Don't look at me that way

Production
Dreifilm
in co-production with
HFF Munich

with
Catrina Stemmer
Uisenma Borchu
Josef Bierbichler

directed by
Uisenma Borchu
Synopsis

Hedi is the new neighbour of Iva, who raises her daughter Sophia by herself. The two women start a relationship and Iva is desperately in love with Hedi. Suddenly Iva’s father appears. Hedi feels strongly attracted to him. It seems that only one world exists for Hedi. Her own.
At a certain point while I was writing the script, it became clear that I would be playing Iva’s counterpart Hedi and I realized the radical force within the film. I continued writing with mounting excitement. My characters have an unconscious inner desire for alienation.

Catrina and I have been friends for a long time, but when I asked her whether she would take on the role it was as if we were meeting for the first time. For us as non actors this was an advantage, as it meant we could explore the roles from fresh perspectives. I wanted to protect the naturalness by improvised dialogs, and the small and intimate team meant that I had a lot of freedom. I was sometimes nervous about my dual role on both sides of the camera, but acting myself was ideal and allowed me to intervene directly in the scenes.

While I was still looking for the “grandfather” character, I happened to be in the cinema at Michael Haneke’s “Code inconnu” – and I was gripped by the certainty that no other actor than Josef Bierbichler would be right for the role. Bierbichler is the only professional actor in the film. The idea of bringing non actors and professional actors together has always been a powerful one that generates a tangible, palpable freshness, and I am happy that Bierbichler brought his own personal style to his development of the idea in the film.

I rejected rules and conventions from the outset; this brought considerable opposition from the establishment, but that was no reason for me to give up. I was utterly convinced of my urge to make this film and leave those barriers behind me to arrive at the essence of the film.

I have lived between two cultures since I was five years old. Mongolia in the holidays, then back to Germany. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it was particularly difficult to combine these worlds, neither of which knew about the other, and the stark contrasts numbed me to my core. This situation drove me to permanently reflect about people, their roles and identities. In my previous films I have examined women, their forms of upbringing and their intimacies; however, I have now taken another route with this drama and attempted to visualize what it means to be female by using my own thoughts, questioning the identity of the person that is made into a woman – whether the process takes place in the character of Hedi or Iva. Two characters full of contrasts, seeking, finding and destroying.

The film adopts the element of contrast to tell the story. It was vital for me to have this element in the film – it is something I have a deep and permanent need for.

Uisenma Borchu
This film focuses on a young woman, born in Mongolia and experiencing her first formative childhood years there before coming to a new home – in this case the German Democratic Republic – and being forced to accustom herself to unfamiliar cultural contexts. She recounts her experiences in life as a pure and direct force and tells her story without reflecting on the external contexts and connections that impact on her life, such as society and politics. She presents her attempt to assimilate herself into an alien environment, so to speak. This creates the impression in the film that life simply must be lived in this way, that it cannot be lived in any other way because the drive to identify those external contexts and connections in order to assimilate into them is not recognized as an equally natural life-force.

This situation would be the opposite of inner emigration – in fact, it would be the most radical expression of individuality. Given the personal biography of the film-maker, it would be a film about a refusal to assimilate and instead to cleave to one’s own origins – one’s innate identity.

In this sense, the film would be a political film.

Josef Bierbichler about the film
Uisenma Borchu was born in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 1984. Her family moved to East Germany in 1989. In 2003 she graduated from high school in Staßfurt. During this time she wrote for the German youth press organization Jugendpresse Deutschland and played competitive volleyball, winning the German championships in 2001. Uisenma studied French and history at Mainz University from 2004 to 2006. And documentary film and journalism at the University of Television and Film Munich from 2006. She has been a Heinrich Böll Foundation scholar-ship-holder since 2009.

about the filmmaker

**Khuyagaa – A day in the life of a nomadic boy** / 2012 / 25 Min.  
KiKa; makido film Docfest Munich 2013

**Himmel voller Geigen** / 2010 / 43 Min.  
Dokumenta Kassel 2011; Int. Filmschool Festival Munich 2011; Docfest Munich 2012; Megaherz Award 2012

**Thos** / Brand Film for Designer  
Tschagsalmaa Borchuu  
Nominated for Porsche Int. Student Ad Award 2012

**Donne-moi Plus** / Short Documentary / 14 min.  
Premiere at Festival de Cannes 2008 – German Films Next Generation
Catrina Stemmer – Iva

Born in 1986 in Munich, the daughter of an Australian mother and German father. After graduating from high school Catrina began to study social sciences and is still occupied in the field today.

Catrina is completely new to acting, which – as rehearsals showed – proved immensely fortunate for the film production. Her acting is honest and natural, particularly since large parts of the film are based on her own experiences.
Josef Bierbichler – Grandfather

Josef Bierbichler, born April 26th 1948 in Ambach, Bavaria, is an actor, author and director. He has received numerous theater awards as Actor of the Year. In 2007 he was presented with the German Film Award as Best Actor for his role in Hans Steinbichler’s “Winterreise”.

Filmography selection

Das weiße Band / The white Ribbon 2009 – Michael Haneke
Der Knochenmann / The Bone Man 2009 – Wolfgang Murnberger
Winterreise 2006 – Hans Steinbichler
Code inconnu / Code Unknown 2000 – Michael Haneke
Abschied. Brechts letzter Sommer / The Farewell 2000 – Jan Schütte
Winterschláfer / Winter Sleepers 1997 – Tom Tykwer
Die tödliche Maria / Deadly Maria 1993 – Tom Tykwer
Woyzeck 1979 – Werner Herzog
Herz aus Glas / Heart of Glass 1976 – Werner Herzog
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<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
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<td>Hedi</td>
<td>UISENMA BORCHU</td>
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<td>Iva</td>
<td>CATRINA STEMMER</td>
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<td>Sepp</td>
<td>JOSEF BIERBICHLER</td>
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<td>Sofia</td>
<td>ANNE-MARIE WEISZ</td>
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<td>CHIMGE TSEVELSUREN</td>
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<td>ANDREAS KARL WILKE</td>
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<td>MARIE FISCHER</td>
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<td>KATJA BRENNER</td>
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<td>Crew</td>
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<td>Writer/Director</td>
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<td>JULIAN ANSICLMINO</td>
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<td>SVEN ZELLNER</td>
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<td>UISENMA BORCHU</td>
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<td>STEFFEN MUELLER</td>
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<td>JESUS CASQUETE GONZALES</td>
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<td>DANIEL BÄRSCHNEIDER</td>
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<td>GERARD AUER</td>
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<td>ANDREAS GOLDBRUNNER</td>
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<td>MARKUS DICKLUBER</td>
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<td>Costume Design</td>
<td>TSCHAGSALMAA BORCHU</td>
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Credits

Titel  Don’t look at me that way / Schau mich nicht so an

Country  GERMANY / MONGOLIA

Year  2015

Length  88 Min

Technical Specs

Sound Mix  5.1

Color  Color

Aspect Ratio  1.85 : 1

Camera  Arri Alexa. Zeiss HS

Cinematographic Process  2K/24fps/Loc-C
Don't look at me that way

contacts

Production

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