SPECIAL ISSUE: ANIMATION & VFX

DIRECTORS Toby Genkel & Ansgar Niebuhr
PRODUCERS Studio Soi & Trixter
ACTOR Kostja Ullmann
FACE TO FACE
WITH GERMAN FILMS
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ANIMATION & VFX IN GERMANY

While the first German animation films were made before the First World War, the first animator to command an international reputation was Lotte Reiniger, who became famous for her silhouette films created from back-lit paper cut-outs. She made her first animation film – THE ORNAMENT OF THE LOVestruck Heart – in 1919, while her 1926 classic THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED is regarded by many as the first ever feature-length animation film consisting of 250,000 single images. In addition to shooting experimental shorts and silhouette films from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, Reiniger also worked on silhouette sequences for such live-action features as Georg Wilhelm Pabst’s DON QUIXOTE (1933) and Jean Renoir’s LA MARSEILLAISE (1937) before emigrating to Great Britain in 1936 where she lived and worked until 1980.

Another key figure from the silent movie era was the avant-garde animator and painter Oskar Fischinger, who experimented with photographing multiple forms such as melting wax, cardboard cutouts and swirling liquids. He worked at the UFA studios in Babelsberg on special effects for Fritz Lang’s silent science fiction film WOMAN IN THE MOON (1928) and also received commissions from the advertising industry. While Fischinger’s work earned him increasing international attention, the Nazis, however, did not share this enthusiasm, declaring his work to be “degenerate” in 1936. Forced to leave his native Germany, he made a new home in Los Angeles, working for such studios as Paramount, MGM and Walt Disney (he was responsible for the memorable scene of broomsticks marching in goose-step style in THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE episode of the 1940 classic FANTASIA) and spearheaded the development of the experimental film movement in America.

ANIMATION UNDER THE SWASTIKA

Meanwhile, back home under the Nazis, there was little chance of German animators being able to explore new artistic channels in the new climate, although Josef Goebbels’ Film Ministry ordered those filmmakers who had remained in Germany to step up their production and concentrate on animation features which could be released in the cinemas.

Hans Fischer – also known as Fischerkoesen – directed and produced animated fairy-tale fantasies such as WEATHER-BEATEN MELODY (1942), SNOWMAN (1943), and THE SILLY GOOSE (1944) which were regarded by many as being on a par with the productions from Walt Disney. After the war, he resumed
his career, working on commissions for the advertising industry with shorts for such brands as Aral, Haribo and AfriCola, and is also credited as being the creator of the mascot for public broadcaster Hessischer Rundfunk, the cartoon seal known as “Uncle Otto”.

As Jennifer Lynde Barker notes in her essay on Fischerkoesen in the 1950s for the book accompanying the Locarno Film Festival’s Beloved and Rejected retrospective dedicated to the cinema in the young Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963, “Germany’s Walt Disney” was adept at tapping into international trends of animation from filmmakers as diverse as Disney, the Fleischer brothers, Norman McLaren, Claire Parker and Ladislav Starewicz for his own work. Meanwhile, the three Diehl brothers – Paul, Hermann and Ferdinand – concentrated on puppet animation based on fables and fairy-tales after initially starting out in classical animation and silhouette films (their short THE CALIPH STORK was inspired by the work of Lotte Reiniger and based on the fairytale by Wilhelm Hauff). Their greatest success came with the films around the figure of the hedgehog “Mecki” who first appeared unnamed with his eternal rival, the hare, in the short WETTLAUF ZWISCHEN HASE UND IGEL, based on the Aesop’s fable, in 1938. After the war, “Mecki” became a household name, spawning numerous stop-motion animation films and books as well as a flood of toys when the figure was licensed to the renowned German stuffed-animal manufacturer Steiff. Meanwhile, a number of animators – Wolf- gang Urchs, Boris von Borresholm – were among the group of filmmakers who signed the Oberhausen Manifesto in February 1962. Urchs had made GARDEN GNOMES the previous year, spotlighting the social aspects of life in the young Federal Republic, and followed with highly political shorts like DIE PISTOLE (1963) and KONTRASTE (1964). However, it was over two decades before he produced his first feature-length animation film, IN DER ARCHE LIEGT DER WURM (known as STOWAWAY IN THE ARK in the US), which was released in the cinemas in 1987 and followed this three years later with PETERCHENS MONDFAHRT.

**POST-WAR YEARS**

After 1945, Germany was flooded with animated films from the US, particularly from Walt Disney. After living under 12 years of the Nazi terror and excluded from the latest films (and music) from across the Atlantic, the Germans were naturally keen to catch up on the pleasures forbidden them by the Nazis and this included films from Hollywood.

As Albrecht Ade, the founder of Stuttgart’s internationally renowned animation festival, pointed out in a publication celebrating the new generation of animators in the mid-1980s, Disney and other studios set the agenda for German audiences’ tastes for animation were concerned. In the 1950s, German animators flourished mainly in the world of advertising – and also produced shorts for the West German election campaigns in 1957 and 1961.

**THE OBERHAUSEN GENERATION**

Meanwhile, a number of animators – Wolfgang Urchs, Boris von Borresholm – were among the group of filmmakers who signed the Oberhausen Manifesto in February 1962. Urchs had made GARDEN GNOMES the previous year, spotlighting the social aspects of life in the young Federal Republic, and followed with highly political shorts like DIE PISTOLE (1963) and KONTRASTE (1964).

He closed the doors to his studio after completing one last feature, DIE KLEINE ZAUBERFLOTE, inspired by Mozart’s opera, in 1998. Three years later, the German Film Awards presented an honorary award to the veteran animator in recognition of his outstanding services to German cinema. Linda and her team were praised for wanting to offer an alternative to the “American style of
over-dynamic movements and the mad hectic pace of the characters” with imaginative stories, the soft and gentle approach and careful drawing.

**DEFA STUDIO FOR ANIMATED FILM**

A parallel animation scene developed in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR): the DEFA Studio for Animated Film was founded in Dresden in 1955, producing mostly children’s and family films as well as, on occasion, adult satires and artistic films. The studio became a gathering place for artists from a variety of related disciplines, including graphic design, commercial graphics, puppetry and information films as well as production groups specializing in puppet animation films, silhouette films and the classic 2-cell animation. Over 2,000 films were made for the cinema, television and other institutions until 1990. Short films were made each year for the Children’s General Program to be shown to kindergarten and nursery school groups, while others served as supporting films before the main features in the cinemas.

Writing in *Animation: A World History*, Giannalberto Bendazzi observed: “The studio’s work was often described as spoon-feeding, as it had to comply with socialist realism. Puppets and cartoon characters could not be too aloof. They had to be as natural as possible so they were not associated with the negative rating, ‘Formenhascherei’, (meaning, straining after formal effects). Intervention, control and eavesdropping at the studio lasted till the end of the East German regime.”

Among the studio’s leading figures were the late Kurt Weiler, Sieglinde Hamacher and Günther Rätz. Weiler – who received the DEFA Foundation’s Award for Services to German Cinema in 2004 – was known for his puppet animation on such films as *Die Geschichte von Kalif Storch* (1984) as well as providing the animated sequences for productions at the DEFA Studio for Feature Films, including Rolf Losansky’s *Ein Schneemann in Afrika* (1977) and Hannelore Unterberg’s *Konzert für Bratpfanne und Orchester* (1976).

Ratz has directed more than 60 films, including the internationally successful series *Filopat and Patofil* (1962/68) as well as the feature-length films *The Flying Windmill* (1981) and *The Trace Leads to the Silver Lake* (1990), a puppet animation version of a classic Western based on the Karl May novel *The Treasure in the Silver Lake*.

Following the closure of the DEFA Studio, 1993 saw the German Federal Archive entrusting the German Institute for Animated Film (DIAF) in Dresden with the studio’s estate and legacy. In addition to more than 2,000 film prints, the DIAF also archives an extensive collection of film-related materials and documents, particularly from the field of East German animated film. A permanent exhibition was opened by the Institute in 2002 on the complete works of the DEFA Studio for Animated Films at the Dresden Technical Museum.

**GERMAN ANIMATION GOES ADULT**

German animated feature films had traditionally been targeted at children, but this changed at the beginning of the 1990s thanks to two producer-directors, Gerhard Hahn and Michael Schaanck, who had set up their animation studios in the previous decade in Berlin and Hamburg, respectively, when they decided to try their hand at more “adult” subjects.

They joined forces with Rötger “Brösel” Feldmann, the mastermind behind the cult Werner comic strips, to bring the adventures of the unemployed biker and his beer-swilling mates to the big screen, with the first film, *Werner – Beinhart* (1990), attracting some 5.4 million German cinemagoers. This spawned a highly successful film franchise – naturally with all kinds of merchandising tie-ins – consisting of *Werner – Eat My Dust* (1996), *Werner – Vollès Roaaa!!!* (1999), *Werner – Gekotzt wird Später* (2003) and, the last outing to date, *Werner – EisKalt!* directed by veteran cinematographer Gernot Roll in 2011.

Another successful comic book property, Walter Moers’ *Little Asshole*, was brought to the cinema by Schaack in 1997 and became one of the most successful domestic theatrical releases of that year with over 3 million admissions.

At the same time, Hahn and Schaack remained true to the animation industry’s core audience – now known as family entertainment – by producing feature films based on the children classics *Pippi Langstrumpf* and *Das doppelte Lottchen* or TV series centered around such characters as Benjamin Blümchen, Bibi Blockberg and Urmel.

**BRANDS AND CLASSICS**

Moreover, the German outpost of US major studio Warner Bros. played an important role in co-producing and/or distributing locally-made animation from the end of the 1990s on such titles as Munich Animation Film’s updated version of the Bremen Town Musicians in *The Fearless Four*, or the late Thilo Graf Rothkirch’s *The Little Polar Bear* and *Laura’s Star* franchises.

In recent years, Universum Film has joined Warner Bros. as one of the key distribution/production partners for German animators, building up such brands as *Coconut the Little Dragon*, *Raven the Little Rascal*, *MAYA the Bee*, *Movie*, and *Knight Rusty*.****
A third home for German animation, Constantin Film, the distributor of the WERNER films, co-produced and distributed the 3D animation films IMPY’S WONDERLAND (2008), ANIMALS UNITED (2010), and the family action drama TARZAN (2013).

**ANIMATION AND VFX MADE IN GERMANY TODAY**

According to the European Audiovisual Observatory’s recent study *Mapping the Animation Industry in Europe* commissioned by the European Commission, Germany ranked fourth in the European Union in production capacity with 20 animation features released theatrically between 2010 and 2014. These included such films as ANIMALS UNITED, LAURA’S STAR, and PRINCESS LILLIFEE AND THE LITTLE UNICORN.

However, as Akkord Film’s Dirk Beinhold notes, “the volume of animated production out of Germany is relatively low, and budgets are modest in comparison with France or the UK.” He produced two 2D-animated feature films – RAVEN THE LITTLE RASCAL 1 & 2 – with budgets of around $5 million each, which were raised from within Germany alone. “But this is the exception, the budgets were relatively low, and 2D animated features are not as attractive internationally anymore,” he reports.

“At Akkord Film, we work very hard to adapt our local brands like the upcoming CG-animated feature film RABBIT SCHOOL – GUARDIANS OF THE GOLDEN EGG, which is based on a traditional German Easter book, into internationally appealing family entertainment by spending years on story development,” Beinhold explains. “At this stage, we only develop simple 2D designs in order to avoid design and technology dictating content. It is only then that we start modelling our characters to serve the story. Nowadays, 3D/CG animation like RABBIT SCHOOL sells almost ten times better in the rest of the world than 2D animation. However, German-speaking countries and territories like France still appreciate 2D animated features like our RAVEN THE LITTLE RASCAL.”

Meanwhile, Trixter’s Michael Coldewey points out that German animation nowadays tends to be filed under the ‘childrens film’ label whereas the US productions à la Pixar are always regarded as ‘family entertainment’ and also attract adult cinemagoers who wouldn’t necessarily go to see a German animated feature. “There was a change with films like WERNER and LITTLE ASSHOLE when the German animation scene found a niche to attract adults to its films, but this development didn’t last,” he recalls.

Tania Reichert-Faciides agrees that German animation feature films are invariably based on existing brands and targeted specifically at young children. “For example, you won’t see a teenager going to see COCONUT THE LITTLE DRAGON,” she says. From 1998 to 2010, Reichert-Faciides had been the CEO of the video distributor Universum Film, overseeing the expansion of its operations into DVD and theatrical distribution and handling the releases of such animation features as PRINCESS LILLIFEE, MOONBEAM BEAR and THE FLIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS. In 2013, she then set up her Munich-based boutique outfit Freebird Pictures in 2013 to focus on the production and distribution of films and series for audiences from pre-school to approximately 12 years with such credits as MOLLY MONSTER and OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...
DIVERSE LANDSCAPE

Many of the animation studios and VFX houses may still be based like their live-action colleagues in the traditional “production triangle” of Munich, Hamburg and Berlin, but the development of Germany’s patchwork of regional film funds and rapid advances in technology mean that there are important players operating in every corner of Germany.

Nowadays, you are just as likely to find a studio based in Halle, Düsseldorf or Hanover, away from the main centers – while the Stuttgart area has developed into a veritable magnet for animators and VFX artists thanks to Baden-Württemberg’s long-standing support for this sector through the MFG film fund and the various film schools and other institutions of higher education in the region.

The German capital is home to such established animation studios as Hahn Film and Cartoon Film as well as such players as MovieBrats, The Big-B Animation, and Pictagon, and is a base for leading VFX houses – from Celluloid VFX (whose credits include the UNDERWORLD franchise and CRANK 2) through RiseFX (CAPTAIN AMERICA, HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY SHALLOWS) to an outpost of ARRI Media (with its headquarters in Munich and other branches in Cologne, Halle, and Frankfurt) and Exozet (CLOUD ATLAS) on the Babelsberg studio lot.

Meanwhile, in Munich, you will find such key players as Caligari Film (behind such successful brands as PRINCESS LILLIFEE and MOONBEAM BEAR) and Trixter (see accompanying portrait) as well as the three times Oscar®-nominated ScanlineVFX which won the Technical Achievement Academy Award® in 2008 for its in-house fluid effects software “Flowline”.

Moving westwards to the Stuttgart region, the cluster of animation/VFX companies located there include Studio Film Bilder, the Caligari Film subsidiary Traffic Entertainment and Little Mainmen characters who appear on ZDF in the early evenings six days a week, Frankfurt is the center of operations for Jan Bonath’s Scopas Medien (producing the Oscar®-winning Lauenstein brothers’ first animation feature MARNIE’S WORLD), and Hanover a base for Ambient Entertainment (whose CGI features include TARZAN and ANIMALS UNITED) and Alexandra Schatz Filmproduktion, a partner studio for the MOLLY MONSTER pre-school TV series and feature film.

As Reichert-Facilides points out, one of the challenges currently facing the German animation sector is the “significant reduction” in the financing from the broadcasters for animation series. “There are many reasons for this,” she explains, “such as the existence of thematic channels, lower budgets and the move to more international productions.”

However, the involvement of television and the online portals play a crucial role in establishing brands with the young viewers.

INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

International co-production for the financing of animated feature films is “definitely indispensable”, according to Moviebrats’ Alexander Weimer, “to be able to provide state-of-the-
art animation which is defined by the major studio productions. The budgets are constantly on the rise in independent animation as well, even though it is still way below the price tag of typical studio features. But it’s nearly impossible to raise those funds from Germany alone, so co-production usually is the only option – and it also provides access to a wider network of artists and talents,” he observes.

Akkord Film’s Dirk Beinholt, who is currently producing the RAVEN THE LITTLE RASCAL TV series with the French production house 2Mi- nutes and additional service providers in China and Canada, points out that co-production is a natural state of affairs for the European animation industry with such institutionalized co-production platforms as the CARToON Forum and Movie events as well as Animation Production Day during Stuttgart’s Festival of Animated Film (IFTS).

“Co-production plays an important role particularly when it’s a case of putting bigger budgets together,” Freebird Pictures’ Tania Reichert-Facilides agrees, although she points out that Germany has “a clear dis- advantage in a European context” in not having a tax incentive scheme for production like most other European countries.

Nevertheless, in her position as a board member of the Animation Section at the Ger- man Producers Alliance – Film & Television, she has been instrumental in organizing platforms to bring German animation studios to- gether with potential production partners.

This September saw the staging of the third edition of the “German-European Alliances in Animation” workshop at the beginning of the Cartoon Forum in Toulouse where German representatives from the industry and their international counterparts discussed perspectives, trends and opportunities in animation. The focus region for 2016 was the UK and Ireland, after the previous years had seen the spotlight on Poland and the Baltic states.

The workshop was also used as the launchpad for the latest edition of the Animation Made in Germany brochure showcasing animation companies working out of Germany (available as a download from Producers Alliance and AG Animationsfilm websites – www.produzentenallianz.de or www.ag-animationsfilm.com).

Other networking opportunities are offered by the German Reception at the Annecy Animation Film Festival and the Animation Production Day (APD) during Stuttgart’s Festival of Animation Film (IFTS). At APD’s 2016 edition, around 140 participants from 18 different countries discussed cooperations for the 39 selected animation projects with a total production volume of over 500 million euros in over 600 one-to-one meetings.

**VFX IN GERMANY**

“From the creative and technical perspective, German VFX are on a top level comparable with first-class international VFX studios,” says Heiko Burkhardsmaier, Head of Business & Legal Affairs at Stuttgart-based Mackevision Medien Design. He points to the fact that Trixter and Rise FX are currently vendors for Marvel Studios blockbusters such as CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR and GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 2, while Scanline, Luxx and Mackevision joined these two companies on producing effects for INDEPENDENCE DAY – RESURGENCE. In addition, Mackevision has been one of the biggest vendors for the internationally popular GAME OF THRONES TV series since 2013, and Scanline’s name can be found in the closing credits as one of the VFX wizards working on Timur Bekmambetov’s BEN HUR.

With only very few VFX-laden productions originating from Germany, the VFX houses here “need to work on international pro- ductions from US studios in order to survive and hold on to personnel,” Burkhardsmaier explains. “The good people want to work on the shows and features where they can use and develop their creative and technical skills. German or European productions have very limited budgets most of the time and the challenge is to find solutions to match their budgets. For US productions, it is often the case that the challenge is to be able to do the work.”

**TRAINING**

Animation was high on the agenda when the Ludwigsburg-based Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg was founded in 1991 by Albrecht Ade, who served as the artistic director until 2000 and had also been behind the launching of the Stuttgart Festival of Ani- mated Film (IFTS) in 1982. This particular focus received another extra boost when the academy then launched its own Institute of Animation, Visual Effects and Digital Post-production in 2002 with courses to train concept artists, animation and effects direc- tors/producers, character animators and ef- fects artists as well as technical directors. In 2014, the animation platform Animation Career Review ranked the Institute for Animation as one of the five best animation schools worldwide. Over the years, numerous prizes at German and international festivals have gone to the institute’s students including Verena Fels (MOBILE), Moritz Mayerhofer (URS) and Kasia Wilk (BEAR ME), while Steve Bache, Mahya Goudarzi, and Louise Peter’s animated documentary EYE FOR AN EYE was one of the three titles nominated in the ‘Best Foreign Animation’ category for the Student Oscar®.

In addition, one of this year’s graduates, US-born Andreas Feix, saw his graduation film CITIPATI among the five films nominated in the Short and Animation Films category for the 2016 First Steps Awards.

Meanwhile, the achievements of the ani- mation students at Cologne’s Academy of Media Arts (KHM) – whose alumni include Vera Lalyko (WINDOW WITH A VIEW) and
Simon Steinhorst (EMIL) – were recognized by this year’s edition of Zagreb’s World Festival of Animated Film with two exhibitions and a film program featuring such young talents as Anna Lytton (MIRROR), Simon Schnellmann (LIFE IS RUGGED), Eunjin Park (678), and Patrick Buhr (WHAT I FORGOT TO SAY).

Babelsberg graduates have included Tomer Eshed’s FLAMINGO PRIDE and Nicolas de Leval Jezierski’s HALF YOU MET MY GIRL-FRIEND. Moreover, two animation students from Babelsberg were nominated for this year’s First Steps Awards: Benedikt Toniolo with CAFÉ D’AMOUR and Beatrice Baumann with TOYS IN THE ATTIC.

Located next to Studio Babelsberg lot, the Film University now offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Animation allowing students to take responsibility for all stages in the production of an animated film – from the development of the original idea through to the sound recording and film layout –, while its Master of Fine Arts in Animation Direction enables students to expand their artistic, technical, dramaturgical, and concept design skills as well as learn how to plan the production of an animated film and manage a team.

FUNDING

Like their live-action and documentary colleagues, animation producers benefit from the fact that Germany has a federal structure. Like their live-action and documentary colleagues, animation producers benefit from the fact that Germany has a federal structure. Additionally, Germany traditionally leaned more towards cinema, and regional funders play a pioneering role by involving animation specialists in the funding operations.

"The second obstacle for continuous work in the animation industry is the fact that funding of TV series is only now gradually becoming possible because the institutions traditionally leaned more towards cinema," Meyer-Hermann notes.

Meanwhile, MovieBrats Pictures’ Alexander Weimer points to other aspects of the production process for animation films, which may not be fully appreciated by the funding bodies. "For instance, the development process can easily be more costly than on a live-action film, and to get a project off the ground, attac sales etc., it’s necessary to make the best sales teaser possible with a high production value, but that has its price. Your typical development funding not only rarely covers the production of such a teaser, but sometimes they also require you to make one before you apply for the money in order to convince the fund. It’s almost like a chicken and egg situation."

Berlin-based MovieBrats Pictures, which had been the German co-producer on Russian director Ivan Tverdovsky’s Karlovy Vary competition title ZOOLOGY, is to serve as the delegate producer on the international production HUMP alongside screenwriter Amin Matalqa and former Pixar story manager Ryan Lynch, with Eric Goossens of Belgium-based Walking The Dog serving as co-producer.
The 3D animated desert adventure HUMP, written by Sundance Audience Award winner Matalqa and Matthew Antonelli, will be the feature directorial debut by the former Pixar director R.J. Gibbs whose previous credits included working as a story artist on such Pixar productions as TOY STORY 2, MONSTERS, INC. and FINDING NEMO as well as directing episodes of Pixar TV shows MATER’S TALL TALES and TALES FROM RADIATOR SPRINGS.

NEW INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT ANIMATION AND VFX

Given the concentration of animation and VFX companies in the Stuttgart region, the MFG film fund has been a great champion for this sector serving as one of the founders of the Animation Media Cluster Region Stuttgart which brings some 20 VFX and animation companies – from Pixomondo and Studio Soi through Studio88 to Mackevision and Luxx Studios – under an umbrella. In addition, the fund’s new guidelines from 2014 introduced a new funding category to support line producers of VFX-laden feature films or international TV productions.

The Oscar®-winning VFX supervisor Jörn Großhans at Stuttgart-based Mackevision Medien Design received €150,000 for the handling of visual effects for the fifth season of GAME OF THRONES, while Mackevision and Pixomondo were awarded €300,000 to handle the VFX on MTV/Viacom’s fantasy adventure series SHANNARA. MFG – which has provided over €6.7 million for the development, production, and distribution of over 110 animated films and series – also sponsors the Lotte Reiniger Award for Animated Film for the best graduation film at the annual Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film (ITFS).

Meanwhile, Bavaria’s regional film fund FFF Bayern extended its dedicated international co-production funding program in summer 2015 to include support for VFX producers based in Bavaria. According to Ilse Aigner, Bavaria’s Minister for Economics and Media,

Energy and Technology, the additional funding would support local companies “in this difficult international competitive market”, bolster Bavaria’s position as a VFX hub and, simultaneously, benefit the overall sector as the measure would bring additional productions to Bavaria. As a result, VFX studio Trixter was awarded €450,000 for the virtual shoot of CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR, €275,000 was allocated to ScanlineVFX for the digital sets it created for Steven Quale’s action film THE LAKE.

BRAIN DRAIN

However, German VFX houses still feel at a competitive disadvantage compared to rivals benefiting from incentive programs in Canada, France, the UK, Belgium, and Ireland, among others. Lobbying efforts are being directed at revising the current German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) and German Motion Picture Fund (GMPF) to enable the VFX sector to become a player on a scale mirroring Germany’s ranking in education, creative and technical innovative power.

“We have highly trained artists, but many of them are switching freely between animation and VFX,” Moviebrats Pictures’ Alexander Weimer adds. “And since the VFX industry is thriving in certain regions in Germany thanks to the Hollywood VFX spectacles, we are sometimes faced with a shortage of talented artists.”

“Germany is like a sleeping giant. We have the talent. In theory, we also have the money for making it big, but we are just not putting it together to unleash that giant,” he concludes.

Martin Blaney
In his animation adventure OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE… director Toby Genkel brought the hapless creatures who had missed the ark back to life on our cinema screens. This prehistoric cartoon fun hit the spot perfectly for audiences all over the world.

“A cartoon film needs to sparkle with ideas,” Toby Genkel explains. “We sit side by side throughout the design phase. For OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE… I needed a creature completely incapable of living in the normal world.” And the way it looked had to convey that hopelessness. “I need a character that tells me the story,” the director explains. “OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE… was a dream project.” In the meantime, the 3-D animation has been sold internationally, to every conceivable country. “Very few films manage that.” Emely Christians, who finances Genkel’s films with her production company Ulysses Film, was named Producer of the Year at the Cartoon Forum for the European co-production in 2015. Due to its immense success, there are plans to offer the scurrilous cartoon film crew surrounding Noah a comeback in a prospective sequel.

But Toby Genkel not only lends wings to prehistoric creatures, he also provides a cast of birds with the necessary lift off. In his latest film RICHARD THE STORK, a newly hatched sparrow is adopted by a stork-mother. As he imagines he is a stork himself, he wants to accompany the migrating birds on their long, strenuous journey to Africa. “The lively little sparrow is determined to fly really fast, which gives the film a great deal of its energy.” The character designers studied the movements of birds in order to animate them as realistically as possible: “We exhausted the possibilities available to us and we are very proud of the outcome.”

Genkel learned his craft at Trickompany. During his studies at the College for Illustration, Fashion and Graphic Design, he completed an internship at the Hamburg-based company. “At that time I played in a band and I wanted to be a rock star,” Genkel recalls. “I hadn’t grasped how amazing it is, the animation genre.” Aged only 20, he was able to try out what suited him best in the various departments. “At the time there was no animation film industry to speak of in Germany. Almost all the animators and character designers came from the USA, Ireland or Canada.

Under the direction of studio boss Michael Schaack, Genkel worked as a layouter and background designer on films like DER KLEENE PUNKER and the WERNER films. In 1998 he co-directed OTTIFANT with Ute Münchow-Pohl. “I was second in command and I learned a lot.” In his 15 years at Tricompky he co-developed series and played a decisive part in the stylistic conception of the company’s productions.

Genkel underlines that “the German market is very important, but we need to produce films that can be sold internationally. Because we produce our films entirely in Europe, an industry is emerging here. It’s a high-pressured system,” Genkel emphasizes.

His next 3-D animation will be TABALUGA – THE GREEN DRAGON by Sven Unterwaldt, in which he is involved as co-author and co-director. And he is working on the films YAKARI – THE LITTLE INDIAN and OLCHI, which are to be made next year. “Telling stories is my thing, rather than the actual drawing.”

Birgit Heidsiek
“I’ve been into films and animation since I was a kid,” says Ansgar Niebuhr. “I shot JAWS 4 using rubber sharks on strings and an 8mm camera! But when I started there were few possibilities to learn animation in a classic education, so I was very lucky to join Trickompany, an animation studio in Hamburg. I worked on Hayo Freitag’s nightmare scene for the animated feature film FELIDAE, based on Akif Pirici’s novel. Later I worked on Lindgren’s KARLSSON ON THE ROOF and many others.”

For Niebuhr, now aged 47, “the characters need feelings and moods as well as movement. They have to act and show emotions, which is not easy since production in Europe tends to be spread over multiple places and studios – it is important to keep track of the narrative and the visual.”

Niebuhr, who has just taken over direction on the feature film CONNI, has “pulled the elements together so it works at various levels: we have a great script and characters, these are the most important elements.”

A great admirer of Pixar and Disney, Niebuhr praises how the best animation can “work better than current live-action blockbusters because the latter tend to be too formulaic. Just look at ZOOTOPiA: it’s both smart and funny!”

For Germans and Europeans the narrative signature is more poetic than going for every beat and heavy movements, as in blockbusters: there’s no emotional explosion every three shots. And we, as European filmmakers, are still developing: there’s great stuff coming from Ireland and France at the moment.”

With far less money to play with than US producers, “we finance through subsidy and co-producing,” Niebuhr explains. “We bundle our competences and strengths because we can’t keep rewriting scripts endlessly or develop from scratch. If you have a known property it makes financing easier, such as with Princess Lilifée or Max and Moritz, but I would like family films to be able to achieve this independence one day. Never say never!”

For Niebuhr, the ideal situation would be “to have an own development fund and with producers and directors willing to take the plunge; I am sure we will get there. There is such a wealth of wonderful material, such as fairy tales. The Irish have their mythology, the US had mad fun with fairy tales as in, for example, SHREK. The Czechs have also revisited their past. European material is such a broad and rich field and we can make the best of it. The smartest animation today comes from the US but we have such a vast potential in our own stories.”

Simon Kingsley
"Something a little different"

A PORTRAIT OF STUDIO SOI

Our company’s history so far can be divided into three phases,” says Carsten Bunte, a graduate from the Production class of the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, who founded the animation studio Studio Soi with six graduates from the Filmakademie’s Institute of Animation – Torben Meier, Klaus Morschheuser, Mathias Schreck, Jakob Schuh, Michael Sieber and Saschka Unseld – in the summer of 2003.

"From the outset, we were very diversified with specialization in design, 3D computer animation and compositing, stop motion and set construction," Bunte recalls, pointing out that during the studio’s first phase, “we always followed the goal of working in narrative terms and convincing our clients that they wanted something a little different.”

Award-winning productions from the early years included the ZDF-commissioned computer-animated shorts ENGEL ZU FUSS by Jakob Schuh and Saschka Unseld and DER KLEINE UND DAS BIEST by Johannes Weiland and Uwe Heidschötter.

The second phase was heralded in 2008 when the studio won two pitches to handle the production of THE GRUFFALO and the Cartoon Network series THE AMAZING WORLD OF GUMBALL.

Studio Soi was brought onboard by Michael Rose’s Magic Light Pictures to develop and animate a half-hour special based on Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler’s bestselling 1999 book The Gruffalo.

The film was seen by over 1 million viewers when it was first aired by BBC 1 on Christmas day 2009 and went on to receive numerous international awards as well as Oscar® and BAFTA nominations.

The collaboration with Magic Light also spawned another two films based on Donaldson’s books – THE GRUFFALO’S CHILD and ROOM ON THE BROOM.

“The change in 2008 saw the number of working at Studio Soi increase from 8-10 people to 35 employees, and we now have between 60-80 working with us,” Bunte says, noting that around 90% of the staff are non-German coming from such countries as France, Italy, Spain and the UK.

The studio was involved in the technical direction for THE AMAZING WORLD OF GUMBALL series which revolves around the life of a 12-year-old cat called Gumball Watterson, and has produced five seasons since 2008. A sixth season is now in preparation.

“Third phase in our development in 2012/13 saw us starting to develop projects in-house and we raised the finance to produce an international animation series entitled KLUMP, Bunte continues.

Looking back on Studio Soi’s first 13 years, he explains that the studio has “always been interested in projects that make real demands on us, that consciously demand we deliver that extra 10%, as well as help us to keep developing and learning as a studio. We don’t want to start repeating ourselves.”

Martin Blaney
FOCUSED AND KEEN TO EXPAND

A PORTRAIT OF TRIXTER

"Our heart still beats for animation, although we make our living with visual effects," says Michael Coldewey who co-founded Trixter with Simone Kraus in 1998 to create visual effects and digital character animation for feature films, television and commercials. While Trixter’s headquarters are in Munich’s Schwabing district, the company also has an outpost in Berlin, managed by Martin Herzberg with a focus on work for commercials and industrial films, while Kraus has been based Stateside as an animation supervisor for the past 10 years heading up Trixter, Inc. in Santa Monica, as part of the expansion into high-end visual effects for international live-action features.

Trixter has also handled VFX for such studio productions as X-MEN: FIRST CLASS, GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 2, and INDEPENDENCE DAY 2, and is one of the animation studios with Ulysses Filmproduktion and Dan Krech’s Toronto-based Awesome-town working on the CGI feature film TABALUGA for Helge Sasse’s Tempest Film.

“We now have a capacity of 500-700 VFX shots per show in Munich and Berlin because we have an extremely good pipeline setup,” Coldewey says. “And more than half our artists come from 15 to 20 different nations, although English is working language.”

At the same time, the company has also been active as a co-producer for foreign and domestic German productions. “Trixter was still quite young when we acquired all of the film rights to KNISTER’s Lily The Witch book series and produced an animated TV series with 52 episodes,” Coldewey recalls. “We then joined forces with the live-action production house Blue Eyes Fiction to produce two feature films and are now preparing a third film with partners from Austria and Belgium.”

Keen to expand Trixter’s (co-)production output, Coldewey has brought Lucia Scharbatke onboard to work on the development of various film projects, including an adaptation of best-selling author Cornelia Funke’s Ghost Knight as live-action with animation elements to be produced with Academy Award®-winner Volker Engel’s company Uncharted Territory.

And this summer saw Trixter’s CEO Christian Sommer become a third shareholder in the company alongside Coldewey and Kraus to handle the company’s overall management as well as represent the company in lobbying politicians for improved film financing parameters and the introduction of tax incentives in Germany.

Martin Blaney
START SMALL AND CARRY ON

A PORTRAIT OF ACTOR KOSTJA ULLMANN
IT is something of a cliche to say that everyone starts in a small way, but rarely is this as apt as in Kostja Ullmann’s case. His parents – actor Volker Ullmann and dancer Manelle Ullmann – founded the Stage School in Hamburg not long after his birth, and their son watched them at work there even when he was a very small boy. “At that time, the desire to become an actor myself one day was probably already developing in my subconscious,” Ullmann says now, looking back. “But when I stood on the stage and before the camera for the first time, aged eleven, at first it was just a matter of fun for me, a hobby alongside my schooling. It wasn’t until a few years later that I realized properly how it could also be a profession with which you might even earn money.”

Supported and encouraged by his parents – “at least after they had realized that I really enjoyed acting, not that they could have stopped me by then,” as the now 32-year-old actor emphasizes, laughing – he appeared subsequently in numerous student films and TV productions. By contrast, Ullmann’s studies at acting school were crowned by a film by Marco Kreuzpaintner, in which he played the heterosexual crush of a gay teenager in 2004. “Naturally, because of its subject matter as well. And not least due to the response it triggered with so many viewers.” Some fan mail came from as far away as Russia, and according to the actor, there is no other film even to the present day that people want to talk to him about more often. When Kreuzpaintner and he presented their second film together, COMING IN, at the Mardi Gras Film Festival in Sydney 2016, the coming-out drama from 12 years previously was shown again as well. “Everyone in that cinema knew and loved our film – and all of them seemed really grateful and happy for the opportunity to see it again on the big screen. That was a truly wonderful moment.”

By contrast to Kreuzpaintner – who promptly exploited the lively interest in SUMMER STORM at the Toronto International Film Festival to realize his first film in the USA – Ullmann remained faithful to German cinema. Comedies with mainstream appeal like SPECIAL ESCORT, SINGLE BY CONTRACT or 3 TURKS AND A BABY became one of his specialties, and he was also involved in the internationally distributed film version of the teenage bestseller RUBY RED and its two sequels. But he faced the cameras for Oskar Roehler as well (SOURCES OF LIFE) and played the leading male role in Angelina Maccarone’s drama HOUNDED about a sadomasochistic love affair between a young criminal and his probation officer, which won the Golden Leopard in Locarno 2006.

“I have always tried to avoid being typecast in a specific kind of role. And I am really very glad that the German market offers me such diversity,” says Ullmann, who also has an agent in England. “In the end, I’m grateful for every convincing role that I am offered, whether in America, in Germany or anywhere else – that doesn’t really matter.”

The actor from Hamburg was brought up bi-lingually thanks to his mother, who was born in India and grew up in England, and so he has filmed one or two movies in English already: in Budapest he faced the cameras for Ridley Scott’s series based on Ken Follett’s World Without End, and he also had a small part in Anton Corbijn’s A MOST WANTED MAN with Philip Seymour Hoffman.

Ullmann has no fears about getting bored back at home in Germany, anyway. When he is not actually filming las most recently for Marc Rothemund’s MEIN BLIND DATE MIT DEM LEBEN and HAPPY BURNOUT by André Erkau, which are both due for launch in German cinemas in the first half of 2017), he works on developing his own material. Or he can be found in studios working as a voice for animation movies, like THE CROODS or most recently SAM O’COOL – EIN SCHRÄGER VOGEL HEBT AB, for which he won the German Animated Voice Award at the 23rd International Animation Film Festival Stuttgart this past April.

“For me, that’s a completely different world,” Ullmann says of this aspect in his profession. “All the things you can use your body and face for otherwise suddenly have to be put into your voice. It’s incredibly complicated work. I really have the greatest respect for all professional dubbing artists.” And he knows just what he is talking about – after all, in this field he also started in a small way: he lent his voice for TV series such as BAYWATCH at the age of only eleven.

Patrick Heidmann
TONI ERDMANN will represent Germany as the official submission for the 89th Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film. This was decided by an independent jury appointed by German Films. Jury representative Felicitas Darschin (Bundesverband Regie) announced the decision on 25 August 2016 at a press presentation in Munich in the presence of producers Janine Jackowski and Jonas Dornbach and actor Thomas Loibl.

The nine-person jury substantiated its decision as follows: “TONI ERDMANN stood out among the eight submitted films with its resolute artistic signature. A bold and stylistically confident cinematic display of character on the pulse of the times. Maren Ade manages to turn 162 minutes of film into a humorous, unmasking stroll through the nuances of a father-daughter relationship. Universal topics like social isolation and the challenge of interpersonal integrity are skillfully dissected. Touching, evocative, implementing societal questions, and an unwavering artistic clarity. Just as modern international cinema should be.”

Director Maren Ade commented on the jury’s decision: “I am very happy that the jury is sending TONI ERDMANN into the Oscar® race and am anxious to see how Toni behaves in Los Angeles.”

And producers Janine Jackowski & Jonas Dornbach: “We are very honored! The film has already had an incredible journey and this milestone is very special. Internationally, this is a great sign and we hope that TONI ERDMANN will experience even more adventures in the future! With Sony Pictures Classics we have the best partner on our side.”

TONI ERDMANN is a production by Komplizen Film, in co-production with the Austrian coop 99 Filmproduktion, knm (Monaco) and Missing Link Films. The production was funded by Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, Eurimages, the German Federal Film Fund, the German Federal Film Board, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, BKM, the Austrian Film Institute, Film Industry Support Austria, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, FilmFernseh Fonds Bayern and MEDIA.
FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS

German Films has launched a campaign to promote a new wave of German cinema achievements to international audiences and to showcase exceptional German talent worldwide. The initiative – entitled FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS – will spotlight six of the most influential German actresses currently working in the industry, who represent just some of the many dynamic ‘faces’ of German filmmaking today. Promoting the campaign with a series of marketing and PR measures across the year and making PR materials available to international distributors of German films, the stars of the campaign are: Julia Jentsch – who recently starred in 24 WEEKS in Competition at this year’s Berlinale and ALL OF A SUDDEN programmed in Berlin and London; Lilith Stangenberg – star of WILD – which world premiered at Sundance earlier this year; Liv Lisa Fries – who will star in the upcoming series BABYLON BERLIN; Paula Beer – who just won the Marcello Mastroianni Award for Best Young Actor or Actress in Venice for the lead in François Ozon’s FRANTZ; Sandra Hüller – lead actress in TONI ERDMANN – Germany’s official submission for the 89th Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film, which world premiered in Cannes’ Competition in 2016; and Saskia Rosendahl – who can be seen in NIRGENDWO by Matthias Starke (World Premiere in Competition at Zurich Film Festival 2016) and will star in Oscar®-winner Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck’s upcoming feature, WORK WITHOUT AUTHOR (WT).

BABYLON BERLIN SHOOTING IN NRW

It’s one of the most elaborate series projects in the history of German television: BABYLON BERLIN. Two whole seasons, with eight episodes each, which the directors Tom Tykwer, Achim von Borries and Hendrik Handloegten are dividing up among themselves, will be produced in one go. After shooting began mid-May in Berlin, the crew moved to North Rhine-Westphalia at the end of September, where they will shoot for 30 days in Cologne, Krefeld, and Mülheim an der Ruhr. BABYLON BERLIN is based on the best-selling series by Volker Kutscher about the police inspector Gereon Rath who investigated during the late 1920s in Berlin.

Filming is to continue in the region until November, when Tom Tykwer’s crew will then return to Berlin. The series will broadcast on Sky in 2017, then on Germany’s pubcaster ARD in 2018. BABYLON BERLIN is being supported by the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW with 1.5 million euros and produced by X Filme Creative Pool, ARD with Degeto and WDR, Sky and Beta Film.

MEDIENBOARD AND TIFF ANNOUNCE NEW RESIDENCY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

A new German-Canadian Residency Exchange program was announced in September at TIFF. The program, which will begin in 2017, will offer one German and one Canadian filmmaker the opportunity to live, work and find inspiration in two countries. The initiative is a collaboration between the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). The international exchange will expand the creative reach and opportunities for the participants of Medienboard’s Artist-in-Residence program in Berlin and TIFF’s Len Blum Residency in Toronto.

“We are delighted to be working with TIFF to offer our Artist-in-Residence the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Canadian and North American film industry,” said Kirsten Niehuus, CEO, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg. “Both Berlin and Toronto are significant cities in the industry, with established film professionals that are able to share their experience and knowledge with the next generation of filmmakers.”

“Providing filmmakers with opportunities to inspire and develop their craft lies at the heart of TIFF’s talent development programs,” said Kathleen Drumm, Director, TIFF Industry. “Collaborating with Medienboard on this exchange opens important international doors for participants. It also provides a great way for TIFF to expand its international remit by providing a home for outstanding German talent here at TIFF Bell Lightbox.”
INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS AND SERIES SHOOT IN BAVARIA

In late summer 2016, four extraordinary productions began shooting in Bavaria with support from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern: the Swedish director Lisa Langseth is in Middle Franconia working on EUPHORIA with Alicia Vikander, Eva Green and Charlotte Rampling. Rupert Everett is shooting THE HAPPY PRINCE with Colin Firth and Emily Watson in Upper Franconia. And two series are in the pipeline too: Boris Kunz is in Olching and Baierbrunn directing the 6-part series HINAUS about a corruptable mayor in a fictive Bavarian village. Hans-Christian Schmid is shooting the 8-parter DAS VERSCHWINDEN in Upper Palatinate.

GERMAN-DUTCH FILM CONFERENCE: MEET YOUR NEIGHBOUR

From 31 August-2 September, the Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, the City of Leipzig and the Netherlands Film Fund organized the first German-Dutch film conference with the title “Meet Your Neighbour”. Over 50 guests from Holland and Central Germany gathered together for three days to exchange their experiences with co-productions and discuss ideas for more intensive cooperation between the two regions in the future. The program included case studies such as Martin Koolhoven’s BRIMSTONE, provided insight into European television productions and the distribution market, as well as an overview of current projects within the framework of the German-Dutch Co-Development Fund for Children’s Films, which MDM and the Netherlands Film Fund initiated last year.

“We have maintained long-term close contacts between the Dutch film industry and the creative industry in Central Germany, from which numerous successful projects have been developed,” concluded MDM managing director Manfred Schmidt. “The conference opened up possibilities to maintain a dialogue about creative similarities, but also about differences and, above all, the common path on the European film market.”
GERMAN SHORT FILM ASSOCIATION CONTINUES NETWORKING IN KIEV

Since 2006, the German Short Film Association has been presenting a short film marathon with a selection of 30 German productions at the Molodist International Film Festival in Kiev. Over the years this LONG NIGHT OF GERMAN SHORT FILMS has developed into a permanent audience favorite. Supported by German Films, it is possible for filmmakers to be on hand to present their films in person. Additionally, during this year’s edition of the festival, the award winners and nominees of the German Short Film Award will be presented in two programs during the festival, which is the oldest film festival in the Ukraine and one of the foremost industry meeting events in Eastern Europe.

Since 2014, the German Short Film Association also offers industry events for Ukrainian and German filmmakers during the Molodist Talent Workshops. During this year’s edition, Andrea Wink (East-West Talent Lab, goEast Festival of Central and Eastern European Film) will address young professionals with her presentation on opportunities for up-and-coming filmmakers and also offers a Presentation Training to selected participants. There will also be the practical workshop “Reassemble the City. Change Perspectives” held by Stephan Mueller (director, Berlin, Kamerapferd), who has won many awards for his innovative short film collages. The aim of the various workshops is to encourage networking between German and Ukrainian filmmakers. The project is being supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

16º FESTIVAL DE CINE ALEMÁN IN BUENOS AIRES

Kaminski, Toni, Herbert, Rico and Oskar – they were all at the Festival of German Films in Buenos Aires along with many other characters from the latest German films. The director Wolfgang Becker opened the 16th edition of the festival with ME AND KAMINSKI. A total of 18 feature-length films and the NEXT GENERATION SHORT TIGER short film program were shown in the Argentinean capital from 15 to 21 September 2016. The 18 films included international festival hits from such festivals as Sundance, Berlin, Cannes and Toronto, well-known names like Wolfgang Becker, Doris Dorrie and Maren Ade, promising newcomers, as well as documentaries and family entertainment. The Expressionist silent film DESTINY by Fritz Lang from 1921 was presented in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut in a newly restored version, with musical accompaniment by the Cue Trio. And this year, Argentinian film buffs can also continue watching German films from their sofa at home: the VoD platform Qubit is making some German films – from classics to contemporary – from its catalogue available at no charge.

German Films organizes Festivals of German Films around the globe with various partners to provide an international showcase for new German productions as a way of supporting improved perception, increasing awareness as well as foreign sales. Apart from Buenos Aires, Festivals of German Films are also held in New York, Madrid, Paris, China, Moscow and Australia. The event in Buenos Aires was originally planned as a “little sister” to the popular Festival of German Films in Madrid, but has long since developed into its very own success story with excellent attendance figures.

EFP OPENING DOORS IN BUSAN

Opening Doors – a program designed to highlight the European films and talents presented at the Busan International Film Festival (6-15 October 2016) – will this year support 18 European filmmakers and actors, who will meet with industry and press and enjoy the lively discussions with the Korean audience. Director Johannes Naber will be traveling from Germany to Busan for the world premiere of his latest film HEART OF STONE and director Tony Loeser will present the animation film MULLEWAPP – A PIG’S TALE to local audiences and industry.

Initiated 19 years ago by the European Film Promotion (EFP), the Opening Doors project recognized the great potential of the festival’s special focus on European films. As one of the main gateways to the Asian market, the festival has brought about an ever increasing presence of European talent and sales in Korea. Opening Doors is generously supported by the Creative Europe – Media Programme of the European Union and the participating EFP member organizations.
NEW FILMS

RABBIT SCHOOL – GUARDIANS OF THE GOLDEN EGG (photo © Akkord Film Produktion/Universum Film)

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new German productions are presented on the following 16 pages. Please visit our website www.german-films.de for more information on German features, documentaries and shorts.
Georg Letterer is an introvert modeler, who builds detail-obsessed prototypes. He receives an order from a famous Hollywood actress, Dolores Moor, to make a model of her extravagant villa. This is the opportunity for Georg to escape from suburban dreariness and the perfidious psychological terror of his brother. He tirelessly works on the detailed model and simultaneously falls for the unattainable Dolores. One day Georg discovers an unusual power: he is able to influence the physical reality of the villa through the prototype he is building. With his own interests in mind, Georg becomes a calculating puppeteer who holds the threads of life of everyone around him, just to win Dolores for himself.

The film is based on the Belgian comic book Dolores by François Schuiten & Benoit Peeters [text] and Anne Baltus [illustrations], published in 1991 by Casterman.

MICHAEL RÖSEL was born in 1971. He studied Directing at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg and focused his thesis on commercials. Since 2003, he has been working as a freelance director for advertising and image films on behalf of various agencies and clients such as Mercedes-Benz, Microsoft, DFB, Avira, McDonald’s, Haribo, Chupa Chups, Trumpf, Vitana, Merck and others. He also realized the first season of the highly successful series LAIBLE UND FRISCH. DOLORES is his feature film debut.

GENRE Psycho Thriller
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016
DIRECTOR Michael Rösel
SCREENPLAY Sebastian Feld
CINEMATOGRAPHY Willy Dettmeyer
CAST Udo Schenk, Franziska Petri, Mona Petri, Mathias Herrmann, Alexander Horbe, Marcus Grusser
PRODUCER Frieder Scheiffele
CO-PRODUCER Stefanie Groß
PRODUCTION COMPANY Schwabenlandfilm, in co-production with SWR
RUNTIME 90 min
LANGUAGE German
SALES Media Luna New Films idamartins@medialuna.biz www.medialuna.biz
The happy gay couple David (38) and Khaled (29) would love to marry publicly – if there weren’t Khaled’s Arab family, David’s pseudo-orthodox Jewish mother and an unexpected pregnancy. Misunderstandings, outing fears, a possible paternity and an art gallery insolvency are driving these contradictory families into an emotional chaos and beyond their borders.

HANNO OLDERDISSEN was born in 1976. After being a show jumper, working as a male nurse at a mental hospital and studying Sociology he finally made it into the film industry. From 2000–2004 he gained experience in cinema and commercials as a dolly grip, location manager and 1st AD, and started directing his own shorts. From 2004–2007 he studied Directing at the ifs international film-school in Cologne, graduating with the award-winning short ROBIN. In 2008 he began working with fellow director Markus Sehr, directing commercials and virals. Also active as a screenwriter, his other films include: TAME AS A LAMB (short, 2004), CROSSCOUNTRY (short, 2006), COMFORT ZONE (short, 2006), and his feature debut FAMILY COMMITMENTS (2015).

GENRE Comedy
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2015
DIRECTOR Hanno Olderdissen
SCREENPLAY Lucas Banuscha, Michael Comtesse
CINEMATOGRAPHY Carol Burandt von Kameke
CAST Max von Pufendorf, Omar El-Saeidi, Maren Kroymann, Ramin Yazdani, Franziska Brandmeier
PRODUCERS Knut Jäger, Sebastian Weyland
PRODUCTION COMPANY Heimathafen Film & Media
RUNTIME 85 min
LANGUAGE German
FESTIVALS Hamburg 2015, Max Ophüls Festival Saarbrücken 2016, Boston LGBT Festival 2016
SALES Media Luna New Films idamartins@medialuna.biz www.medialuna.biz
Max, an urban rabbit boy, gets trapped in an old-fashioned Easter rabbit school that is surrounded by a clever fox family scheming to take over Easter. With the help of cute rabbit girl Emmy and training lessons from mysterious Madame Hermione, Max not only learns the secret magic of Easter bunnies, but also where he truly belongs. Will this be enough to save Easter and his new friends?

A story about a courageous rabbit who realizes that home is where your heart is – and where you’ll never hop alone. Based on an all-time children’s book classic and brought to life with a fresh twist and a modern look-and-feel by some of Germany’s best writing, design & animation teams.

UTE VON MÜNCHOW-POHL has directed several animated productions such as KOMMANDO STORTEBEKER (2001), the TV series LITTLE DODO (2007), the features LITTLE DODO (2008, co-dir), LAURA’S STAR AND THE DREAMMONSTERS (2011, co-dir), RAVEN THE LITTLE RASCAL (2012) and RAVEN THE LITTLE RASCAL – THE BIG RACE (2015). RABBIT SCHOOL – GUARDIANS OF THE GOLDEN EGG (2016) is her 6th animated feature. She is also active as a screenwriter, storyboard artist and animator.

GENRE Animation, Adventure, Children & Youth, Family Entertainment
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016
DIRECTOR Ute von Munchow-Pohl
SCREENPLAY Katja Grübel, Dagmar Rehbinder
PRODUCER Dirk Beinhold
PRODUCTION COMPANY Akkord Film, in co-production with Virgin Lands, NDR, SWR
RUNTIME 76 min
LANGUAGE German

SALES Sola Media
post@sola-media.com
www.sola-media.com
**RICHARD THE STORK (3D)**

Orphaned at birth and raised by storks, the sparrow Richard believes he is one of them. But when the time comes to migrate, his stork family must reveal his true identity and leave him behind in the forest, since he would not survive the journey to Africa. Determined to prove he is a stork after all, Richard ventures south on his own, joined by an eccentric owl with an imaginary friend and a narcissistic, disco-singing parakeet. Along their epic journey, they run into many obstacles, like deadly bats, internet-addicted pigeons, mafia crows and a thundering jumbo jet. When they finally find their way to Africa, it’s up to Richard to rescue his stork brother from the clutches of a monstrous honey badger. The tiniest stork must learn to see himself as the greatest sparrow to unleash his true potential and be reunited with his family.

A fresh and entertaining, yet deeply touching 3D-animated feature, coming from an award-winning screenplay. From the makers and the director of O00PS! NOAH IS GONE...

**Toby Genkel** started his education in 1991 at the animation studio TRICKCOMPANY in Hamburg. He began as a background designer, created layouts and storyboards for several feature films and television productions before becoming a co-director. Genkel’s films as a director or co-director include the animations WERNER – GEKOTZT WIRD SPÄTER and DIETER – DER FILM, which both enjoyed great popularity in Germany, and the international co-production LEGENDS OF VALHALLA – THOR (3D), which has already been sold to over 50 countries. His last 3D animation O00PS! NOAH IS GONE... has sold out worldwide.

**Reza Memari** studied Marketing Communications at the Bavarian Academy for Advertising in Munich before working at the video games company Acclaim Entertainment as a PR and Product Manager. He later became an editor for film and TV and moved to Berlin, where he wrote, directed and produced several short films. In 2009 he was nominated for Best German Animation Screenplay at the International Animation Film Festival Stuttgart for RICHARD THE STORK. He took part in the Academy for Children’s Media workshop in 2010.

**Genre** Animation, Family Entertainment

**Year of Production** 2016

**Directors** Toby Genkel, Reza Memari

**Screenplay** Reza Memari

**Producer** Kristine Knudsen

**Co-Producers** Emely Christians, Eric Goossens, Stephan Roelants

**Production Company** Knudsen & Streuber Medienmanufaktur, in co-production with Ulysses Filmproduktion, Walking The Dog, Melusiné Productions, Den Siste Skilling

**Runtime** 85 min

**Language** English

**Sales** Global Screen

info@globalscreen.de

www.globalscreen.de
This is the story of Toby, the most creative 11-year-old child and inventor you can think of.

One day, the little robot Robby enters into his life. He’s been separated from his robot parents when his spaceship crashed and now he’s looking for them. Toby decides to offer his help and the two of them become friends. Teaming up, they build an invention that can fly, float, and drive on a road – a fantastic Voyager especially designed to help their search. Meanwhile, the unscrupulous Sir Joshua and his super bad agents are hot on their heels, wanting to use Robby and the fantastic Voyager for their own evil plans. But even super bad agents should never, ever underestimate the power of best friends!

ROBBY & TOBY’S FANTASTIC VOYAGER


GENRE Family Entertainment
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016
DIRECTOR Wolfgang Groos
SCREENPLAY Jan Berger
CINEMATOGRAPHY Armin Golisano
CAST Arsseni Bultmann, Alexandra Maria Lara, Sam Riley, Friedrich Mucke, Jordis Triebel, Bjarne Mädel, Ralph Caspers
PRODUCERS Uwe Kolbe, Björn Vosgerau, Kristina Löbbert, Stefan Schubert, Hejo Emons
CO-PRODUCERS Eric Goosens, Anton Roebben, Kalle Friz, Isabel Hund
PRODUCTION COMPANIES Wüste Film, Wüste Film West, in co-production with STUDIO-CANAL Film, Walking The Dog
RUNTIME 90 min
LANGUAGE German
SALES ARRI Media International
worldsales@arri.de
www.arrimedia.de/international
Ben and his brother Barnabas have been bosom buddies for as long as he can remember. Although Barnabas, known as “Simpel”, is now 22, he has stayed at the mental age of a three-year-old. He may get on his brother’s nerves at times, but Ben could never imagine life without him. However, when their mother unexpectedly dies, it is decided to put Simpel in a home. The brothers go on the run and Ben realizes after a crazy odyssey that only one option is left open to him: he must find the father they last saw 15 years ago.


GENRE Comedy, Drama
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016
DIRECTOR Markus Goller
SCREENPLAY Dirk Ahner
CINEMATOGRAPHY Ueli Steiger
CAST David Kross, Frederick Lau, Emilia Schüle, Devid Striesow, Axel Stein, Anneke Kim Sarnau, Tim Wilde, Annette Frier
PRODUCER Michael Lehmann
CO-PRODUCERS Benjamin Seikel, Cornel Schafer
PRODUCTION COMPANY Letterbox Filmproduktion, in co-production with C-FILMS (Germany), Amalia Film
RUNTIME 100 min
LANGUAGE German

SALES
Global Screen
info@globalscreen.de
www.globalscreen.de
The beloved VAMPIRE SISTERS are back! This time they have a new baby brother, Franz, a sweet half-vampire. But he is in danger! The evil vampire queen Antanasia wants him in her castle, as her heir. When Silvania accidentally hypnotizes her parents Mihai and Elvira, thus putting them temporarily out of action, Antanasia kidnaps baby Franz. Daka pursues her to Transylvania to rescue him. With Murdo’s help she breaks into the castle, but is, instead, captivated by Antanasia because she is living what Daka has always dreamed of, the life of a free vampire! Meanwhile Silvania and Dirk van Kombast are on their way to the castle. Together with Murdo they have to free Franz and Daka from Antanasia’s clutches before Franz is crowned successor to the throne.

DIE VAMPIRSCHWESTERN 3 – REISE NACH TRANSSILVANIEN
VAMPIRE SISTERS 3 – JOURNEY TO TRANSYLVANIA

TIM TRACHTE was born in 1976 and studied Dramaturgy in Munich. After work experience as an editor in New York, he studied Directing at the University of Television and Film in Munich. His second feature DAVON WILLS DU NICHTS WISSEN won the World Showcase Award for Best International Feature at the Soho International Film Festival in 2012. VAMPIRE SISTERS 3 is his second collaboration with CLAUSSEN+PUTZ Filmproduktion. GÉNRE Adventure, Family Entertainment
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016
DIRECTOR Tim Trachte
SCREENPLAY Ursula Gruber, Sigrun De Pascalis
CINEMATOGRAPHY Fabian Rösler
CAST Marta Martin, Laura Roge, Christiane Paul, Stipe Erceg
PRODUCERS Jakob Claussen, Uli Putz
PRODUCTION COMPANY CLAUSSEN+PUTZ Filmproduktion, in co-production with Deutsche Columbia Pictures Filmproduktion
RUNTIME 95 min
LANGUAGE German
SALES ARRI Media International
worldsales@arri.de
www.arrimedia.de/international
Two people, two sets of perceptions and memories – did Angela and Christian love each other? Were they ever a proper couple? What did they expect of each other? All questions bring forth contradictory answers. The only indisputable fact is that they met in 1986 in Berlin. Yet when Angela became pregnant and decided to keep the child, they broke off contact. Since then they have never spoken about what transpired. 25 years later, their daughter sets up a camera. She interviews Christian, she interviews Angela. She then plays the respective recording back to them – hers to him, his to her. Suddenly, a dynamic unfolds between the two parents, without them actually encountering each other. In this space, their history is recast in the context of the present. Felt truths appear amongst true feelings.

HE SHE I

HE SHE I is a film about the power to tell your own story, and the powerlessness to prevent a second version of it – a conversation that never happened.

CARLOTTA KITTEL was born in 1988. After studies in Editing at the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF and the Lodz Film School in Poland, she completed a postgraduate program at the Film University Babelsberg in 2016. She has worked as a freelance editor for German and international cinematic productions, most notably CENTER OF MY WORLD (dir: Jakob M. Erwa) in 2015. HE SHE I marks her directorial debut.

TOGRAPHY Andac Karabeyoglu PRODUCER Isabell Wackers PRODUCTION COMPANY Filmuniversität Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF RUNTIME 88 min LANGUAGE German

SALES Filmuniversität Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF distribution@filmuniversitaet.de www.filmuniversitaet.de

FOUR PASSPORTS

FOUR PASSPORTS is a partly animated first-person documentary about emigration and identity in the aftermath of former Yugoslavia’s dissolution, told from the perspective of filmmaker Mihajlo Jevtić. The story of four passports and one country – a farewell 25 years in the making.

MIHAJLO JEVTIĆ was born in 1978. He studied Documentary Filmmaking in Paris and participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus. Active as a writer, producer and director, his films include: IN THE BOX (short doc, 2004), ALONE, ALONE, YOU SHOULD NEVER BE ALONE (short doc, 2006), MILAN IN THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS (short, 2007), SNARE DRUM (short, 2008), GAGARIN AND ME (short, 2012), SLOW DAYS IN BEPPU (short doc, 2014), and the feature documentary FOUR PASSPORTS (2016).


SALES parabellum film post@parabellumfilm.de www.parabellumfilm.de

PHOTO © parabellum film
NOT WITHOUT US! follows children, whose personalities are as varied as the landscapes in which they live, on their way from home to school: Vincent, the skiing ace, zips down the steep slopes of the Feuerkogel mountain; HIV-positive Luniko from the South African township Khayelitsha is always accompanied by fear; Enjo, the little philosopher, feels deeply connected to his world between the mountains and the lake; Sanjana who lives in a red-light district in India; and To from Laos, who doesn’t find school so difficult, but the journey there sure is. They share their hopes and plans, and tell us of their dreams and their fears – of child labor, prostitution, war, and crime. All are worried about the destruction of nature. A film about the future of the planet – a future that these children are going to shape.


A young filmmaker takes a trip to Myanmar into her own past, revisiting the places of her childhood. A journey to look for her missing father, but also into the warmth and security of living memory embodied by her friends and family. Shot in still, poetic frames, the film discreetly captures the present day echoes of a country kept in isolation for decades. Caught between romanticized pictures of her childhood and the contemporary modernized mega city of Yangon, Seng Mai goes to see those who brought her up, who implanted the longing in her which pulled her halfway around the globe; a passionate journey that changes her life forever.

TO BE WITH YOU – MY FAMILY IN MYANMAR

SEHNSUCHT NACH MYANMAR

SENG MAI was born 1987 in Myanmar. After studying Fine Arts, she worked as a news photographer and attended the Yangon Film School. She recently participated in an exchange program at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, where she was the first international student to take part in the series YOUNG DOC’S with SWR. TO BE WITH YOU – MY FAMILY IN MYANMAR is her graduation film.
Education is one of our most valuable resources. This is a rare look behind the scenes, this is a story of three young teachers in the making that are thrown in the (harsh) reality of the German educational system. TO BE A TEACHER is the emotional story of three young teachers and their first years in school, a period called “Referendariat” in Germany. Here they come to realize that their studies did not prepare them at all for what it means to work in one of the most responsible and important jobs of society. A rare insight into fabricating one of the most essential resources of modern times: education. A coming-of-age story about three young people whose idealism clashes with a harsh reality.

JAKOB SCHMIDT was born in 1989. He has worked in journalism and completed several production internships. A student at the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF, his films include: the shorts I’D RATHER BE A MURDERER (2012), 517 FUWATOWN (doc, 2012), RESTLESS (2013), STORM CELLS (2015), and his feature-length documentary TO BE A TEACHER (2016).

ZWISCHEN DEN STÜHLEN

Check out the new GFQ digital issue
www.germanfilmsquarterly.de

Specially designed for desktop and mobile devices, to keep you informed on all the latest German films and filmmakers, and a whole lot more!
WHERE THE WOODS END

Elke, a young police officer, and her colleague Armin are on patrol close to the Czech border. During a routine stop and search operation a young Czech man resists their police orders and in the heat of the moment gets shot by Elke. As a result, Elke gets suspended while the police investigate internally and she sinks into a deep sense of guilt. While her emotions become unbearable, Elke decides to make her way to the Czech Republic in order to find the family of the man she killed.

FELIX AHRENS was born in 1986. He completed several internships at German TV stations. Working as a production manager, he co-founded CURLY PICTURES Film Production. In 2012 he started studying Directing at the Film University Babelsberg. His films include: BADENIXE (2011), HEUTE UND MORGEN (2012), DIE FLIEHKRAFT DES KOMETEN (2013), MAILBOX (2014), VAKUUM (2015), MEMOIRE (2015), and AM ENDE DER WALD (2016).

AYNY

A cruel war has taken two brothers’ home. Their mother protects them under her arms and fosters the seed of their new life, anxious her sons could come into danger if they leave the house. But the boys chase their dream to play a music instrument they’ve fallen in love with. A beautiful Oud. They collect scrap metal to earn the money and must find out that their mother’s fear was for a good reason. But as strong birds will always fly, the two boys become one to overcome their trauma.

AHMAD SALEH was born in 1980 in Saudi Arabia of Palestinian descent. From 1998-2003, he studied Engineering in Palestine before moving to Germany to study Digital Media at the Bremen University of the Arts (HFK). He started out writing short stories before he found his passion in filmmaking. His debut short HOUSE (2012) was nominated for the German Short Film Award 2012. AYNY (2016) was awarded the Student Academy Award for Best Foreign Animation 2016.
ETAGE X

An accidental meeting in an elevator at a department store leads two older women to their limits and forces them to improvise by the time the elevator gets stuck.

FRANCY FABRITZ was born in 1985 in Dresden. While studying Cultural Sciences, Aesthetics and Applied Arts, she also worked in the fields of theater and documentary film. Since 2013, she has been studying at the German Academy of Film & Television (DFFB). Her films focus on sexuality and gender from the female perspective and include: the shorts GIER (2012), MAHLZEIT (2013), BUTCH IS BEAUTIFUL (2013), DURST (2014), SCHWEIN (2015), and ETAGE X (2016).

GENRE Erotic YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016 DIRECTOR Francy Fabritz SCREENPLAY Francy Fabritz, Manuela Kay CINEMATOGRAPHY Sarah Vetter CAST Eva Medusa Gühne, Morgana Muses PRODUCER Eike Eckold PRODUCTION COMPANY Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (DFFB) RUNTIME 14 min LANGUAGE German FESTIVALS Locarno 2016, San Sebastian 2016 AWARDS Panavision Award San Sebastian 2016

SALES Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin j.settmacher@dffb.de www.dffb.de

INVENTION OF TRUST

The young teacher Michael Gewarceives a mysterious message – the personal rating service "b.good" has bought his online and mobile data to evaluate his professional skills and his personality in several categories. After neglecting the consequences, he finds himself in a moral fight for trust in the midst of students, colleagues and friends.

ALEX SCHAAD was born in 1990. After various jobs in film, television and the theater, he began studying at the University of Television & Film in Munich. His films include: the shorts THOMAS BALDER UND DER FORTGANG (2014), MARIE (2015), and INVENTION OF TRUST (2016).

GENRE Drama, Thriller YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2016 DIRECTOR Alex Schaad SCREENPLAY Dimitrij & Alex Schaad CINEMATOGRAPHY Ahmed El Nagar CAST Dimitrij Schaad, Ulrich Wessel, Petra M. Nerette, Patrick Finger, Sierk Radzei, Omid Memar, Lilly Forgach, Ercan Karacayli PRODUCER Richard Lamprecht PRODUCTION COMPANY Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film München, in co-production with Donndorffilm LENGTH 30 min LANGUAGE German FESTIVALS Max Ophuls Preis Saarbrücken 2016 AWARDS Max Ophuls Preis Saarbrücken 2016, Student Academy Award (Foreign Narrative: Gold) 2016

SALES Donndorffilm richard@donndorffilm.de www.donndorffilm.de
PERI is a Turkish woman, who lives with her husband and her daughter in Germany. Her life is bound between doing the household chores, shopping, taking care of her child and managing the home. Her husband is not aware of her emotions. One day he gives her a surprise, being very sure it will make her as happy as he is. Instead, it turns Peri’s world upside down.

SÜHEYLA SCHWENK is a student at the German Film & Television Academy Berlin. Her films include the shorts OPFER (2012), PERI GEHT AUS (2014), MERAL, KIZIM (2015), and SEVINCE (2016).
BIBI & TINA – TOHUWABOHU TOTAL

It’s perfect pandemonium this time when Bibi and Tina meet a runaway boy with an attitude problem, who turns out to actually be a girl, named Adea. Adea’s uncle is so narrow-minded and stubborn that even with all her magic spells, Bibi can’t manage to get the two to reconcile. Meanwhile, Falkenstein Castle is being renovated, which is driving the Count to his wits’ end. Especially since Alex is planning to hold a music festival at Falkenstein and is determined to go through with it over his father’s objections. And if all that wasn’t enough, Tina gets kidnapped. Despite the complete chaos, one thing is clear – in the end, real change comes from everybody working and pulling together, not by magic.

GENRE Family Entertainment
CATEGORY Feature
DIRECTOR Detlev Buck
SCREENPLAY Bettina Borgerding, Detlev Buck
CAST Lina Larissa Strahl, Lisa-Marie Koroll, Louis Held, Lea van Acken, Michael Maertens, Winnie Bowe, Fabian Buch, Martin Seifert, Joachim Meyerhoff, Albert Kitzi, Karim Gunes
PRODUCERS Christoph Daniel, Marc Schmidheiny, Sonja Schmitt, Detlev Buck
CO-PRODUCERS Dario Suter, Joel Brandeis, Claus Boje, Gabrielle Salomon
PRODUCTION COMPANY DCM Pictures, in co-production with Boje Buck Produktion, Kiddinx Filmproduction, ZDF
LANGUAGE German
SALES Beta Film
beta@betafilm.com
www.betafilm.com

HANNI & NANNI 2016

This summer saw producers UFA FICTION and Feine Filme embarking on a reboot of their successful HANNI & NANNI franchise, based on Enid Blyton’s classic St Clare’s book series, with the newcomers 11-year-old twins Laila and Rosa Meinecke cast as the title characters. Much to the twins’ dismay, their mother (Jessica Schwarz) decides to pack them off to the Lindenhof boarding school for the rest of the school year since absolute chaos would be on the cards if their musician father (The Boss-Hoss singer Sascha Vollmer) was to look after them back home in Berlin. The twins are hell bent on doing everything to be thrown out of school, but then events take an unexpected turn...

GENRE Family Entertainment
CATEGORY Feature
DIRECTOR Isabell Šuba
SCREENPLAY Katrin Milhahn, Antonia Rothe-Liermann, Sandra Nettelbeck
CAST Laila Meinecke, Rosa Meinecke, Maria Schrader, Julia Koschitz, Katharina Thalbach, Jessica Schwarz, Sascha Vollmer, Henry Hübchen
PRODUCERS Sebastian Werninger, Hermann Florin
PRODUCTION COMPANY UFA Fiction, in co-production with Feine Filme
LANGUAGE German
SALES Global Screen
info@globalscreen.de
www.globalscreen.de

KEN – THE MOVIE

Produced via a mixture of crowdfunding and classic subsidy, the film follows Ken Stringfellow reliving parts of his life and fraying the line between reality and fiction in the process. The story follows the musician on tour in the U.S.. It’s a very familiar road, but this time his world is turned upside down. The towns appear deserted, his shows are going badly, and his nerves are at breaking point. One morning he wakes to find his voice gone, which sends him over the edge, plunging into a catastrophic breakdown. Stranded and distressed, he is haunted by the memory of his mother abandoning him as a child. He decides to take fate into his own hands and begins the search for her: it is a long and painful road back to life.

GENRE Drama, Music, Road Movie, Tragicomedy
CATEGORY Feature
DIRECTOR Claudia Rorarius
SCREENPLAY Claudia Rorarius
CAST Ken Stringfellow, Kim Taylor
PRODUCER Claudia Rorarius
PRODUCTION COMPANY Soquiet Filmproduktion
LANGUAGE English
CONTACT Soquiet Filmproduktion
claudia@soquietfilms.com
www.soquietfilms.com
www.ken-themovie.com
LOMMBOCK

Fifteen years after Christian Zübert’s feature debut, the pothead comedy LAMMBOCK, that took the cinemas by storm, the director is now back with lead actors Lucas Gregorowicz and Moritz Bleibtreu for a new chapter – with unexpected twists and turns – in the lives of best friends Stefan and Kai. While Stefan is about to settle down to a glamorous existence with the tough businesswoman Yasemin, whose father is one of the most influential men in Dubai, Kai muddles through life in their native city of Würzburg with the “Lommbock” delivery service. When the friends meet up again after all these years, things start going awry after they “take a drag first”...

PLAYING GOD

Why is the life of a fire-fighter who died in the Twin Towers on September 11 worth on average a million euros less than that of a stockbroker who lost his life in the same disaster? How much money should oil giant BP pay the fishermen on the Gulf of Mexico after the largest oil spill in history? How can Vietnam veterans be compensated for their suffering, which stems from exposure to Agent Orange? Questions that almost appear cynical, but not for America’s famous compensation specialist: Ken Feinberg. PLAYING GOD reveals what happens within our system of values when economic interests and people’s lives become intertwined by tragedy.

DAS PUBERTIER – DER FILM

Director Leander Haußmann has collaborated with author Jan Weiler in adapting his bestseller about grumpy, uncommunicative pubescents and their equally embarrassing parents for the big screen. Newcomer Harriet Herbig-Matten plays teenager Carla who transforms from daddy’s little princess into a petulant little madam shortly before her 14th birthday. Her journalist father Hannes (Jan Josef Liefers) decides to stay home to help Carla get through this difficult phase, but puts his foot in it at every move. And other fathers aren’t any better: Hannes’ best friend Holger (Detlev Buck) prefers to be shot at in the Middle East rather than have to deal with his teenage terror back home...
ROCK MY HEART

Jana (16) has a heart defect that could end her life at any moment. Furious at her fate, she rebels against her illness and her despairing parents. She also rejects a new treatment for fear of the side effects. When she meets the reclusive racing trainer Paul (75) and the seemingly wild stallion ‘Rock My Heart’, it becomes clear that she is the only one who can work with the highly sensitive animal. Paul convinces her to enter a prize race with Rock, training her to be a jockey. Although at her physical limits, Jana hides her illness from Paul. Not even her parents know of her plans. Even when her illness seems to strike her down, she doesn’t let go of her dreams. She knows it takes courage to race, but it takes even more to say yes to life again.

GENRE Family Entertainment CATEGORY Feature DIRECTOR Hanno Olderdissen SCREENPLAY Clemente Fernandez-Gill CAST Lena Klenke, Dieter Hallervorden, Emilio Moutaoukkil, Michael Lott, Annette Frier, Milan Peschel, Anneke Kim Sarnau PRODUCER Boris Schönfelder CO-PRODUCERS Christine Strobl, Marc Gabizon, David Kehrl, Antonio Exacoustos PRODUCTION COMPANY Neue Schönhauser Filmproduktion, in co-production with Degeto Film, Senator Film, ARRI Media LANGUAGE German

CONTACT Neue Schönhauser Filmproduktion info@neueschoenhauser.de www.neueschoenhauser.de

UNTER DEUTSCHEN BETTEN

Based on Justyna Polanska’s eponymous best-seller, actress-producer Veronica Ferres’ latest project sees her playing the one-hit wonder Linda Lehmann who dreams of making a big comeback to the music charts...until she sees that her long-term boyfriend and producer Friedrich only has eyes for a new starlet. What’s more, it looks like she may have reached her sell-by date in the music industry. Salvation of sorts comes in the shape of her former cleaner Justyna, although the pampered diva is thrown in the deep end when she has to help Justyna out with her cleaning job for two weeks. Chaos inevitably ensues, but the two very different women come to learn the value of true friendship...

GENRE Comedy CATEGORY Feature DIRECTOR Jan Fehse SCREENPLAY Lucy Astner CAST Veronica Ferres, Heiner Lauterbach, Magdalena Boczarska, Milan Peschel, Eray Egilmaz, Simon Schwarz, Thelma Buabeng, Lore Richter, Anna Julia Kapfelsperger, Johannes Zirner, Oliver Pocher, Monika Gruber PRODUCER Nina Maag CO-PRODUCER Magdalena Prosteder PRODUCTION COMPANY Construction Film, in co-production with Fox International Productions (Germany) LANGUAGE German

SALES 20th Century Fox (Germany) germar.tetzlaff@fox.com

CONTACT Neue Schönhauser Filmproduktion info@neueschoenhauser.de www.neueschoenhauser.de
GERMAN FILMS
SERVICE + MARKETING

is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company. In 2004, the company was reorganized and now operates under the name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

SHAREHOLDERS are the German Producers Association, the German Producers Alliance, the Association of German Film Exporters, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the Deutsche Kinemathek, the German Documentary Association, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, and the German Short Film Association.

German Films’ budget of presently €4.55 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, Film- und Medienstiftung 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.

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

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

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RANGE OF ACTIVITIES
- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, San Sebastian, Locarno, Rome, Karlovy Vary, Montreal, Toronto, New York, Shanghai, Warsaw, Moscow, and Busan
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets (Berlin, Cannes, AFM Los Angeles, Shanghai, Toronto, Clermont-Ferrand, Annecy)
- 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
- Publication of informational literature about current German films and the German film industry, as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- A website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions
- Organization of umbrella stands for German films at international film festivals and institutions
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, home entertainment, and television
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation, and German films being shown
- Organization of the annual Next Generation Short Tiger short film program, which presents a selection of shorts and is internationally premiered in Cannes
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