GERMAN FILMS AT THE SUMMER FESTIVALS

GERMAN FILM AWARD
... and the winners are...

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film exporters

foreign representatives · imprint
In the past five years or so, Germany’s private film funds have often been criticized for gathering millions of Deutschmarks or Euros of “stupid German money” and supposedly packing them off in suitcases to send over the Atlantic to Hollywood producers in need of a few million for their film projects. The argument so often was that it made sense to concentrate the German private equity in Stateside projects because they had the greatest potential for international marketability as they would be shot in English – indeed, the bankers Merrill Lynch reported that 10-15% of US production was being financed by German film funds at one point a couple of years ago. Similarly, leading international law firm SJ Berwin noted in 2002 that six to seven billion Euros were currently invested in German film funds and amounts in excess of one billion Euros were annually transferred from Germany to the US for the financing of Hollywood films.

It only needed cinemagoers to wait until the very end of the closing credits of such films as The Lord of the Rings, Mission: Impossible 2 or Stuart Little for them to see that these all-American blockbusters were in fact “German films” thanks to the GmbH & Co. KG in the copyright listing.

But it would be too simplified a picture to say that the funds have only put their money into US-based, English-language pictures, for several funds have made – conscious and voluntary – efforts to direct some of this private investment cash into German and/or European projects to give the production location on this side of the Atlantic a welcome boost.

The history of film funds in Germany goes back to 1970s when their only aim was to make as large a loss as possible. One of the German films financed at this time was Christiane F – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo by Uli Edel.

The father of German Film Productions’ David Groenewold put up about DM 2 million of the film’s DM 5 million budget, with DM 3 million coming in from subsidies. “The investors were allowed at that time to write off subsidies as if they had taken out a loan,” Groenewold explains. “So they were allowed to write off DM 5m on an investment of 2m, meaning that on a tax bracket of 50%, they got back 2.5m from taxes even before the film was released. They didn’t have an interest in the film being released. Funnily enough, when the film was successful in the same fiscal year, the investors made a lot of money but weren’t too happy because they had to pay a lot of taxes.”

This changed in 1982 with the introduction of paragraph 15a in the Income Tax Act when only losses of up to 100% of the invested capital could be set off against income. The investors were allowed at that time to write off subsidies as if they had taken out a loan,” Groenewold explains. “So they were allowed to write off DM 5m on an investment of 2m, meaning that on a tax bracket of 50%, they got back 2.5m from taxes even before the film was released. They didn’t have an interest in the film being released. Funnily enough, when the film was successful in the same fiscal year, the investors made a lot of money but weren’t too happy because they had to pay a lot of taxes.”
saving world as one could get better deals from the shipping or property leasing funds.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of East Germany at the end of 1980s, tax saving funds became retail as fund models were created for numerous property funds. When the regulations were tightened up on the East German property funds, making them less attractive for investors, fund managers looked for an alternative area to invest in and found the media and film industry as the perfect platform.

As Petra Klein of the film and media fund team at Blue Capital in Hamburg pointed out in 2000, “the renaissance of this market is due to the increased professionalism of the media industry and the vigorous growth of the media market.”

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF GERMAN FILM FUNDS

The attraction of German film funds has been mainly derived from the film fund being treated as the producer of a film, and the film fund has to comply with prerequisites set out in the German Media Decree (“Medienberlass”). The fund produces a fixed intangible asset which, according to German law, is not carried as an asset on the balance sheet. Expenses of the film fund incurred in the production and exploitation of films are, thus, generally deductible in the year they are incurred and should amount to losses for the film fund. Investors may benefit from an allocation of these losses if the film fund has been structured properly.

STRUCTURE OF FILM FUNDS

In general, German film funds are structured as German limited partnerships – GmbH & Co. KG – with investors subscribing for an interest in the limited partnership and, upon registration with the commercial register, becoming partners with limited liability.

Germany experienced a dramatic increase in the popularity of private film funds from the end of the 1990s because of the tax environment in which private investors carried a particularly heavy tax burden with individual tax rates of up to a maximum of 51% (these are set to decrease to 42% by 2005).

The production and exploitation of films carried out by the film fund will, in general, be treated as a trading business for German tax purposes. Investors have to be regarded as entrepreneurs (“Mitunternehmer”) for German tax purposes. Due to their contributions, they will be treated as bearing the risk and having the initiative as an entrepreneur if they have certain rights as limited partners under the limited partnership agreement.

INTENTION TO EARN PROFITS

The film fund, as well as every investor, must intend to earn profits (“Gewinnerzielungsabsicht”). If it is likely that the film fund will earn profits during its term – referred to as the “Totalgewinnprognose” – and taking into account profits from the disposal of the film and exploitation rights, this should generally be evidence of an intention to earn profits.

FILM FUNDS AS LOSS ALLOCATION VEHICLES

It has been important that the film funds avoid being treated as loss allocation vehicles (“Verlustzuweisungsmodelle”) for German tax purposes because no loss allowances will then be granted.

A film fund will be regarded as a loss allocation vehicle if the achievement of tax saving benefits is deemed to be the main purpose of the film fund. The German tax authorities have published detailed regulations covering the criteria on a fund’s structure to determine whether its main purpose is to achieve tax saving benefits.
Consequently, more and more funds were structured for single investors or small groups of investors in order to avoid the difficulties that would arise from being regarded as loss allocation vehicles.

**PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT ABROAD: PROBLEMS**

Moreover, if a film is produced abroad or if a foreign co-producer is involved in the production of the film, the film fund has to ensure that it avoids establishing a permanent establishment abroad (“ausländische Betriebsstätte”) since loss allowances may be excluded or limited. There is a risk that the production expenses would be allocated for tax purposes to a foreign permanent establishment of the non-German co-producer. This would result in the initial losses occurring from the film production not being available for the German investors. In addition, a non-German co-producer participating in a co-production with a German fund would have to establish a German-based permanent establishment and would be subject to German taxation.

The Media Decree offered a solution to the problem: the co-production would have to be organized as a bare co-production grouping (“blosse Koproduktionsgemeinschaft”) and should not qualify as a co-production partnership (“Koproduktionsgesellschaft”) or it will be treated tax-wise as a co-entrepreneurship. In the case of a co-production grouping, each co-producer will only be taxed in his own country, but this requires that no rights are jointly exploited by the co-producers. Thus, the world rights have to be split between the co-producers and even a partial cross-collateralization is not permitted.

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO SECURE INVESTMENT**

In a presentation on “Filming with Equity Money from Germany”, Hamburg media lawyers Harro von Have and Andreas Pense pointed out that the minimum requirements a producer needs to meet in order to secure fund investment for his productions would be “projected revenues in the range of 135-150% of the film project’s budget” and “depending on the company’s track record, those revenue projections will be asked to be verified or confirmed by a third party with a ‘Triple A’ reputation.”

“...In order to better secure their investment, investors will generally want a distribution company to be tied into the arrangement as early on in the structure as possible,” von Have and Pense explained. “Ultimately, the structure of the distribution arrangement is critical to the success of a film fund, i.e. owing to the prevailing tax regime, it is essential that the tax advantage to the fund is not apparent as a main feature of the distribution arrangement. In other words, film funds are forced to make what is known as a “total profit” – where taxable profits from investments exceed tax-relevant losses. In order to achieve this, the fund will need to earn total revenues amounting to 135-150% of the budget in order to recoup its entire investment plus an investor rate of return which, on average, is in the double-digit range.

**THE MEDIA DECREE**

In February 2001, the German Federal Ministry of Finance issued the long anticipated Media Decree which set out guidelines for the first time regarding the treatment of film and television funds vis-à-vis income tax.

(1) A fund’s producer status:
The aim of each film fund is to be treated as the producer of the film in order to write off all production expenses immediately for tax purposes. Producer status is granted to whoever makes the material decisions about the film production and is responsible for the economic consequences.

(2) Production services agreements:
In order to ensure the producer status of the film fund, the production services agreement has to be treated as a so-called “unreal” service production (“unechte Auftragsproduktion”), with the production services company being treated as a service provider and the film fund retaining its producer status. The production services agreement, therefore, has to include provisions guaranteeing that the fund...
has rights of instruction and control, a significant influence on the production process, and a decision-making power on essential film production elements such as budget and film financing, cast, production schedule and so on. The production services company is remunerated by the fund with a fixed fee and a profit participation.

(3) International co-productions: The Media Decree has thrown obstacles into the path of German film funds wanting to embark on international co-productions (see above). The regulations make it practically impossible for German producers to comply with the provisions of the European Convention or the bilateral co-production agreements Germany has concluded with several countries. Indeed, the Media Decree’s stipulations affected all international co-productions and not just those structured with film funds - the vibrant co-production activity between Germany and Canada, for example, was reduced to a trickle after the introduction of the Decree.

As lawyers Professor Dr. Mathias Schwarz and Stephan von Zitzewitz noted, the Media Decree and the 1999 changes in sections 2a and 2b of the Income Tax Code, “made tax conditions more difficult for co-productions. International co-productions have been severely affected, which raises a number of legal questions both in European law and arising from bilateral co-production agreements which generally prohibit discrimination. The legal requirements governing the formulation of co-production agreements qualifying as co-production groupings remain unclear. Whether such contracts will satisfy the requirements of the international co-production treaties also remains doubtful.”

PLAYERS AROUND GERMANY

With the boom in German media funds from the late 1990s, a number of players consequently appeared on the scene around Germany placing funds to raise money to finance international film and television productions.

Many of them were based in Munich such as Alcas (previously known as KG Allgemeine Leasing) which backed such Hollywood projects as William Friedkin’s Rules of Engagement or John Woo’s Mission:
Impossible 2; Hollywood Partners which supported the production of Philip Kaufmann’s historical drama Quills, with Geoffrey Rush and Kate Winslet, and Peter Duncan’s Passion with Richard Roxburgh and Barbara Hershey; and IMF whose funds backed David Dobkin’s Clay Pigeons, Neil LaBute’s Nurse Betty and Richard Caesar’s thriller The Calling before later boarding the Schwarzenegger blockbuster Terminator 3 and Oliver Stone’s Alexander.

The Bavarian capital was also home to MBP, managed by veteran producer Rainer Mockert, whose lineup of funded films has included István Szabo’s Taking Sides, the animation feature film A Christmas Carol, and a raft of films from “Down Under” such as Ray Lawrence’s Lantana and Kimble Rendall’s Cut.

In addition, Munich has been the base for the long-established Cinerenta fund – which had also been active in the 1970s – backing such projects as A Map of the World, starring Sigourney Weaver and Julianne Moore, Diamonds with Kirk Douglas, Dan Akroyd and Lauren Bacall, the court drama The Contender with Jeff Bridges, Gary Oldman and Christian Slater, and the science fiction thriller Final Cut which was shown at this year’s Berlinale.

And a Gruenwald address is sported by VIP, Germany’s biggest fund which is independent of the banks: last year, the fund raised some €238.4 million for investment in projects and has backed such productions as the Kevin Costner drama Upside of Danger, the OSCAR-winning Monster and the SAT.1 TV two-parter Der Ring der Nibelungen, while Apollo Media – financier/producer of such films as Sound of Thunder, The Musketeer, and Extreme Ops – moved its operations from Cologne to Munich because of the more tax fund-friendly treatment from the financial authorities in the Bavarian capital.

Meanwhile, up in Potsdam-Babelsberg, a series of funds were launched in 1997 and 1998 to raise equity for internationally marketable feature films and TV projects. Sony Pictures Entertainment’s (SPE) Global Entertainment fund placed around DM 600 million to invest in such films as Joel Schumacher’s thriller 8mm, Danny Cannon’s horror flick I Still Don’t Know What You Did Last Summer, Rob Minkoff’s family film Stuart Little, and Sydney Pollack’s Random Hearts, but none of these projects were physically produced in the Berlin-Brandenburg region or at the Babelsberg studios where the fund was headquartered. Nevertheless, SPE agreed to commit DM 100 million to investment over seven years in the region’s entertainment industry as a “thank you” for the Brandenburg finance authorities giving the Sony fund the all-clear to raise equity from private German investors. Local German productions like Was tun.
wen’s brennt and Anatomie 2, produced by Deutsche Columbia Pictures Filmproduktion, benefited from this financial commitment as did production services companies in the region.

Moreover, the American TV powerhouse Hallmark tapped into German equity through the Babelsberg Studios Film Fund launched on its behalf by the ABN Amro Bank for financing TV event productions — including Hans Christian Andersen’s The Snow Queen and The Return of the Secret Garden which were partly shot at the studios. Babelsberg’s sound stages also provided the setting for scenes from the sci-fi comedy TV series Lexx – The Dark Zone which were backed by the Vif Filmproduktion funds launched by producer/distributor Wolfram Tichy. He was also involved in putting up part of the financing for Renny Bartlett’s Eisenstein and Michael Moore’s OSCAR-winning documentary Bowling for Columbine.

Over in Cologne veteran producer Gerhard Schmidt launched International West Pictures (IWP) to raise money for international features which were shot in North Rhine-Westphalia or elsewhere in Germany – ranging from the comedy Boat Trip with OSCAR-winner Cuba Gooding Jr. and Roger Moore to the story of boxers Joe Louis and Max Schmeling in Joe and Max, shot on the sound stages in Babelsberg. Schmidt has subsequently joined forces with fund expert Rudolf Wiesmeier to set up their Living Pictures fund to finance internationally marketable feature films, one of their first projects being Marleen Gorris’ Carolina starring Julia Stiles and Shirley MacLaine.

Finally, Hamburg has become the base for another fund – Studio Hamburg Worldwide Pictures – which is exclusively involved in producing and financing English-language independent films budgeted at under $20 million. The first projects backed by the team led by fund manager Wolfgang Eisenwein were John Irvin’s The Boys From County Clare and the family comedy Chestnut – Hero of Central Park. The third project – a sequel to Dungeons and Dragons – was set to begin shooting on location in Lithuania at the end of July.

TO SPEND OR NOT TO SPEND – IN GERMANY OR EUROPE?

Each year, some two billion Euros of German private equity has been raised from small investors (not to speak of the “grey market” of private placements) and the bulk would find its way to the US and into Hollywood producers’ projects. Always financially tight and having to rely on public subsidy handouts, German producers naturally felt left out of this cash bonanza and called for some of this German taxpayers’ money to be channeled into German – or at least European production. There were even calls for government legislation to be introduced to stem the flow of money to the USA.

In fact, in the face of growing political pressure to introduce a quota on the equity going to the US, a number of the funds made an effort to direct some of their investment into local production and some even made their USP the fact that their funds were focused on European – if not specifically German – projects.

Thus, Apollo Media invested in projects shooting in Europe such as Bruce Beresford’s Alma Bride of the Wind, Peter Hyam’s The Musketeer or Alan Rudolph’s Investigating Sex – which featured German star Til Schweiger alongside a cast including Nick Nolte, Neve Campbell and Tuesday Weld – and the World War I horror film Deathwatch, which was shot on location outside of Prague and starred Billy Elliott star Jamie Bell and Chocolat’s Hugh O’Conor. Not only were these films shot in Europe, but they made use of German/European technicians and gave German actors such as Armin Rohde, Jana Pallaske and Heino Ferch a taste of work on an international production.

Similarly, after backing the first Austin Powers film and a host of other US-based features, CP Medien (previously known as KC Medien) concentrated on quality European-based projects such as Jean-Jacques Annaud’s Enemy at the Gates, Eric Rohmer’s The Lady and the Duke and Hardy Martins’ So weit die Fuesse tragen, as well as Constantin Costa-Gavras’ Amen and Terry Gilliam’s ill-fated The Man
Who Killed Don Quixote (which was subsequently the subject of the hilarious documentary Lost In La Mancha). Here again, local actors such as Robert Stadlober, Sophie Rois, Ulrich Tukur and Ivan Shvedoff were cast in CP's international projects.

Other smaller players who have also backed German/European productions have been the Kaufbeuren-based Victory Media who backed several animation series as well as the TV two-parter of The Magnificent Ambersons and the musical documentary Musica Cubana which was directed by the Munich Academy of Television & Film graduate German Kral in the spirit of Buena Vista Social Club. Arno Ortmair’s Media Fonds, based on the lot of the Bavaria Film Studios outside of Munich, put equity into German TV films such as Trivial Pursuit – Vertrauen ist toedlich, directed by Curt Faudon with Tobias Moretti and Thomas Heinze, Paul Hills’ thriller The Poet with Juergen Prochnow, and Raoul Ruiz’s biopic Klimt starring John Malkovich, which began shooting in Austria and Germany this year.

Moreover, Eberhard Junkersdorf and Dietmar Guentsche’s Neue Bioskop Germany fund is committed to producing English-language features with European content. During this year’s Berlinale, Junkersdorf announced a collaboration with the US producer @radical.media “to give us a partner at our side who has access to an international network as well as having developed outstanding English-language projects.”

“Our interest in producing films here in Germany and Europe is very high,” stressed @radical.media chairman Jon Kamen. “Creatively, these are the kinds of films we want to make. So we can see this partnership as building a bridge from Europe to the US.”

Neue Bioskop Germany’s first fund with a volume of €8 million will back two German-language projects, including Michael Pohl’s thriller Goldrausch, while the next placement – as part of the partnership with radical – plans to bring together a total of Euro 50 million for a slate of English-language projects.

LOBBING FOR A "GERMANY EFFECT"

In 2002, 18 of the private media funds joined forces to set up their own interest and lobbying group, the Verband Deutscher Medienfonds (VDM), and indicated their willingness to contribute to bolstering Germany’s attractiveness as a production location through the adoption of a “Germany effect” for their activities.

A VDM communiqué stressed, however, that this 'effect' should only be calculated from a fund’s overall annual volume rather than on a project-by-project basis and noted that "the German effect must not be allowed to lead to a discrimination of European or US-American co-production partners and other international participants on projects."

As producer Eberhard Junkersdorf pointed out at a discussion on media funds during the 2003 Munich Media Days, the introduction of a German or European spend obligation for the funds would be of immeasurable benefit for the German economy. "It can’t be that capital to the tune of €2-3 billion lands in America each year," he declared. "As our industry is expanding strongly, one would create additional tax revenue and also employment with 10% of the money that would otherwise flow abroad."
But fund expert Tilo Seiffert notes a word of caution about the calls for a 20% quota of the funds’ placed volume having to be invested in local production or production shot in Germany: “that would work out to €400 million and would inflate the German market which wouldn’t be able to cope with such an influx of money.” Even without any fixed obligation to invest at home, the German film industry has benefited from the know-how which has been built up over the last six to seven years by German media lawyers and fund managers who have been involved in the setting up and administration of these funds. In addition, the funds have spawned a network of production experts who have gained a valuable insight into the workings of international production.

**FILM 20’S TAX INCENTIVE PROPOSAL**

Last year, though, saw the German producers pressure group Film20 itself begin lobbying politicians to introduce legislation which would help keep back some of the private equity flowing across the Atlantic.

In a study commissioned from management consultant Dr. Michael Paul in early 2003, it was suggested that the introduction of tax incentives similar to the UK’s sale and leaseback model or the Canadian tax credits system could result in a doubling of production expenditure in Germany in the next 5-7 years.

It was argued that the adoption of either of these two incentives could make Germany internationally competitive again because it would be in a position to offer “the last 10 to 15% which often represent the biggest problem in the financing of film projects.”

Paul calculated that around 84 German feature films were currently produced with an overall production volume of Euros 380m. Since only very few international co-productions are made with Germany, one could assume that 80% (Euros 304m) was actually spent in Germany.

According to Paul’s estimates, the introduction of the UK or Canadian models could potentially create another 23,000 jobs in the film industry and double the volume of production expenditure in Germany to Euros 600m by 2010.

"Film production in Germany is at a turning point," the study concluded. "Either we succeed in becoming competitive again on international productions and thereby make a lasting improvement on the economic prospects of production in Germany, and then the film industry will be able to generate substantial positive effects for the whole economy. Or Germany will lose even more ground in the international competition for ‘runaway productions’.”

Commenting on the Film20 proposal at the time, tax lawyer Christof Schmidt of PWC Veltins (now Heussen) and a member of the advisory board of the Verband Deutscher Medienfonds, noted that "it is a good idea to think in this direction, but the proposal is extremely complicated. It is quite difficult to introduce such a complex model for tax incentives as a completely new regulation. The kind of tax incentive proposed by Film20 would require official approval from Brussels and would therefore take so long to realize.”

**GERMAN FILM PRODUCTIONS: A MODEL TO EMULATE?**

With its specific focus on national German feature films and TV productions, the Berlin-based German Film Productions (GFP) fund could be the model to emulate.

After several years as a consultant to local film producers, fund manager David Groenewold thought it was about time that something should be done to channel some of the masses of private equity into the German film industry.

"We are now in a situation that the German financial authorities are closing in on tax-saving laws," Groenewold says. "This has partly to do with the current political situation and the fact that the State doesn’t have any money anymore. But we have a clear commitment from this government and the opposition that they are not wanting to prevent German money flowing into German productions. So my focus is now paying off and, in the long run, this will be the only chance people will have to invest into films.”

With two funds launched so far, GFP has been involved in such German feature films as the current box office success Der Wixxer, starring the crème de la crème of German comedy talent, Sherry Hormann’s gay football comedy Maenner wie wir, and Helmut Dietl’s latest film Vom Suchen und Finden der Liebe. Groenewold has also partnered with X Filme Creative Pool on Dominik Graf’s Roter Kakadu which goes into production later this year and came onboard Ed Herzog’s Lively Up Yourself which Egoli Tossell Film shot on location in North Rhine-Westphalia and Jamaica in April and May with Heike Makatsch and Wotan Wilke Moehring in the lead roles. Moreover, GFP has invested in two projects produced by Peter Rommel Productions – Sehnsucht...
by Valeska Grisebach and Das Apfelsbaumhaus (previously known as Skin Deep) by Andrew Hood – and is in negotiations to partner Little Shark Entertainment for Christian Zuebert’s family film Schatz der Weissen Folke which begins shooting in Bavaria this summer.

On the TV front, GFP backed the ProSieben two-parter Das Jesus-Video which garnered some of the best ratings ever recorded at the private broadcaster and was also a partner on the SAT.1 award-winning “TV event” Das Wunder von Lengede with Heike Makatsch, Heino Ferch, and Armin Rohde. Around five to six TV movies are planned with ProSiebenSat.1, including the two-parter Das Blut der Templer which has been shot recently under the direction of the OSCAR-nominated short filmmaker Florian Baxmeyer, because Groenewold has a “very good working relationship” with the commercial broadcaster’s Stefan Gaertner and Guillaume de Posch. “We are literally able to do and close deals on the phone,” he says.

Turning to the issue of the investor advisory bodies, Groenewold says that the focusing of his fund on German productions makes it easier to meet the financial authorities’ conditions. “What is the plausibility for the fiscal authorities of a US studio or producer coming to present his projects to the investors?” he asks. “I don’t believe that this will happen, so that will lead to less money going out of Germany: When Helmut Dietl comes to talk to the investors about German actors they know, there is a plausibility that they can end up with a discussion that is meaningful and leaves everyone with a satisfied smile because they can say that the decision was made together.”

RECENT CHANGES BRING MORE TRANSPARENCY

Last year, there was growing uncertainty about the future of Germany’s media funds after the end of 2003: it had been feared that the Federal Ministry of Finance would consider investors in film funds merely as acquirers of film rights rather than as producers, thus depriving them of an immediate 100% tax deductible write-off.

But then the Ministry published an addition to its Media Decree last August specifying the conditions for the investors to still be regarded as producers.

According to the revised decree, the investors would now be involved directly in the decision-making process on “all essential measures of film production, particularly the choice of film subject, screenplay, the cast, the calculation of the costs incurred, the shooting schedule and the financing. The agreement alone to the concepts or draft contracts proposed by the initiator doesn’t denote sufficient influence.”

The investors as a group, however, are entitled to elect an advisory board out of the pool of investors having the power to represent the investors in the above described decision-making process (“Investorenbeirat”). The members of the advisory board, which must not in any way be associated with the initiator or the fund’s management, may only be elected once at least 50% of the planned capital has been placed with the fund.

“This is great for initiators of funds in terms of liability because I am on a very tight leash and everyone knows what I am doing. It is also very good in terms of the transparency that needs to be there for investors,” GFP’s Groenewold said after the addition’s publication. “In terms of the daily management, it will make things a little more complicated, but manageable. It is not an insurmountable hurdle that you can’t get across.”

However, at last autumn’s Munich Media Days, the additions came under fire from fund initiators and media lawyers.

In a discussion organized by the Verband Deutscher Medienfonds (VDM), producer and fund initiator Eberhard Junkersdorf said that the new guidelines “are programmed as a job creation scheme for lawyers. Making films means having to take decisions quickly. It is alien practice to want to replace the knowledge of running a production with a supervisory board [of investors]. How can one expect them to be in a position to read a budget or decide on casting?”

Franz Landerer, board chairman of Victory Media, added that “the advisory board ruling is a ‘knockout’ criteria for Hollywood films. No producer in Hollywood will let other people interfere in his plans,” while Christof Schmidt, VDM board member, suggested that the “uncertainty” and “vagueness” surrounding the new guidelines could only be resolved if the funds sat down together with the financial authorities on a national and regional state level.

Scene from GFP’s “Der Wixxer” (photo © Falcon Media Group AG/Rat Pack)
However, Ingetraud Meurer, a senior civil servant at the Federal Ministry of Finance, was adamant that "all of the remaining questions were answered in the extended Media Ruling" and argued that the new legislation was a "practicable regulation".

The initial unease about the requirement for the establishment of an investor advisory board has apparently since passed. The condition has since been taken onboard by new funds launched since summer 2003: for example, the prospectus for Hannover Leasing's Montranus €228 million fund noted that the anticipated placement volume would not be sufficient to realize all six short-listed projects [including Paul Greengrass' The Bourne Supremacy, Sydney Pollack's The Interpreter and Iain Softley's The Skeleton Key].

"The investors will decide at the meeting, among other things, as to which of the proposed projects should in the end be produced. All of the investors are urgently recommended to take part in the meeting either personally, via the Internet or through a seconded representative. Information and documents which are needed in connection with the voting (e.g. agenda, comprehensive material concerning the film projects, motions) will be distributed at the shareholders meeting and published in good time in the Internet," the prospectus stated.

Another fund Equity Pictures, for example, had always had an advisory board of investor representatives even before the August 2003 ruling, so the additional ruling did not have any great effect on the fund's operations and wasn't such a great imposition.

Meanwhile VIP held elections for its three investor representatives for the VIP 4 fund at the end of May.

As Alexander Kaminski of the fund specialist Vendura pointed out, "important decisions could now be taken daily – if required – with the elected and also cinematically qualified body from the midst of the investors [Eberhard Hauff, former director of the Munich Film Festival and an investor in VIP 4, was one of the three elected]. Thus an influence of the investors according to the more stringent conditions of the Media Decree can already be documented to the financial authorities during the current year. In our opinion, a clear plus compared to the investor meetings held only at the end of the year."

**INVESTOR PROTECTION IMPROVEMENT ACT**

In the meantime a new regulation – the Investor Protection Improvement Act ("Anlegerschutzverbesserungsgesetz") – passed by the German legislative body on 1 July 2004 has shaken up the German fund community. This new act, which shall come into force on 1 July 2005, foresees the general obligation of initiators of closed funds to publish a prospectus for the participation offer. Only funds not offering more than 20 shares or funds offering shares for a purchase price of at least €200,000.00 are exempt from this obligation. As German media funds are distributed on the basis of elaborate prospectuses already, the critical issue arising out of the new act is that the prospectuses may only be published after having been approved by the Federal Agency for the Supervision of Financial Services ("Bundesanstalt fuer Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht" = BaFin). Although the BaFin is obligated to render such a decision within a period of twenty days, this period will only start once the BaFin has acknowledged receipt of a documentation sufficient to enable a full examination of the prospectus. Up until today, it is not clear what will be considered a fully sufficient documentation. Further insecurity is fostered by the fact that the new act gives only very little information as to the required content of the prospectuses, details of which shall be regulated in a decree still to be issued by the German government. Big trouble, however, lies ahead should the BaFin not be able to render a decision within a reasonable time frame, even if due to a pure lack of personnel. In this case, the initiator will have no right to publish the prospectus having no other possibility but to take legal action in order to receive such approval. This procedure might prove very time consuming thus hindering funds to publish their participation offer in time for the usual investor rally by the end of the year.

**TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE**

Combining public film funding with private equity: The national and regional public funds are getting used to private equity being part of the financing mix, according to Andreas Grosch of VIP. The Munich-based funder had the German Federal Film Board and...
Filmstiftung NRW onboard the German comedy Sieben Zwerge - Maenner allein im Wald. At the Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg’s Start-Up Forum on Private Investment in June, Grosch admitted that there had been “concern from the public funds that their money is being used by the [private] funds to reduce its risk.” Relations with FilmFernsehFonds Bayern had been “unproblematic” whereas there had initially been a “small conflict” with Filmstiftung NRW. However, entering into a regular dialogue with the public funds helped to dispel any reservations.

The reduction in TV license revenues and the (possible) contraction in the German regional public fund budgets (the proposals to slash FilmFoerderung Hamburg’s budget by 50% from 2005 is the latest worrying development) could lead to the local German film industry and the financial sector coming closer together as producers look for alternative sources of funding for their projects.

Private placements: According to Roland Pellegrino of Miromar Entertainment, “there are plenty of people with money to invest in film production” where tailor-made financing structures are designed for private investors without having to go through the process of setting up a fund. Dan Maag and Philipp Schulz-Deyle of Munich-based Orange Pictures are now in talks for him to put up the finance for their next feature about Baron von Richthofen which would be shot entirely in Germany. Private placements are “the market of the future,” Pellegrino says.

There is a new breed of producers appearing on the scene who are open to working with private funds – and prepared to deliver what the funds require to cover their risks. As Dan Maag explained at the Start-Up Forum about working with IMF 3 on their $15 million English-language project Dead Fish, “it was new territory for us and was a challenge for us as a producer to have to present things that one had only heard of and not needed for a normal German production.” There was the obligation to provide a US distributor [Warner Bros.] and sales estimates etc., but they were lucky in having Gary Oldman committing early to the project which also starred Trainspotting’s Robert Carlyle and was shot on location in the UK.

“We are seeing more and more of the younger [German] producers thinking about the marketing potential of their projects,” adds Andreas Grosch. “Three to four years ago, the funds had to spend more time looking for projects, but now we have more producers approaching us with projects.”

There may be some legislative fine-tuning in the future, but the attraction of film funds doesn’t look abating. As one fund manager points out, “one has to understand that the tax-saving momentum is very much a German characteristic. We always say: ‘the Germans have two vices – to procreate and to save taxes!’ There will always be that demand.”

Martin Blaney (Screen International Correspondent for Germany, Austria and Switzerland)
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Dani Levy has worked in the film and television industry for over 20 years, although he never had formal training as an actor or filmmaker. He was the most experienced of the quartet who founded the Berlin production house X Filme Creative Pool in 1994 and has regularly worn the hats of actor, producer and editor with those of writer-director on his films. Martin Blaney spoke to Levy about his personal approach to his work as a director and his views on German cinema.

German Films Quarterly: Do you see a common theme running through your films?

Dani Levy: There are many common themes, but what I think is common to all of my films is the great emotional impact. That applies whether it is the comedies of the first three films or Zucker – where I have returned to the comedy genre – as well as for the dramas. At the center, they are always about people who are mostly in romantic entanglements with one another. You could say that I have always made love stories even though they were in different genres. The films have a high emotional content and the audience can also experience a lot emotionally if they go along with the film. At the same time, the films were also rather controversial; they had both real fans and enemies. I always felt this was a positive thing and saw the controversial or even almost scandalous aspect as something that we should really wish for in the cinema instead of just wanting to make money and be entertained. I guess I have never made a film that was boring or easy.
going, there was usually a real intensity in the plot and interaction of the characters.

Being self-taught, I came to filmmaking with a large dollop of naivety and I try to retain this naivety because I want to prevent at all costs ending up in some kind of routine. I think I’m one of the more experimental filmmakers in Germany and am always trying out new things in the areas of content and genre. I was one of the first directors to work in Cinemascope in Germany and made quite a step forward in the field of DV cinema. I really enjoy trying these things out and exploring new territories. So, I am open to all genres and would have no problems trying my hand at something like a western or even science fiction. I am also keen to explore new production forms and that’s something I try to encourage people to do at X Filme in order to ensure that we don’t just get bigger and more expensive with each new project, but that we remain lively with small budgets and new media, that we experiment formally.

GFQ: Did you have role models when you started out as a director?

DL: Of course I have lots of heroes. I grew up with filmmakers like Polanski, Truffaut, Forman, Bergman, Scorcese and Fellini, while the early films from Wenders and Herzog were also very important for me. And in recent times, I have been particularly impressed by directors like Lars von Trier and Pedro Almodovar, but I also like a good old Hollywood comedy like As Good As It Gets. And when I made my first film, Godard’s A bout de souffle had a great influence on me and the same was the case with Truffaut’s Jules et Jim.

GFQ: Is the combination of writer-director important for you?

DL: Yes, but I would never say that this is the way it will always be. I have a dream that I’ll get offered a good screenplay and don’t have to write it myself. In fact, I’d like to be able to develop projects on a broader basis and have authors write for me or us. It has been a case, though, of ‘learning by doing’ because I am self-taught as far as writing is concerned. I think it has been important that I write for myself to be able to retain the impulsive and personal nature of the stories. At the same time, I have a lot of fun doing it; writing is like paradise for me, even when you have writer’s blocks, crises, and self-doubt. It is a real oasis of intellectual and artistic freedom because there aren’t any compromises made during the writing process. Indeed, I don’t think there have been many cases where the [lack of] money forced me to make compromises: rather, the small amount of money made me inventive and creative.

GFQ: You began an acting career before you were a director?

DL: I started in the theater very early in 1977. It was by coincidence, I had never planned it because I always wanted to direct. But I fell in love with acting and found my introverted side being challenged to reveal itself. In front of the camera you are much more naked and take lots of risks and I have always liked to have this other string to my bow. It’s always important for me when directing that I know inside and from experience what the actors are feeling. You just have to prepare the ground for them to be courageous, for them to take risks and show something of themselves.

Funny enough, in the last 2 or 3 years, I have been discovered in France [as an actor] after I played the husband of Emanuele Béart in Catherine Corsini’s La Répétition. I would have never been cast for that in Germany, whereas in France they seem to be able to do more with my dark and Jewish looks. I received several offers of parts as romantic heroes after this film and took lead roles in another couple of films, although I speak with an accent. Coming from Switzerland never made it easy as an actor in Germany, either. But I enjoy acting, although it is much tougher than directing.

GFQ: It must have been a particular challenge when you were directing and acting at the same time in your films.

DL: I never saw it as being arduous. Apart from a lack of distance, acting in your own film has a number of advantages: the communication between actor and director is, of course, ideal and I really enjoyed it. On The Giraffe, Maria [Schrader] co-directed and was behind the monitor when I was acting in front of the camera. She is a great observer and someone who can always provoke me to come out of my shell. Moreover, I have my ‘family’ of collaborators like DoP Charly Koschnick and my AD Arndt Wegering who have been with me over the years.

GFQ: How was the reception of your films outside of Germany?

DL: I may not have had that worldwide hit yet, but I always enjoyed accompanying my films to festivals abroad because the audiences were more open than those back in Germany. My first film Du mich auch was in the Semaire de la Critique in Cannes and I have often been at festivals in North America with my films, and I hope Zucker will get many invitations. One festival which really stays in my memory is the time when I was in Puerto Rico with Silent Night and the cinema was packed Catholic Puerto Ricans watching a love triangle and thinking they were watching a Swedish porn movie!

GFQ: In February, the German Film Academy asked some of its members at an event in Berlin: What do you hate about German cinema? What does Dani Levy hate or love about German cinema?

DL: I often find that German cinema is not courageous enough and too predictable. It is too often defined by television aesthetics which want a great probability and comprehensibility in all of the processes and characters. I always say: Why do you want this when it doesn’t even exist in reality? Why do we want to present a world or logic in cinema that doesn’t actually exist? Why does the audience always have to understand everything or have everything announced in advance before it happens? Let’s have the mysterious, enigmatic and unpredictable, the daring and surprising shown in our films.

On the upside, we have really great acting talents and could work in the top world league if it wasn’t for the language. We have a great infrastructure and, culturally, a very privileged funding system. We have a very good audience, but we aren’t prepared to make regular demands on this audience and educate them to try different kinds of films. People are too preoccupied with making money and often lose sight of the fact that a film which might not do so well at the box office could, nevertheless, be a good door-opener for introducing different kinds of cinema. For example, on an artistic level, I am more pleased about a Head-On with 600,000 admissions than a Manitou’s Shoe with 11 million. Run Lola Run and Good Bye, Lenin! managed to cater to both sides: they are actually arthouse films, but they made that crossover. We have to have the courage to keep on making such films and not just concentrate on tame teenie comedies. Indeed, I think cinema should do more – it has a mission to promote understanding between peoples and cultures.
Maria Speth was born in Titting/Bavaria on 19 August 1967. After her school graduation, she moved to Berlin and completed a private training course as an actress. At a Rolling Stones concert she then met an editor, who awakened her interest in film editing. During the nineties, with the aid of a grant for film editors from the German Federal Film Board, she worked as an editing assistant (including for productions by Detlev Buck and Rudolf Thome) and assistant director (for Thome and others). Speth applied to the “Konrad Wolf” Academy of Film & Television (HFF/B) with her short film Mittwoch, made in 1995, and studied Direction there until 2002. Her short film Barfuss, made during her course, was shown at the 45th International Festival of Short Film at Oberhausen and won the 3sat Promotional Award. Speth’s graduation film The Days Between (In den Tag hinein, 2001) enjoyed an astonishing run at festivals. It was invited to the Ophuels Festival in Saarbruecken for the up-and-coming generation, was shown at the festival in Rotterdam, the Women’s Film Festival in Créteil, and at others including Sao Paolo, Montreal, Toronto, Karlovy Vary, at the Viennale, in Pusan, Valladolid, Thessaloniki, Bratislava and La Rochelle. The Days Between won the Tiger Award in Rotterdam and the Grand Prix du Jury in Créteil and was introduced into German cinemas by the Berlin distributors Peripher. At present, Speth is working on a new project with the working title Madonnen, which is being produced by the Cologne-based production company Pandora Film. Shooting begins in the spring of 2005.

Maria Speth is one of a handful of lone wolves who have breathed life into German film in recent years by developing an independent, lively vision of film beyond the mainstream. Her graduation film at the Potsdam Academy of Film ”Konrad Wolf” was already an artistic monolith capturing a very specific feeling for life, a time of indecision. The main character Lynn (Sabine Timoteo) lets herself be carried from one day to the next in Berlin. She does not fulfill any expectations and drifts between two men and several jobs. Speth and cameraman Reinhold Vorschneider film the city through the perceptions of her heroine. Lynn’s rhythm of life and work lead to a selective big-city feeling, the image of a city whose atmosphere and bluish light appear to be a continuation of the young woman’s floating state. Again and again, we see Lynn roaming through the city shortly before it wakes or as night finally falls.

“The point was to show a certain urbanity which one doesn’t necessarily associate only with Berlin,” Speth says. “Lynn often wanders through Berlin at night and at sunset. That was how those atmospheres of light and color emerged.”

Very gradually, “from day to day”, a love story develops between Lynn and the Japanese exchange student Koji. For Speth, the actual fascination of this encounter was the characters’ difficulties in understanding each other. “What happens when two people meet who do not speak the same language? Other forms of communication then become important: the sounds, the gestures, the mimicry. Since so little is conveyed by means of language here, it was interesting for me to tell viewers something about bodies and what distinguishes them.”

In the short film that she made during her studies, Barfuss, Speth had already worked entirely without language. This piece focuses on a young girl who comes to the city from the countryside and makes the
first encounters with her own personality and sexuality. "Here too, I attempted to tell a story without dialogues and to see what happens. The next film was simply the logical continuation of that. In The Days Between, the actual moments and the constellations in which the characters moved were important to me. I was less interested in the question of why people are the way they are."

In the course of the film, Lynn repeatedly reacts in an unpredictable way – on one occasion she even sets fire to the room when she thinks that her boyfriend is paying her insufficient attention. "Lynn," says Speth, "attempts to try out the way she should live. She acts, sometimes aggressively, in order to find things out." In the film, Speth is not interested in explaining Lynn’s behavior. Instead, she aims to capture and hold on to a state, a feeling for life. It is a question of filming normality, the everyday quality of an existence, of observing unspectacular moments without evaluating or judging them.

In The Days Between, this feeling – the urban forlornness, waiting and drifting – certainly points beyond the protagonist. Alongside its impressive visual conception, this universality – largely independent of language – may be one of the reasons for the film’s great success abroad. It was shown at festivals all over the world and won the main prizes in Créteil and in Rotterdam. "Of course," Speth says, "it is nice when people react to your work, when they are moved, when whatever it is about life that you are attempting to demonstrate meets with understanding."

Speth’s latest project, with the working title Madonnen, also focuses on a female figure who thwarts all social expectations. It is about a mother of several children who strays from the straight and narrow. She foists her children onto her own mother, thus forcing her to give them the affection she herself was denied as a child. "I like it," Speth says, "when a film allows you space for your own perceptions. When not everything that the viewers are meant to feel and think is already prescribed in advance."

We can then look forward to seeing how Speth’s enormous awareness of form is linked to a character who challenges viewers by refusing all common patterns of behavior and interpretation.

Katja Nicodemus (Die Zeit) spoke with Maria Speth
Now over a decade in business, the Hamburg-based company Relevant Film of Peter Timm and Heike Wiehle-Timm has built up a respectable track record of production for the cinema and television and is now toying with the idea of working on projects outside of Germany after its experiences on Rolf Schuebel’s Blueprint.

“I came to film via the theater and art,” recalls producer Heike Wiehle-Timm who worked for three years at the Bayerisches Schauspielhaus in Munich before deciding that “theater was a great playground, but I wanted to be involved in stories for a wider audience.”

After moving with husband Peter to Hamburg she worked as a producer for Polyphon for five years and, whilst there, produced her first feature film, Timm’s adaptation of the Hera Lind bestseller Ein Mann fuer jede Tonart, starring Katja Riemann.

"Producing this film gave me the feeling that this was the direction I wanted to go in and so we founded Relevant Film in 1993," she...
says. “We started small, producing feature films as co-productions with other companies, like Avista Film on Die Putzfraueninsel.” Over the years, Relevant has been able to cater for both cinema and television production: “commissioned television productions are important for the company’s operations – the bread and butter – and we have developed strong links to all of the stations. RTL has become an important partner although we have felt the station’s cuts in commissions as have other independents in the market.”

“Nevertheless, we developed other collaborations, such as with SAT.1 for the upcoming Dennis Satin comedy Was waere wenn (working title) and now with NDR for the Marianne Saegebrecht project Charlotte und ihre Maenner. The struggle has become harder, but a precise development of the stories will guarantee our success in the future, too.”

Working for the cinema, on the other hand, is described by Wiehle-Timm as “a luxury”. “Every project is a challenge, but that is even more so with cinema. The ‘TV child’ comes into the world much quicker and you can entrust them to a kindergarten. Moreover, those projects are developed very specifically for an audience and time slot. But with feature films, you are pregnant with the project for a long time and you have to look after them until the wedding day!”

Initially, the company began just with projects by Peter Timm, but then opened up to working with other directors and Timm is also free to work with other production companies as well (his latest feature Mein Bruder ist ein Hund was made last year with Tradewind Pictures). “It is fun to work with other people and to see which films suit which station and schedule,” Wiehle-Timm explains. “One of our goals was to make quality programs for television which appeal to audiences and can also be shown at festivals. What was important for me were comedies and melodramas which give an insight into the human situation.”

Seeing herself very much as a creative producer, Wiehle-Timm points out that she likes to be involved in the story development: “I enjoy bringing the various elements together – the writer, director, cast and financing – and of being the ‘nerve center’ of this creative potential. I come from the content side, so my business knowledge of how to run a company was acquired on the job. That was a challenge I wanted to take on rather than stay and work in the world of subsidized theater.”

To date, the production of Rolf Schuebel’s Blueprint, starring Franka Potente in a double role as mother and daughter, was Relevant’s biggest challenge, being some four years in the making from the original idea through to the completion due to the size of the budget and having locations in Canada as well as Germany. In addition, there was the question of how to adapt Charlotte Kerner’s novel and to present the issue of cloning in a way that would be interesting for lots of people.”

Unfortunately, the makers’ own expectations didn’t coincide with commercial reality: “Opinions were divided on the film: the audience reactions were positive. But what some people didn’t like was that our idea had been to take a conventional genre approach rather than an arthouse one in order to reach a wider audience.”

At the same time, Wiehle-Timm could imagine Blueprint opening doors for other opportunities outside of Germany for Relevant, as they have only produced for the German market until now. Indeed, she has already spoken with some Polish producers about a possible collaboration. Moreover, since the original novel by Charlotte Kerner is known internationally, there would seem to be a likelihood that the film could also have a career abroad.

Back home, Wiehle-Timm says that it is still an uphill struggle for German films in their own market despite the box office successes of such films as Good Bye, Lenin! and Manitou’s Shoe. “I am pleased about every success our cinema has, but we need to work on the acceptance of German films among the younger cinemagoers,” she argues. “I have an 18-year-old daughter and know how they prefer US mainstream films. But we have many good stories to tell and we have to put up a fight to get German films into the cinemas against the big US competition. We don’t have to copy them, but we should increase our efforts on the targeting and marketing of our own projects.”

Martin Blaney spoke to Heike Wiehle-Timm
There are people who cover the floors of their apartment with cold tiles. When they get up in the mornings, they either have to put shoes on, or turn the heating right up. And then there are people who — in the early morning — enjoy the feeling of putting their feet on a warm wooden floor. **Birol Uenel** is not a man for chilly feet. Quite apart from the fact that the winner of the 2004 German Film Award (in the category Best Actor) is qualified to lay parquet flooring and would only, if at all, put up with tiles in his bathroom, **Birol Uenel** is a warm person, although he seems to be inwardly seething with anger and energy.

"Well, that was about time, too." 43-year-old Uenel did not come up with any high-sounding phrases when he was awarded the prize for his role of Cahit in Fatih Akin's film **Head-On**. Uenel — who was born in Turkey and brought up in Germany — responded with self-assurance: "I have worked many years for it."


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"I was seven when I came to Bremen. My parents had already left, I was living with my grandmother in the mountains, where she cultivates chick-peas." It was in the village that he received the scars on his face and neck that are still visible today. "Hot oil," he says, shrugging his shoulders.

At school, a teacher gave him some insights into German literature. "Immigrant children have to work their way towards the language in a completely different way. Sentence structure and melody, rhymes ... perhaps we should ask ourselves more specifically just what it is that the author, whether it be Goethe or Hauptmann, really wants to say?"

After drama school, he acted in the theater, made his first feature films, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, he established an off-theater in the former eastern part of the city. He came to the attention of the director Frank Castorf, who cast Uenel as probably the most German figure in literature; he played Siegfried in The Nibelungen – Born Bad. Rather than a blonde, blue-eyed giant, the audience was presented with a dark-haired, brown-eyed, only 1.72 meter tall Birol Uenel.

His roles for television and cinema have been rather more in accordance with tradition. Uenel plays Turks, Palestinians, dealers, terrorists. But there are directors who are more courageous – and people with character impress him: "Our society is a shark-pool. Nonetheless, there are people who take you seriously, who don’t pay such attention to externals. Those who don’t care what other people say about you," says Uenel, and again he appears rather angry.

Everything has changed since Head-On. He is especially pleased at the film’s success abroad. "A short time ago I was at the premiere in Rome, and the audience was very enthusiastic. I think that the Italians, who are so influenced by Catholicism, understand the double morality shown in the film very well. That is the film’s strength. It is not only a matter of the traditions in Turkish families, where so much is swept under the kelim. It is also about the double morality of the Germans." The reaction to the film in France is important to him. "France has an even greater tradition of immigration than the one in Germany. I am convinced that the French will like Head-On."

The drama was a triumph in Turkey directly after the Golden Bear for the Best Film at the Berlinale, although the Turkish press – like the German papers – also had a go at the previous films made by the film’s principal actress. "Turkey has become a modern country," Uenel says. "The reaction was astonishingly positive, particularly in Istanbul, where we made some parts of the film."

This great lover of the German language, who had almost forgotten Turkish, is honored that his next film – a dramatic love story – is to be set in Turkey. "The Turkish language returned to me, there must have been a switch in my head that could be turned back on."

But he has not only been discovered by Turkish filmmakers, his phone has been ringing in Germany, too: "I spent a long time on the phone to Vadim Glovna." He grins mischievously and says: "I would have no objections to a call from Roman Polanski. Jean-Jacques Annaud is also a director who works intensely with his actors." Just like himself, his favorite actors come from the world of the theater: "Anthony Hopkins has tremendous intelligence, marvelous! I also like Brian Cox."

Birol will be spending the late summer and autumn shooting in Turkey. The home country rediscovered? "I have no home country. As an actor, I have the opportunity to move around like a gypsy. My home is the roles I play, the characters. In the future, I can make my past into my present." The "man with no home country" intends to visit his grandmother, now 105-years-old. When he talks about her, his voice becomes warm. "Grandma still trades chick-peas for other things she needs. But she has a telephone now. Recently I rang her up and said: ‘Here’s the scorched one.’ She knew immediately what was what: ‘No, you’re Birol’."

Sascha Langenbach (Berliner Kurier) spoke to Birol Uenel

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actor’s portrait

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GERMAN FILMS HEAT UP
COMPETITION IN EASTERN EUROPE

No less than 17 German films and co-productions were presented this year at Moscow’s 26th International Film Festival from 18 - 27 June 2004, including Nina Grosse’s Olga’s Summer (Olgas Sommer) in the official competition for the coveted St. George Award.

Following Moscow, Karlovy Vary (2 - 10 July 2004) screened thirteen German films and thirteen German-international co-productions, including six films in the two competition sections: the features Napola by Dennis Gansel (whose leading actor Max Riemelt took home the prize for Best Leading Actor), and Niceland by Fridrik Thór Fridriksson, and the documentaries The Center (Die Mitte) by Stanislaw Mucha, Peppers and Nudes – The Photographer Edward Weston by Joachim Haupt & Sabine Pollmeier, Anderer Herbst by Pawel Siczek, and Die Souvenirs des Herrn X by Arah T. Riahi.

For a complete line-up of all the films at Moscow and Karlovy Vary, see pp. 36-39.

BABELSBURG CONFERENCE &
MEDIENFORUM 2004


The central theme of this year’s Babelsberg Conference on Film and Television Production concerns strategies for innovations and new talent in the media. On the first day of the conference, Babelsberg invites guests and participants once again for a discussion with industry experts on successful innovative approaches to film and television production. Day 2 will focus on Film Policy in an expanded Europe. And to round off the event, the symposium Babelsberg Digital will examine new alliances between games and film.

The Medienforum 2004 begins with a podium discussion on the subject of "News", followed by the opening conference of the European project "Digital Innovation through Cooperation in Europe – DICE" (www.dice-online.net). Further information regarding participant registration is available at: www.medienwoche.de.

For more information on both events, please contact: Babelsberg Conference 
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For a complete line-up of all the films at Moscow and Karlovy Vary, see pp. 36-39.
2003’s Distribution Promotion Award Winner “Les coeur des Hommes” Nord Pas-de Calais, and the MFG. in the event organized by the Media-Antenne Strasbourg, CRRAV September. Producers from all over Europe are lined up to participate seminar for documentary filmmakers will take place from 22 - 24 side of the Rhine in Strasbourg, the second part of the 6th ProPitch Unifrance, will present its distributor promotion award. On the other (www.filmtage-tuebingen.de), where the MFG, in cooperation with Stuttgart, the city of Tuebingen will host the 21st French Film Days [57x95] Festival of German Cinema in Madrid Over 6,000 film fans attended the 35 performances of the sixth “ROSENSTRASSE” IN MADRID AUDIENCE AWARD FOR particularly hard: support funds will FilmFoerderung Hamburg The savings plans of the Hamburg Senate have hit the FilmFoerderung Hamburg particularly hard: support funds will be slashed in half from €7 million to €3.5 million. “That’s a punch in the gut and a catastrophe for the film and television location Hamburg,” says executive director Eva Hubert. ARD also terminated its support agreement, and the contract with NDR will run out at the end of the year. Both broadcasters were contributing €2 million annually to FilmFoerderung Hamburg’s budget. Protest calls resounded throughout the entire German film industry. Filmmakers, professional associations and labor unions criticized the cuts and fear an enormous image loss for the area. Companies like Studio Hamburg and Wim Wender’s production outfit Reverse Angle are even considering moving their business elsewhere in the Federal Republic.

According to recent press releases, the local economic authorities are planning to come to Hamburg’s rescue and help out. However, the sum of the pending contribution has yet to be confirmed.

EXTREME BUDGET CUTS FOR FILMFOERDERUNG HAMBURG

The event was opened by Eric Till’s Luther in the presence of producer Alexander Thies and generated great interest among the audience, press and distributors in Catholic Spain. Rosenstrasse by Margarethe von Trotta won the Kodak-sponsored Audience Award.

The other films shown in the Festival’s main program were: Gate to Heaven by Veit Helmer, Berlin Blues (Herr Lehmann) by Leander Haussmann, Gun-Shy (Schussangst) by Dito Tsintsadze, September by Max Faerberboeck, Love in Thoughts (Was nuetzt die Liebe in Gedanken) by Achim von Borries, the animation film Jester Till (Till Eulenspiegel) by Eberhard Junkersdorf, the TV film Zwei Tage Hoffnung by Peter Keglevic, the documentary The Center (Die Mitte) by Stanislaw Mucha, the short film program NEXT GENERATION 2004 and four other shorts (Andersartig by Christina Schindler, Dangle by Phil Traill, Finow by Susanne Quester, and Oby by Anja Perl and Max Stolzenberg). The event was rounded off with a screening of the silent film The Last Laugh (Der letzte Mann) by Friedrich-Wilhelm Murnau with live musical accompaniment. And a retrospective with eight films offered cinema highlights from the last ten years of German cinema.

Eight Spanish and five German producers had a brainstorming session on the initiative of the German Embassy in Madrid during the festival. The talks saw proposals being hammered out to improve the conditions for co-productions between the two countries. The talks are set to be continued within a larger forum during the film festival in Seville in November where a part of the Madrid festival program will be shown in a special sidebar for German cinema.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ON THE SET

“Principal shooting can sometimes be anything but harmonious!” This was the tenor of the seminar “Conflict Management and Conflicts on the Set” offered by Andrea Engel and Bettina Dutt’s company KONFLIKTFREIRAUM (translation: “Conflict Free Area”). Students at the Munich Academy of Television & Film participated in the workshop (from 4 - 6 June 2004) which presented them the theoretical and practical basics of conflict management. The ability to recognize and professionally and productively deal with arising conflict were just two of the topics covered in the three-day forum. Additional sessions are planned for the future to help give film students further insight into the often tricky task of successfully coordinating the different players on film sets. For further information, please contact info@konfliktfreiraum.de
AG KURZFILM WITH GERMAN SHORTS IN MEXICO

For the German focus at the international short film festival Expresión en Corto (17 - 24 July) in Guanajuato/Mexico, the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm) sent six shorts with international potential: Dangle by Phil Traill, Me, Myself and the Universe (Ich und das Universum) by Hajo Schomerus, Woman Below the Ice (Die Eisbaderin) by Alla Churikova, Kalkheim by Tobias Kipp, Yo lo vi by Fritz Steingrobe & Hanna Nordholt, and Mirror by Matthias Mueller.

In addition to these six films, the program also included an extensive selection of films from the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival. The filmmakers Anja Struck (Enfants du miel) and Athanasios Karanikolas (My Redeemer/Mein Erloeser) accompanied their own films and the two German programs to Mexico. And AG Kurzfilm chairman and director of the German competition at Oberhausen, Carsten Spicher, was also on hand to present the programs to the local audiences.

FILM COMMISSION BAVARIA: NEW ONLINE & INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

New address, new look: On the occasion of this year’s Munich Film Festival FFF’s Film Commission Bavaria presented its newly re-launched website www.film-commission-bayern.de. A fresh, clear design, user-friendly service tools and information updates make the website a complete offer for everyone interested in film and television production in Munich and Bavaria. Among other things, an overview of the partners assembled in the project “Location Network Bavaria” gives an impression of the state’s multi-faceted regions and opportunities for film production. This summer, two of the partners in the network welcome renowned production teams: International Emmy Award-winner Heinrich Breloer (The Manns), DoP Gernot Roll (Nowhere in Africa) and set designer Goetz Weidner (Das Boot) shot part of their historic docu-drama The Devil’s Architect (Speer und Er) in alpine Berchtesgaden.

And successful filmmaker Soenke Wortmann (The Miracle of Bern) will be producing the adventure film Der Schatz der weissen Falken, to be shot in the Northern Bavarian Region “Fraenkische Schweiz”. In Munich, the famous town hall and the university are settings for Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage, (cf. p. 34), a new film version of the trial against the members of the resistance group “The White Rose” in 1943. All three productions are funded by FilmFernseFonds Bayern and consulted by its film commission.

In the spring, after attending the “Focus Germany” presentation at the Berlinale and in Cannes, Film Commission Bavaria’s Anja Metzger was present at the Locations Trade Show in Los Angeles, where she was part of the “German Film Commissions” community booth. In July, she introduced Bavarian film funding, industry and location issues to Mexican film professionals at the Expresión en Corto International Film Festival in Guanajuato. Further activities this year will include a panel discussion at the Munich Media Days, the ongoing extension and promotion of the Location Network Bavaria as well as the preparation of hosting the next European Film Commission meeting during next year’s Berlinale.

WIND FORCE 8

World Wide is the title of a documentary film project initiated by the Cologne-based broadcaster WDR and the Filmstiftung NRW to support documentaries produced for the international market. The first project to be awarded financial support (€475,000) under this long-term label is Windstaerke acht, a production by the Munich-based Caligari Film about emigration to America in the 19th century. And for the occasion, a sailboat with 20 passengers and a 15-man crew will set sail in September from Hamburg to New York. But those on board shouldn’t expect a luxurious cruise: the €1.7 million project will offer the same conditions experienced by the original emigrants in 1850. Following the Gerd-Ruge-Scholarship, which is endowed with €100,000 and also supports the development of young documentary filmmakers, World Wide is the second of the Filmstiftung’s initiatives explicitly dedicated to the documentary field.
SHORT TIGER 2004: MAIN PRIZES GO TO BERLIN AND LUDWIGSBURG

Five years old and worth €110,000 – that’s how the FFA short film award Short Tiger presented itself this year within the framework of the Filmfest Munich. And according to the jury (producer Peter Rommel, OSCAR-winning director Florian Gallenberger, and German Federal Film Board CEO Peter Dinges), the new up-and-coming film talents hail from Berlin and Ludwigsburg. As in 2001 and 2002, again this year two of the nominated films were awarded the Short Tiger main prize: the representational short Abhaunt (dir: Christoph Wermke) and the animated Annie & Boo (dir: Johannes Weiland). The winning students from the German Film & Television Academy Berlin (dffb) and the Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg each received €25,000 promotional support during a ceremony with 500 guests.

The other four nominated filmmakers (Joscha Douma for Zweelf 1/2 Minuten/Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg; Felix Goennert for Lucia/Konrad Wolf Academy of Film & Television HFF/B; Hajo Schomerus for Ich und das Universum/University of Applied Sciences Dortmund; Susanne Seidel for Pantoffelhelden/HFF/B) were also given €15,000 each toward the work on their next projects. Seven German film schools submitted a total of 27 films for the running. Since 2000, the Short Tiger Award is the largest financial short film prize and a significant contribution to the German Federal Film Board’s annual short film reference support of over €500,000.

TRIUMPH OF ”THE BLIND FLYERS“

For over five years, the MDM Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung has been active in Central Germany. And numerous projects have evolved during this time – but it is not just the honors and awards that speak for the quality of these productions.

Erfurt is home to a success story in the field of children’s films: the MDM-supported feature The Blind Flyers (Die Blindgaenger, dir: Bernd Sahling) from the production outfit Kinderfilm GmbH. The Blind Flyers convinced audiences and juries alike earlier this year at the Berlinale and at the Children’s Film Festival in Zlín. And now the film has taken home the award for Best Children’s Film at this year’s German Film Awards. The The Blind Flyers will hit German cinemas in October 2004 – MDM wishes a great local start!

GERMAN DOCUMENTARIES IN MARSEILLE

At the 15th Sunny Side of the Doc, the trade fair for documentary television formats, Germany’s independent documentary scene was represented with a record number of 25 filmmakers and producers who were busy discussing their co-production plans with highly-interested producers from all over the world. Marseille continues to remain the location for networking and negotiating: the close personal contacts to commissioning editors in a relaxed atmosphere (as compared to the hectic MIPTV or at home in editorial offices) is unbeatable. In addition, the some 300 buyers showed continued interest in the twenty films in the ag dok video library.

The regional focus on the Mediterranean countries was less influential this year, due in part to the strong presence of commissioning editors from the USA, Japan and Australia. Another positive tendency this year was the increased participation of both public and private German broadcasters.
Antikoerper

Type of Project  Feature Film  Cinema  Genre  Thriller  Production Company  Medienkontor Movie/Berlin, in co-production with Kinowelt Filmproduktion/Munich  With backing from Filmförderungsnahlaastalt (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Nordmedia  Producers  Boris Schoenfelder, Rainer Koelmel  Director  Christian Alvart  Screenplay  Christian Alvart  Director of Photography  Hagen Bogdanski  Editor  Philipp Stahl  Music by  Michl Britsch  Principal Cast  Heinz Hoenig, Wotan Wilke Moehring, André Hennicke, Ulrike Krumbiegel, Nina Proll, Juergen Schornagel  Shooting Language  German  Shooting in  Berlin, Brandenburg, Harz, May - June 2004

When was the last time you saw a thriller that actually lived up to the description? The whole point of a thriller is to thrill. It has to have characters with personality and depth so you can identify with them and sympathize and/or empathize with them and their situation. It has to place those characters within a dramatic context that moves and develops. It has to keep you guessing as to what will happen next, to whom, where, when, why and how. Welcome to the twisted world of Antikoerper.

In his story of an unwitting village police officer that becomes the pawn of a twisted serial killer while investigating a murder and, subsequently, a mortal danger to his nearest and dearest, writer-director Christian Alvart has fashioned an exquisitely nasty psychological game. "Of course I want to make the audience sweat and bite their nails," he says. "But Antikoerper is about more. It’s about the question of the separation between good and evil. What makes one person good and the other evil? If there’s no Last Judgement, why be good in the first place?"

Warming to his theme, Alvart continues: "I’ve spent years researching the serial killer phenomenon and, for me, a serial killer, somebody who subordinates the lives of his fellow man to his own satisfaction, represents the culmination of egoism. In an extreme form, he lives the "ideals" of “liberalism” but without its limits. And these limits move with each generation. What is quite "normal" for us today would have been unthinkable for my parents."

But before we fire up our chainsaws, let’s not forget Antikoerper is a film, one that producer Boris Schoenfelder says “has a very exciting story. I knew it as soon as Christian sent me the first ten pages. It has a very strong opening and then becomes extremely tense as the story develops. The cinema experience is stronger than the televusal one that thinks in short term narrative. The material must be allowed to unfold and have harder stuff.” Citing Silence of the Lambs and Seven as examples of how good thrillers can work, Schoenfelder admits, “it’s not easy to make thrillers in Germany, but Anatomie and The Experiment show it’s possible. We want Antikoerper to be authentic, credible and come over like a true story. Grip the viewer, lead them through it and you’ve won!”

Der Baum der Wuensche

Type of Project  TV Movie  Genre  Drama, Love Story  Production Company  Filmfabrik/Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich  With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern  Producer  Kadir Soezen  Director  Rolf Schuebel  Screenplay  Tevzik Baser  Director of Photography  Holly Fink  Editor  Ulrike Leipold  Music by  Detlef Petersen  Principal Cast  Lale Yavas, Erhan Emre, Tim Seyfi, Hilmi Soezer  Shooting Language  German  Shooting in  Cologne, Oberhausen, Munich, Istanbul, Uerguep, March - July 2004

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Producer Kadir Soezen founded Filmfabrik, "in order to realize high-quality, character driven, stories.” With Baum der Wuensche, 25 documentaries and theatrical features later, he is finally bringing his own novel, Goldsucher, to the small screen in what, at €4.5 million, will be one of the most expensive German TV movies ever made, spanning several countries, cities and decades.
Taking its title literally, the Baum der Wuensche is a tree that stands in the middle of a small Turkish village, from whose branches the locals hang pieces of paper on which they have written their wishes. It’s the early 1960s and for three friends, Melike, Mustafa and Kadir, life changes dramatically as Germany. “Wirtschaftswunder” in full swing, throws open the doors to the so-called “guest workers” from Turkey. Mustafa and Kadir leave, Melike remains behind. Her heartfelt wish, to marry Mustafa, is hung on the tree. But the years pass and eventually she marries Yasar, one of the few young men to remain behind. When Mustafa returns it’s too late so he heads back to Cologne. After five unhappy years, Melike also uproots to Germany where she again meets Mustafa and the two begin a passionate love affair. But when Yasar arrives with their two children, worlds are set to collide. For the novel’s adaptation, Soezen chose Tevfik Baser, “one of the most respected filmmakers in Europe. He comes from Turkey, lives and works in Germany.” The choice of director fell on Rolf Schuebel. “I wanted a Turkish author,” says Soezen, “but to get a different vision I wanted a German director. The film needs a German vision and Rol, in his films like Gloomy Sunday, brings both a very poetical as well as documentary-like vision, which is essential for this story.”

For his cast, Soezen chose stage actors, obviously of Turkish origin but born and/or raised in Germany, “because they are basically telling their own family story. They have experienced it, the strong confrontations caused by human migration, of leaving one culture and adapting, or not, to a new one. They all know this story already. That was my intention. Baum der Wuensche is not just a German or Turkish phenomenon. It’s Europe’s. It’s international.”

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“A total challenge and quite complicated” is how producer Sigrid Hoerner of the Berlin-based production outfit Moneypenny Film describes Hannes Stoehr’s (Berlin Is In Germany) ambitious new film project Galatasaray – Depor, which is set in four European countries and has seven different languages being spoken.

Stoehr developed four independent storylines taking place on the day of the Champions League final match between Galatasaray Istanbul and Deportivo la Coruna in Moscow’s Olympic Stadium, and the characters only appear in their respective episode in Moscow, Istanbul, Santiago de Compostela or Berlin. “The film is about people not understanding one another,” Hoerner notes. “The football match itself doesn’t play any role for the stories, but just provides the time frame.”

“We have called it a burlesque comedy because this was better than anything we could find in German,” she adds, pointing that the issues in the film are very topical in the light of the European Union’s enlargement this year and pick up on themes Stoehr had addressed in Berlin Is In Germany. Moneypenny looked for partners in other countries to participate in the financing for this their first international co-production, but they finally only have one co-partner - Filma Nova from Spain - and used service production companies in Istanbul and Moscow to coordinate the shoot ‘on the ground’. The shoot began in Galicia and then traveled to Russia and Turkey before ending up in Berlin where some Russian interiors will also be shot.

The first episode – “West Meets East” set in Moscow – focuses on a young English businesswoman who has been the victim of a robbery and wants to report it to the police. But they are busy trying to keep rival Spanish and Turkish football fans from attacking one another. 1:0 for Depor. Switching to Istanbul for “A German Meets an Alemanci in Turkey”, a young German backpacker’s cleverly planned insurance scam is foiled by the Istanbul police. He’s saved in the nick of time, though, by a Swabian-Turkish taxi-driver and a friendly female police officer – just as Galatasaray equalizes.

Crossing to Galicia on the western fringe of Europe, “The Pilgrim and the Native” has a Hungarian history professor asking for the help of a policeman after his digital camera has been stolen with all of the impressions of the journey to Santiago. But the policeman is more interested in the match in Moscow …

Finally, in “Exception culturelle”, Berlin provides the setting for the story of two French street artists whose finances are rock-bottom and are arguing about how to make some money. However, making a bogus insurance claim on supposedly lost luggage doesn’t work with the German police. In any case, Kreuzberg is gripped by football fever as the match is about to be decided by a penalty …
**Generation**

**Type of Project** Omnibus Film  
**Genre** Animation, Fiction, Documentary  
**Production Company** Icon Film/Cologne, in cooperation with Relations/Berlin  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW  
**Supervising Producer** Herbert Schwering  
**Artistic Director** Nikolaj Nikitin  
**Directors** Mait Laas, Cristian Mungiu, Nadejda Koseva, Kornel Mundruczo, Stefan Arsenijevic  
**Project Advisers** Gabriele Brunnenmeyer, Didi Danquart, Sibylle Kurz  
**Shooting in** Estonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Serbia-Montenegro, Romania, Bulgaria  

Production rolled in May on Bosnian filmmaker Jasmila Zbanic’s *Birthday*, the first of six shorts in the *Generation* omnibus film by six Central and Eastern European filmmakers, about two ten-year-old girls who were born in the Moslem and Christian communities of Mostar when the bridge was destroyed and have never met.

Since then, Mait Laas has been working on an animated short which will serve as a link between the other episodes as well as standing on its own, while Kornel Mundruczo has wrapped his story on a brother and sister recalling their incestuous love affair, and Bulgaria’s Nadejda Koseva began shooting her story of a wedding party with a difference at the end of June.

The film project, which was initiated by the Relations East European cultural program of Germany’s Federal Cultural Foundation, will see six 12-18-minute shorts being made by Stefan Arsenijevic (Serbia-Montenegro), Nadejda Koseva (Bulgaria), Mait Laas (Estonia), Kornel Mundruczo (Hungary), Cristian Mungiu (Romania) and Jasmila Zbanic (Bosnia-Herzegovina) giving a new perspective to traditions and national stories. According to Relations’ artistic director Katrin Klingan, the focus in the selection of the participating countries was “placed on those countries which have their own film culture, but cannot exploit it at the moment due to economic and/or political developments.”

Project coordinator Herbert Schwering of the supervising production company ICON Film explains that all six filmmakers will be invited to do the post-production of their films in Cologne in the autumn. The €400,000 low-budget project has received backing from Filmstiftung NRW, and discussions are currently underway with a German broadcaster to participate in the financing. In addition, the project has attracted interest from several German theatrical distributors and has secured Fuji as a sponsor for the shorts to all be shot on 35 mm.

The individual films were developed during a series of “brain-storming” meetings held during the Berlinale, the Sofia International Film Festival and the goEast Festival in Wiesbaden and have been able to draw on the services of an advisory board comprising film director Didi Danquart, pitching and script consultant Sibylle Kurz, and Media Antenne Berlin-Brandenburg’s manager Gabriele Brunnenmeyer. According to the project’s artistic director Nikolaj Nikitin, it is planned to have the film’s premiere during the Berlinale Talent Campus next February.

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**Gespenster**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Drama  
**Production Company** Schramm Film Koerner & Weber/Berlin, in co-production with Les films des Tournelles/Paris  
**With backing from** BR, ARTE, ARTE France Cinema, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg  
**Producers** Florian Koerner von Gustorf, Michael Weber  
**Director** Christian Petzold  
**Screenplay** Christian Petzold, with collaboration from Harun Farocki  
**Director of Photography** Hans Fromm  
**Editor** Bettina Boehler  
**Music by** Stefan Will  
**Production Design** K.D. Gruber  
**Casting** Simone Baer  
**Principal Cast** Julia Hummer, Sabine Timoteo, Marianne Basler, Aurélien Recoing, Benno Fuermann, Anna Schudt, Claudia Geissler  
**Shooting Language** German, French

The film, which was initiated by the Relations Eastern European cultural program of Germany’s Federal Cultural Foundation, will see six 12-18-minute shorts being made by Stefan Arsenijevic (Serbia-Montenegro), Nadejda Koseva (Bulgaria), Mait Laas (Estonia), Kornel Mundruczo (Hungary), Cristian Mungiu (Romania) and Jasmila Zbanic (Bosnia-Herzegovina) giving a new perspective to traditions and national stories. According to Relations’ artistic director Katrin Klingan, the focus in the selection of the participating countries was “placed on those countries which have their own film culture, but cannot exploit it at the moment due to economic and/or political developments.”

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German Film Award-winning director Christian Petzold has just wrapped principal photography on the feature film Gespenster which marks his fifth collaboration with Florian Kornein von Gustorf and Michael Weber of Berlin-based Schramm Film.

According to Petzold, this film is part of “a sort of ghostly trilogy” that began with The State I Am In (Die Innere Sicherheit) – which itself originally had the working title of Gespenster – and will end with his next project Yella, planned for shooting next year. He recalls that after the editing on The State I Am In, “my editor Bettina Boehler said to me: ‘you can’t just leave her in the meadow, what happens to the girl [played by Julia Hummer] at the end of the film?’ So, this new film also starts in an open space in Berlin’s Tiergarten.” He hit on the idea for the new film after talking with Hummer during a flight to London for a film festival and was inspired by some fairytales he had read to his young daughter; one being the Grimm Brothers’ story Das Totenhemdchen about a child who cannot go up to heaven until its mother stops mourning for her.

“This was an exhausting shoot because unlike the other projects where we had really concrete figures – like a lawyer, a car dealer or even RAF terrorists – everything had an everyday feel about it. Children from a home, thieves and a woman from Paris don’t have any specific definition in the same way,” he explains.

The film describes events over the course of 24 hours in the lives of several people whose paths intersect. One storyline centers on the relationship between Nina and a petty thief Toni (played by Swiss actress Sabine Timoteo), while a second one has a French woman Francoise (Marianne Basler) looking for her daughter – fifteen years after she was kidnapped in Berlin. She is a mother in mourning “who cannot let her daughter die.” When she comes cross Nina (Hummer) on one of her wanderings through the capital, she believes that she has at last found her long-lost daughter. Everything seems to be right – even the scar and the way she looks. However, when Francoise’s husband (Aurélien Recoing) appears, the situation becomes crystal clear in one swoop when he says: “Marie is dead”.

Writer-director Stefan Betz is a longtime friend and fellow filmmaker of Blieninger’s, having made shorts together, and once the script was ready, Blieninger gave up a highly paid job with great prospects at BlickpunktFilm magazine “to look for the funding. I wanted to produce but not set up my own company,” he says. “As a newcomer with little practical experience I wanted to work within an existing structure.” That “existing structure” is Uli Aselmann and Robert Marciniak’s d.i.e. film.

“I knew Uli from when he was with a production company called ndf,” says Blieninger. “We met in 1997 and stayed in close contact. He offered to do Grenzverkehr via his own company. He did it all.”

Wanting “to avoid the feel of a typical Heimat film,” continues Blieninger, “we’ve gone for an innovative look. Our DoP, Alexander Fischerkoesens, has many years experience on the police series Tatort and Polizeiruf 110. He’s also worked with Dominik Graf.”

And, in a statement guaranteed to win him enemies for life, Blieninger is “very proud of how quickly the financing came together. We did the first application at the end of January and got final approval end of April. We did something right! That happens so rarely and we’re all very proud. It’s due, I think, to the script, the production company and a realistic budget.”

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Grenzverkehr is the story of three teenage boys who believe that the best way to become men is to straddle their mopeds and head for the nearest brothel; which just happens to be in the Czech Republic. There, they meet their own personal Waterloo: their mopeds are stolen and an attempt to liberate them only lands them in deepest do- do. Accompanied by a highly pregnant young Ukranian girl, there’s nothing they can do except break for the German border.

“Tatort, has many years experience on the police series Tatort and Polizeiruf 110. He’s also worked with Dominik Graf.”
**Ich lebe**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Drama  
**Production Company** Avista Film/Munich, in co-production with BR & ARTE/Munich, Daniel Zuta Filmproduktion/Frankfurt  
**With backing from** BKM, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Kulturelle Filmförderung Hessen  
**Producers** Alena and Herbert Rimbach  
**Director** Dagmar Knoepfel  
**Screenplay** Dagmar Knoepfel, based on the last three letters by Bozena Nemcova  
**Director of Photography** Jan Malír  
**Editor** Christian Lonk  
**Production Design** Zdeněk Listburek  
**Principal Cast** Corinna Harfouch, Boleslav Polivka, Petr Forman, Ondřej Vetchy  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Prague and surroundings, May - June 2004

**World Sales:**  
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After Requiem fuer eine romantische Frau, filmmaker Dagmar Knoepfel returned once more to the nineteenth century this May and June to shoot a drama about the last weeks in the life of the famous Czech authoress Bozena Nemcova.

This latest film is based on the last three letters of a woman who was writing against time as serious illness took its toll. "The three letters were never completed or posted," notes producer Herbert Rimbach of Avista Film. "They each have the same content and were written in a period of three weeks, but there were slight changes in each letter." Nemcova, who wrote the Bohemian national novel The Grandmother as well as the fairytale adaptation Three Hazelnuts for Aschenbrodel, was born in Bohemia in 1816, later lived in Prague and occupied herself during her life with language and ethnology. Her unhappy marriage to an alcoholic (played in Knoepfel’s film by leading Czech actor Boleslav Polivka) and their financial problems impoverished the family more and more, and the ailing Bozena regularly escaped into the subjective world of fiction. The artistic process and the attempt to understand her own reality are the central issues in this film about a female figure who founders in the society of the nineteenth century on the contradiction between being an autonomous artist, wife and mother.

As Alena Rimbach explains, Knoepfel came across these three letters by chance and decided to create a story showing Bozena in her present situation mixed with reminiscences via flashbacks of the beginnings of her career and raising up a family. "Corinna really got into the character of Bozena and her life even though it was a tough role for her to play as a sick woman who is at her peak."

"In her home town of Heilbronn she [Knoepfel] was offered the chance to stage an adaptation of a play she had written about these three letters. This then gave her the courage to go back to work on the screenplay," Herbert Rimbach adds. About a third of the film has original German sound with Corinna Harfouch alone in her room, while the other scenes have a mixture of Czech and German. "It was quite remarkable because Corinna would speak with Bolek – him in Czech and she in German – but it wasn’t a problem. It was as if they had an invisible connection with one another."

Indeed, Boleslav seems to have been predestined for the role of Nemcova as Alena Rimbach remembers: "Dagmar came to Prague with Requiem for a Bavarian Film Week about three or four years ago and she made a tour which also included Brno. She went out into the town for a walk with Andreas Stroehl [then at the Goethe Institut in the capital, now director of the Filmfest Munich] and Polivka came towards them in the street. Andreas knew Polivka and introduced him to Dagmar, her reaction being: ‘That’s my Josef Nemec!’ As Boleslav now says: ‘I was cast from the street!’ The collaboration on Ich lebe is set to mark a more long-term working relationship between Avista and Knoepfel as they plan to work together on the next project, the €2.4 million adaptation of the Tschingis Aitmatov novel The Girl With the Red Scarf.

**Land’s End**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Comedy, Drama  
**Production Company** Jost Hering Filme/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF Kleines Fernsehspiel/Mainz  
**Producers** Jost Hering  
**Director** Alex Ross  
**Screenplay** Alex Ross  
**Director of Photography** Henning Stinner  
**Editor** Andreas Zitzmann  
**Principal Cast** André Szymanski, Karina Plachetka  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Berlin, Brandenburg, May - June 2004

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Following the death of his grandmother, successful architect Marcus returns to his childhood village for the funeral. There, he meets a group of environmental activists trying to prevent the construction of a motorway through the area, among them the fascinating and idealistic Piglet. But there are also the cranky Hering brothers who know secrets from his past. In the end, Marcus has to decide for what things it is worth getting involved.

Land’s End is the second collaboration between British writer-director Alex Ross and the renowned ZDF Kleines Fernsehspiel (his 1998 film Move On Up winning the Audience Award at the Adolf Grimme Awards in 2000). For the self-confessed “big fan of Soderbergh”, he takes risks with editing and hand camera and it pays dividends. He lets the actors do the work. Land’s End is “both laconic and ironic, showing all aspects of a situation, including its absurdities. I’m a Brit, but this is purely a German story.”

Nonetheless, Ross, who erroneously claims “I’m not very good at explaining my own film, really!” obviously belongs to the English social democratic school of filmmaking, observing his characters with humor and complete sympathy, setting them within their groups and milieu. “I like working with theatrical actors. They’re very low-key with a realistic style. My problem with films, particularly in Germany, is that they explain too much with words, not pictures. I like lots of pauses, silences, looks. I also work as an editor so I am constantly editing in my head. And my cameraman, Henning Stirner, is always pushing me in this direction.” No surprise then, that Land’s End marks the film debut of André Szymanski, usually found treading the boards at Berlin’s Schaubuehne theater. “We wanted him especially,” says producer Jost Hering. “We even arranged the shoot around him.”

Ross also has nothing but praise for his partner: “He stood by me and the project for three years. The script took time, we tried to get funding and there were various delays. He helped me get a great team together. You really need to know why you’re doing a film like this because it’s certainly not for the money!” Hering is an old hand at working with first time and young talent and “I know how hard that is,” he says. “Sometimes I’ve had to give up halfway through. But it’s fun to see how things take shape. We knew we’d have little money so it’s all about cast and crew working together and that comes over perfectly in the film.”

The film, whose script received the German National Screenplay Award for Thomas Wendrich in 2002, centers on 20-year-old Milan from the village of Dunkelhauern on the Polish-German border in Saxony. Milan, a rabbit-hunter and maker of home brew from potatoes, has been brought up without his mother by his tyrannical, alcoholic father in an isolated village peopled only with stubborn, unworldly farmers. Into this eccentric world comes a lovesick Polish stranger whose mysterious death sets off a chain of events that rock the foundations of village life. Milan solves the mystery of the past and, using the power of love, manages to free himself from his father and the village …

Wendrich – whose background is actually in acting including engagements at the legendary Berliner Ensemble, but has developed a successful parallel career as a screenwriter – says that the idea for the film first came to him when he was in Iceland in 1996. He and director Sabine Michel – who both hail from Dresden – had a chance to try out the characters and setting in the short The Duck Shits Back (Hinten scheiss die Ente) which Michel made at the ”Konrad Wolf” Academy of Film & Television (HFF/B) in Potsdam-Babelsberg.

In addition, Wendrich has since directed a short film of his own, Zur Zeit verstorben, starring Michael Gwisdek, Fritz Marquardt and Paul Schulz – which won the Audience Award and a Special Mention at the Filmfest Dresden and the Flying Ox Prize for Best Short at the Schwarin Film Festival this year. Moreover, he has spent the past 12 months working on the adaptation of Wladimir Kaminer’s bestselling cult novel Russendisko for CMW Film Company, Von Vietinghoff Filmproduktion and Kinowelt Filmproduktion; and he is preparing his first feature film as a director, Mary-On-Water (Maria am Wasser), to be produced by Egoli Tossell Film next year.
Playing the lead is Karoline Herfurth, best known from the hit teen comedies Girls On Top 1 and 2. A regular face also on the small screen, Herfurth appeals perfectly to young adults of both sexes and, Alakus is sure, sports fans that like fit women. By a twist of casting fate, “Turks play mostly German roles and many Germans play Turkish parts,” says Alakus. “For me, as the narrator, I wanted the figures to be warmer, more hearty. Not that they’d all be German, anyway.”

Ofsayt is Alakus’ second collaboration with public broadcaster ZDF’s renowned Das kleine Fernsehspiel and the latest in her ongoing collaboration with Ralph Schwingel and Stefan Schubert’s Wueste Film. Regulars to German cinema will need no introduction to the Hamburg production company that so successfully combines making quality intelligent films on a budget with commercial success. In addition to taking the Golden Bear at the Berlinale 2004, Wueste Film’s Head-On (writer-director Fatih Akin) also recently scooped five main prizes at this year’s German Film Awards.

Ofsayt

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Melodrama, Sports Production Company Wueste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with ZDF Kleines Fernsehspiel/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, Nordmedia Producers Stefan Schubert, Ralph Schwingel Director Buket Alakus Screenplay Buket Alakus, Jan Berger Director of Photography Bella Halben Editor Andreas Radtke Principal Cast Karoline Herfurth, Ken Duken, Thierry van Werveke Shooting Language German Shooting in Hamburg, April - May 2004 German Distributor Timebandits Films/ Potsdam

World Sales:
Bavaria Film International · Dept. of Bavaria Media GmbH Thorsten Schaumann
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Ofsayt, as if football fans need reminding, is the Turkish word for offside. Not that you need to understand this complex rule or even appreciate soccer itself to enjoy Buket Alakus’ tragicomedy of a young girl, a passionate football player, whose life is torn apart by cancer but who rediscovers the joy of living through her love of “the beautiful game.”

“Uncomfortable themes have always interested me,” says Alakus. “Women are surrounded by all this beauty insanity! It’s a world of breast enlargements and liposuction and plastic surgery where the crazy is accepted as normal. Damn! I’m frustrated! So what do you do with a girl who loses her femininity?” Make a film where football provides the major backdrop? Why not?!

“It’s a complex game which has much to do with life,” says Alakus. “It’s hard to fake it, all the players have the same aim but it doesn’t mean they’re going to win. My father, brother, even the producers are all fans. The lead character is not a girly girl, and ladies’ football in Germany is sometimes better than the men’s game even though it’s not fully respected.” But don’t confuse Ofsayt with Bend It Like Beckham. “It’s a great film,” says Alakus, “but I’m not remaking it. This is about returning to life. It’s a different conflict. Bend It Like Beckham was about cultural dispute. My heroine, a German-Turkish girl, already has her identity.”

Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Companies Neue Goldkind Filmproduktion/Munich, Broth Film/Munich, in co-production with BR/Munich, SWR/Stuttgart, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM Producers Christoph Mueller, Sven Burgemeister Director Marc Rothemund Screenplay Fred Breinersdorfer Director of Photography Martin Langer Editor Hans Funck Production Design Jana Karen Principal Cast Julia Jentsch, Fabian Hinrichs, Alexander Held, Florian Stetter, Johanna Gastdorf, Joerg Hube, Maximilian Brueckner, Andre Hennicke Shooting Language German Shooting in Munich and surroundings, June - July 2004 German Distributor X Verleih/Berlin

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Twenty years after the release of Michael Verhoeven’s The White Rose and Percy Adlon’s Five Last Days, the story of German resistance figure Sophie Scholl is being brought to the cinema again by Marc Rothemund in his new feature Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage. As producer Christoph Mueller of Neue Goldkind Film explains, there is a new generation out there who can be introduced to the figure of Sophie Scholl since many of them won’t know the films by Verhoeven and Adlon. “We don’t claim to say that we will be better in how we tell the story, but rather that we will be different,” notes Mueller’s partner Sven Burgemeister. “An important distinction from the other films is that Marc’s film only shows the last six days from Sophie’s perspective whereas Verhoeven’s was more about the White Rose and Adlon’s about Sophie’s cellmate Else Gebel.”

Sophie’s example of civil courage – of risking her life and paying the utmost price for an idea – can be inspirational for the young generation, especially at times like this with war raging in different parts of the world. “And there will be a high level of identification because the audience will ask itself ‘How would we have acted in those days?’.” Mueller points out.

Ironically, Mueller and Burgemeister already had a Sophie Scholl project in development when they learned that Rothemund and screenwriter Fred Breinersdorfer were themselves working on a story about the resistance figure, so they decided to pool resources into the one project. “The final concept for the film is the one that Marc and Fred had developed. You have the feeling that you are there, there is a great intensity,” Mueller notes.

While the casting for the title role and the other characters took over a year to complete, Burgemeister says that the choice of Julia Jentsch (The Edukators) “turned out to be the ideal solution. She is very credible in the role, she feels everything and is very concentrated in her approach as she veers between hope and despair.”

“Marc is interested in authenticity,” adds Mueller. “He also wanted there to be a certain similarity with the original people, and to have actors who were good, but not too well-known.” In fact, they have put an impressive cast together, with brother Hans being played by Fabian Hinrichs (Gun Shy), the infamous judge Roland Freisler by André Hennicke (Angst) and Sophie’s cellmate Else Gebel by Johanna Gastdorf (The Miracle of Bern).

Type of Project Feature Film

Percy Adlon

Director of Photography Christine A. Maier

Screenplay Gordian Maugg, Alexander Haeusser

Production Company Transit Film GmbH · Loy W. Arnold, Mark Gruenthal

World Sales: Transit Film GmbH · Loy W. Arnold, Mark Gruenthal

Marc: historical crime story

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For many, the Zeppelin (named after its inventor, Graf Ferdinand von Zeppelin) represents the zenith of man’s conquest of the air. From their military beginnings to ushering in the age of trans-Atlantic air travel, these gracefully silent leviathans captured and gripped the popular imagination and fantasy before their era finally came to a spectacular and fiery end with the crash of the “Hindenburg” in front of the world’s newsreel cameras at Lakehurst, New Jersey, on 6 May 1937.

“Everyone knows the “Hindenburg” as a disaster film,” says writer-director Gordian Maugg, “but through the main protagonist’s search to discover why his grandfather perished in the crash I want to show the story of the fascinating attraction the Zeppelins had on a young man in the 1920s and how they came to cast a shadow over three generations of a southern German family.”

Based on Alexander Haeusser’s novel of the same title, Zeppelin! is a painstakingly researched piece of filmmaking, employing flashback to tell, says Maugg, “the story of simple people who believed in the power and strength of Zeppelin and his vision.”

“By telling what happens over three generations I want to show how the events of the past are handed on from one generation to the next. And this is also most definitely a crime story,” Maugg continues. “That means the hero, whose life still reverberates from what happened to his grandfather almost seventy years ago, and his father after that, is out to solve a mystery as to who did what, where, when, why and how on that fateful day.” Employing the technique Maugg has used to such effect in his previous award-winning films, Der Olympische Sommer (1993) and Hans Warns – Mein 20. Jahrhundert (1999), Zeppelin! seamlessly blends archive film with the fictional elements of the story. By entering into a co-production deal with rights holder Transit Film, Maugg has secured access to a rich seam of historical material. “Archive film shows the time as it was,” he says. “You’re in that time as well and can experience it even better in a film with dialogue.”

"Having worked with Gordian before," says co-producer Loy Arnold, "I believe he's come up with another interesting subject which will be well received at home and abroad."
German Films & Co-Productions at this

at Moscow
In Competition

Olgas Sommer
Olga's Summer
by Nina Grosse
Producer: MTM West/Cologne
World Sales: Bavaria Film
International/Geiselgasteig

at Karlovy Vary
In Competition

Napola
by Dennis Gansel
Producer: Olga Film/Munich
World Sales: Bavaria Film
International/Geiselgasteig

at Karlovy Vary
In Competition

Niceland
by Fridrik Thór Fridriksson
(IS/DK/DE/GB)
German Producer:
Tradewind Pictures/Cologne
World Sales: Bavaria Film
International/Geiselgasteig

at Karlovy Vary
Documentary Competition

Die Mitte
The Center
by Stanislaw Mucha
Producer: strandfilm/Frankfurt
World Sales: TELEPOOL/Munich

at Locarno
Video Competition

Egosshooter
by Field Recordings
(Christian Becker,
Oliver Schwabe)
Producer:
Reverse Angle Factory/Cologne
World Sales: Reverse Angle Pictures/Berlin

at Locarno
Piazza Grande

Der Neunte Tag
The Ninth Day (DE/LU)
by Volker Schloendorff
German Producer:
Provobis/Munich
World Sales: TELEPOOL/Munich

at Locarno
Piazza Grande

Die Syrische Braut
The Syrian Bride
by Eran Riklis (IL/DE/FR)
German Co-Producer:
Neue Impuls Film/Cologne
World Sales: TF1
International/Boulogne

at Locarno
Piazza Grande

Samsara
by Pan Nalin
German Producer:
Pandora Film/Cologne
World Sales: Bavaria Film
International/Geiselgasteig
Summer’s International Film Festivals

**at Karlovy Vary**
* Documentary Competition

**Die Souvenirs des Herrn X**
* The Souvenirs of Mr. X
* by Arash T. Riahi (AT/DE)

German Co-Producer:
Peter Stockhaus Film/Hamburg
World Sales: contact Austrian Film Commission/Vienna

**at Locarno**
* In Competition

**En Garde**
* by Ayse Polat

Producer: X Filme
Creative Pool/Berlin
World Sales: Bavaria Film International/Geiselgasteig

**The Buffalo Boy**
* by Minh Nguyen-Vo (BE/VN/DE)
* Yasmin
* by Kenny Glennan (GB/DE)

**at Locarno**
* In Competition

**Yasmin**
* by Kenny Glennan

German Co-Producer:
EuroArts/Berlin
World Sales: Moviehouse Entertainment/London

**at Locarno**
* In Competition

**Edelweiss-piraten**
* Edelweiss Pirates
* by Niko von Glasow

Producer/World Sales:
Palladio Film/Cologne

**at Montreal**
* World Competition

**Land of Plenty**
* by Wim Wenders

Producer: Reverse Angle/Berlin
World Sales: HanWay Films/London & Cinetic Media/New York

**at Venice**
* in Competition

**Le Chiavi di Casa**
* by Gianni Amelio (IT/DE/FR)

German Co-Producer:
Pandora Film/Cologne
World Sales:
01 Distribution/Rome

**at Venice**
* in Competition

**In die Hand geschrieben**
* Graven Upon Thy Palm
* by Rouven Blankenfeld

Producer/World Sales:
Academy of Media Arts (KHM)/Cologne

**at San Sebastian**
* New Directors’ Competition

**in Competition**

Edelweiss Pirates
by Niko von Glasow

Producer/World Sales:
Palladio Film/Cologne
German Films & Co-Productions in the Sidebars

**at Moscow**

**Panorama**
- *Gate to Heaven* by Veit Helmer
- *The Stratosphere Girl* by M.X. Oberg
- *Detroit* by Jan Christoph Glaser & Carsten Ludwig
- *Liegen Lernen* Learning to Lie by Hendrik Handloegten
- *Fast Souls* by Pasquale Marezzo (IT/DE)

**Special Screenings**
- *Gegen die Wand* Head-On by Fatih Akin
- *Was nuetzte die Liebe in Gedanken* Love in Thoughts by Achim von Borries
- *Die andere Frau* Another Woman by Margarethe von Trotta

**Perspectives**
- *Koenig der Diebe* King of Thieves by Ivan Fila (DE/SK)

**Alexander Kluge Retrospective**
- *Abschied von Gestern* Yesterday Girl (1966)
- *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* Occasional Work of a Female Slave (1973)
- *In Gefahr und groesster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod* In Danger and Dire Distress, the Middle of the Road Leads to Death (1974)
- *Deutschland im Herbst* Germany in Autumn (1978)
- *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die uebrige Zeit* The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time (1985)

**at Karlovy Vary**

**Documentary Competition: Shorts**
- *Anderer Herbst* The Other Autumn by Pawel Siczek
- *Peppers and Nudes – The Photographer Edward Weston* by Joachim Haupt & Sabine Pollmeier

**Special Events**
- *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* The Edukators by Hans Weingartner (DE/AT)

**Horizons**
- *Gegen die Wand* Head-On by Fatih Akin
- *Was nuetzte die Liebe in Gedanken* Love in Thoughts by Achim von Borries
- *Cold Light* by Hilmar Oddsson (IS/NO/GB/DE)
- *Hotel* by Jessica Hausner (AT/DE)
- *Honey Baby* by Mika Kaurismaeki (DE/FI/RU)
- *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring* by Kim Ki-Duk (KR/DE)

**Another View**
- *Die Geschichte vom weinenden Kamel* The Story of the Weeping Camel by Byambasuren Davaa & Luigi Falorni
- *Whisky* by Juan Pablo Rebella & Pablo Stoll (UY/AR/DE)
- *Cowboys and Angels* by David Gleeson (DE/IE)

**East of the West**
- *Heimkehrer* Homecoming by Jovan Arsenic
- *Landschaft* Landscape by Sergei Loznitsa
- *Sizza* Schizo by Guka Omarova (KZ/RU/FR/DE)

**Forum of Independents**
- *Schultze gets the Blues* by Michael Schorr
- *Begegnung im All* Encounter in Space by Thomas Draschan (AT/DE)

**Variety Critics’ Choice**
- *Little Girl Blue* by Anna Luif (DE/CH)

**Czech Films 2003-2004**
- *Koenig der Diebe* King of Thieves by Ivan Fila (DE/SK)
at this Summer’s International Film Festivals

**Dance for the Camera**
*Dialogues ’99/II* by Dirk Szuszie & Ferdinand Teubner

**Special Video Screenings**
*Gilaven! Sing!* by Stephan Settele
*Hollywood Legenden* by Eckhart Schmidt

**at Locarno**

**Filmmakers of the Present**
*Visions of Europe: Die alten boesen Lieder* by Fatih Akin (DE/DK)

**Appellations Suisse**
*Aesshaek – Tales from the Sahara* by Ulrike Koch (CH/DE)
*Cattolica* by Rudolph Jula (DE/CH)
*Verflixt verliebt* by Peter Luisi (CH/DE)

**Newsfront**
*Der Teufelsreporter* by Ernst Laemmle
*Alice in den Staedten* by Wim Wenders
*Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* by Volker Schoendorff & Margarethe von Trolta
*Die Faelschung* by Volker Schoendorff (DE/FR)
*Videogramm einer Revolution* by Harun Farocki & Andrei Ujica
*Salvador Allende* by Patricio Guzman (BE/DE/FR/ES)

**Critics’ Week**
*Die Blutritter* by Douglas Wolfsperger
*Calling Hedy Lamarr* by Georg Misch (DE/AT/GB)
*Touch the Sound* by Thomas Riedelsheimer

**at Montreal**

**Cinema of Europe**
*Nachbarinnen* by Franziska Meletzky
*Oegeln* by Patrick Lambertz
*Such mich nicht* by Tilman Zens
*Sugar Orange* by Andreas Struck
*Yugotrip* by Nadya Derado
*Zwischen Nacht und Tag* by Nicolai Rohde
*Der Schwimmer* by Klaus Huetttman (short)
*Restored Weekend* by Gerd Gockell (short)
*Die Ueberraschung* by Lancelot von Naso (short)

**World Competition: Shorts**
*Kalte Schatten* by Peter Kocyla
*Sonntag, im August* by Marc Meyer

**Documentaries of the World**
*Die Mitte* by Stanislaw Mucha
*Texas Kabul* by Helga Reidemeister

**Out of Competition**
*Gegen die Wand* by Fatih Akin

**at Venice**

**Horizons**
*Agnes und seine Brueder* by Oskar Roehler
*Familia Rodante* by Pablo Traperos (AR/FR/DE)
*Musica Cubana* by German Kral

**Horizons: Special Event**
*Heimat 3* by Edgar Reitz
Agnes and his brothers is the story of three siblings who couldn’t be any more different from each other: Hans-Joerg (Moritz Bleibtreu) is a librarian, sexually obsessed, and a passionate voyeur. Werner (Herbert Knaup) is a successful politician with a self-confident wife and two sons. But behind the facade of their marriage, the foundation is starting to chip. And then there is Agnes (Martin Weiss), who used to be a man, but who now, as a result of unfulfilled love and with great desire, works his way through the night as a dancer.

They all share the same love-hate relationship with the same man who greatly influenced their lives – their eccentric father. One day, one of them finally breaks free …

Genre Tragicomedy Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Oskar Roehler Screenplay Oskar Roehler Director of Photography Carl-F. Koschnick Editors Juliane Lorenz, Simone Hofmann Music by Martin Todsharow Production Design Sabine Rudolph Producer Stefan Arndt Production Company X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg Principal Cast Moritz Bleibtreu, Herbert Knaup, Martin Weiss, Katja Riemann, Tom Schilling, Vadim Glowna Casting Simone Baer Length 116 min, 3,174 m Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital 5.1 Festival Screenings Venice 2004 (Horizons) With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, BKM, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA) German Distributor X Verleih/Berlin

Oskar Roehler was born in 1959, the son of writers Gisela Elsner and Klaus Roehler. He grew up in London, Rome and Nuremberg and made his first short film She LA in 1994. He had his feature debut in 1995 with Gentleman, which was shown at the Filmfest Munich the same year. He followed this two years later with Silvester Countdown which won the Hypo-Bank Young Director’s Award ex aequo with Martin Walz’s Liebe Luegen in Munich. Roehler has been a scriptwriter since 1990 with Ex (1995) and Terror 2000 (1992), and he is also the author of the novel Das Abschnappuniversum. He has lived in Berlin since the early 1980s and works as a freelance journalist and author. For No Place To Go (Die Unberuehrbare, 2000) he received the German Film Award in 2000. His other films include: Greedy (Gierig, 1998), Suck My Dick (2000), Angst (Der alte Affe Angst, 2003), and Agnes and his brothers (Agnes und seine Bruder, 2004), among others.

World Sales:
Bavaria Film International · Dept. of Bavaria Media GmbH · Thorsten Schaumann Bavariafilmplatz 8 · 82031 Geiselgasteig/Germany phone +49-89-64 99 26 86 · fax +49-89-64 99 37 20 email: bavaria.international@bavaria-film.de · www.bavaria-film-international.de
Die Blutritter

RIDERS OF THE SACRED BLOOD

For over 1,000 years the Upper Swabian city of Weingarten in southwest Germany has been celebrating the Ride of the Sacred Blood. On the day after Ascension, 3000 horsemen pay homage to the Holy Relic, which is believed to contain a drop of the blood of Jesus Christ.

While similar rituals elsewhere have been reduced to folkloric popular events, here in Upper Swabia the tradition is taken very seriously. For the people of Weingarten, the Ride of the Sacred Blood is “like Christmas, Easter and Pentecost all rolled into one,” as Father Nikolaus says in the film. Veneration of the Holy Relic heals the sick, gives courage to those in despair, and turns scoffers into devout believers.

With gentle irony and genuine fondness for his protagonists, Douglas Wolfsperger presents a slice of German small-town life and portrays some of the quirkiest characters in this extremely Catholic event.

Blood stands for life and for wounds, for healing and death. In the end, the portraits of the riders condense into an integral whole and leave us with a more acute sense of the transitory nature of earthly life.


Douglas Wolfsperger was born in 1958 in Zurich/Switzerland as a German national and grew up on Lake Constance. After freelance work at SWF in Baden-Baden and WDR in Cologne, he works today as a writer and director. His films include: the short Die Begegnung der Jungfrau Maria mit John Travolta und deren Folgen (short, 1978), the features Lebe Kreuz und Sterbe Quer (1985), Kies (1986), Probefahrt ins Paradies (1992), Heirate mir! (1999), the award-winning documentary Bellaria – As Long As We Live! (Bellaria – so lange wir leben!, 2001), and Riders of the Sacred Blood (Die Blutritter, 2003).

World Sales:
Eikon Suedwest GmbH
Ludwigstrasse 73a · 70176 Stuttgart/Germany
phone +49-30-69 53 72 17
email: koellmann@eikon-film.de · www.eikon-film.de
Followed by a sadistic German police officer, the two young runaways Jenny and Paul flee to Paris, the city of their dreams. Paris is as colorful and alive as their German provincial town was small and gray. They enjoy Paris to the fullest - in brasseries and nights in Montmartre - but the police catch up with them.

Dirty Sky is a modern fairytale with a double ending: an eternally classic love story and a bloody road movie.

**Genre** Love Story, Road Movie  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2003  
**Director** Claude-Oliver Rudolph  
**Screenplay** Claude-Oliver Rudolph  
**Director of Photography** Frank Grunert  
**Music by** DAF & Die Soehne Mannheims  
**Production Design** Kalle Braune  
**Producers** Barbara Wackernagel-Jacobs, Claude-Oliver Rudolph  
**Production Company** Carpe diem Film & TV/Saarbruecken, in co-production with Les Films D’Europe/Luxembourg  
**Principal Cast** Cosma Shiva Hagen, Nikolai Kinski, Claude-Oliver Rudolph, Sabine von Maydell, Uwe Fellensiek  
**Casting** Movie Casting.de, Antje Scholz  
**Special Effects** Karl Heinz Bochnik  
**Length** 88 min, 2,800 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** French  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR

**Festival Screenings** Ophuels Festival Saarbruecken 2003  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, Saar Toto  
**German Distributor** Aladin Media/Cologne

**Claude-Oliver Rudolph** was born in 1956 in Frankfurt. After studying Philosophy, Psychology and Theater Sciences, he worked as an assistant to Jiri Menzel. He then participated in an acting seminar with Lee Strassberg. He is an Acting instructor at various film academies and film institutes. Also active as an actor and writer, his films include: Der dicke Rebell (1986), Lost Horizons (1987), The Wonderbeats (1990), Ebbies Bluff (1992), Weinende Ruhr (1994), Liebe mich bis in den Tod (TV, 1998), Dirty Sky (2003), and Amundsen – The Penguin (2003).
Sixteen-year-old Alice was put into a Catholic educational institute for girls by her mother. She is quite different from the other girls: Because of her extreme sense of hearing she perceives the world around her differently from other people and prefers to stay pretty much by herself. In the home she meets Berivan, a Kurdish girl stranded in the same place hoping for a positive judgment from the German immigration authorities. Gradually, Alice opens up to Berivan and they become friends. But the situation between the two begins to dramatically get out of control after Berivan falls in love with a boy called Illir.

En Garde is a moving story about two girls’ friendship, their hopes and dreams and their favorite game: fencing.

Genre Coming-of-Age Story Category Feature Film Cinema
Year of Production 2004 Director Ayse Polat Screenplay Ayse Polat Director of Photography Patrick Orth Editor Gergana Voigt Music by moser.meyer Producer Maria Koepf Production Company X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in association with intervista digital media/Hamburg, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz Principal Cast Maria Kwiatkowski, Pinar Erincin, Luk Pliyes, Geno Lechner, Antje Westermann, Teresa Harder Casting Weldy & Seibicke Casting Directors Length 94 min, 2,694 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SRD Festival Screenings Locarno 2004 (In Competition) With backing from FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Nordmedia German Distributor X Verleih/Berlin

Ayse Polat was born in Malatya/Turkish Kurdistan in 1970 and moved to Germany in 1978. She made several shorts on 8 mm and video from 1985-1991 and studied Philosophy, Cultural Studies and German in Berlin and Bremen from 1991-1993. Her films include: Fremdennacht (short, 1992), Ein Fest fuer Beyhau (short, 1993) – which won the WDR Promotion Prize in Muenster in 1994 and First Prize at the Turkish Film Festival in Nuremberg the same year, Graefin Sophia Hatun (short, 1997, Jury Prize Ankara 1997), and the features Auslandstournee (1999, Young Director’s Talent Prize Ankara 2001), and En Garde (2004).
The two film cycles, *Heimat* and *Heimat 2*, are recognized milestones in the history of television. *Heimat 3* is not only the third part of the trilogy, but also a narrative inventory of the century in its final decade. Its inner theme is one of endings and beginnings. In six tragicomic episodes, *Heimat 3* tells of the spirit of renewal of the early 1990s, recording how what began as German dreams became less and less German, losing themselves instead in global immensity.

**Genre** Drama, History  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2004  
**Director** Edgar Reitz  
**Screenplay** Edgar Reitz, Thomas Brussig  
**Directors of Photography** Thomas Mauch, Christian Reitz  
**Music by** Nikos Mamangakis, Michael Riessler  
**Production Design** Franz Bauer, Michael Fechner, Irmhild Gumm  
**Producer** Robert Busch  
**Production Company** Edgar Reitz Film/Munich, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, ARD-DEGETO/Frankfurt, ARRI Cine Technik/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Henry Arnold, Salome Kammer, Michael Kausch, Matthias Kniesbeck, Uwe Steimle, Christian Leonhard  
**Casting** Petra Kiener  
**Length** 680 min, 18,605 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color/b&w, 1:1.66  
**Original Version** German  
**Dubbed Version** Italian  
**Subtitled Versions** English, Italian  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Venice 2004 (Horizons: Special Event)  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, MEDIA Plus, State Ministries of Rheinland-Pfalz  
**German Distributor** Kinowelt Filmverleih/ Leipzig  

**Edgar Reitz** was born in 1932 in Morbach and earned degrees in Theater and in Art History. He was a member of the so-called Oberhausen Group in 1962 and, together with filmmaker Alexander Kluge in 1963, co-founded the Institute for Film at the Ulm Academy of Design. A selection of his numerous films includes:  
Maria and her husband move in with her father after he suffers a debilitating aneurism. When her father’s intensive demands conflict with her husband’s expectations, the situation soon becomes too much for Maria to handle. Soon her husband’s insensitivity and lack of support turns abusive. To further complicate matters, Maria begins to receive anonymous phone calls, which over time distance her from her family and her deep religious values.

Rouven Blankenfeld was born in 1975 in Berlin. From 1997 to 1999, he worked as a freelance graphic artist for several print and advertising campaigns. Since 1999, he has been a student at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. His films include: the shorts Eine Lektion in Erziehung (2000), Tag der Umkehr (2001), Kleine Suenden (2001), Das Heft (2001), the feature Graven Upon Thy Palm (In die Hand geschrieben, 2003), Kazumi (trailer, 2003), Auge um Auge (short, 2003), Koeln/Kulturhauptstadt (image trailer, 2004). He is currently working on his next feature Kazumi.
A tragic traffic accident - a woman is killed. Tristan's wife. They have been married for sixteen years. She was his first love ... And Tristan goes back in time, remembering how everything began.

Fifteen-year-old Tristan, shy and quiet, has got a problem. He is no longer a child, but he is not grown up either. He is in puberty. His sexual awakening throws him into deep confusion. While his parents are in the process of getting a divorce, Tristan is confronted with the difficulties of showing his love and affection to the girl he is longing for. And he doesn't have much time left, since he has to move away with his mother at the end of the year.

First Kiss is a romantic coming-of-age comedy of first love. It is also the story of a group of friends, each trying to find their individual way of life. And it evokes the period of the eighties, the times of bottle parties and slow-dance.

Genre Comedy, Coming-of-Age Story Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2002 (new director's cut 2004) Director Kai Wessel Screenplay Sathyan Ramesh Director of Photography Hagen Bogdanski Editor Tina Freitag Music by Richard Cameron, Gerry Arling Producers Markus Gruber, Maike Haas, Roland Willaert Production Company D & D Film & Fernsehproduktion/Huerth, in co-production with Buena Vista International (Germany)/Munich Principal Cast Oliver Korittke, Max Mauff, Diane Siemons-Willems Length 94 min, 2,585 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital Surround Festival Screenings Moscow 2003, Valladolid 2004 With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA)

Kai Wessel was born in Hamburg in 1961 and has been directing since the 1980s. His feature Martha Jellneck was nominated for a German Film Award in 1988. He has directed numerous TV films for ZDF, ARD and ProSieben, including the award-winning Victor Klemperer. Ein Leben in Deutschland (1999). A selection of his other films includes: Mein Bruder, der Idiot (TV, 1999), Hat er Arbeit? (TV, 2000), Goebbels & Geduldig (TV, 2001), and First Kiss (Das Jahr der ersten Kuesse, 2002).
“Crash” isn’t his name, but it’s what they call him. Orphaned at the age of seven after a car accident killed both of his parents, Crash grew up with a scar on his face and a scar in his soul. A fear of intimacy has turned him into a melancholy loner; a longing to help others has led him to become a medic on a rescue team. When he’s not out on the streets saving lives, he dreams. Of escaping. Of finding the young woman who always appears just before he wakes. One night, he comes face to face with the woman of his dreams: November is her name, her boyfriend has just died of an overdose, and she’s a good eight months pregnant. But she’s ready to go on with her life. And she makes Crash realize that he, too, has a life – one of his own, not just the one he is living for others. As he and November fall in love, Crash begins to feel something like happiness and hope. And when fate seems about to repeat itself, it is up to him to choose between leaving everything behind or grabbing his new life with both hands …

In his virtuoso feature-film debut, Hendrik Hoelzemann probes into the soul of a troubled young man who rescues others but is desperately in need of being rescued himself. Bringing a subdued yet powerful intensity to his role as “Crash,” noted young talent Matthias Schweighoefer (Soloalbum) infuses the film with poignant intensity.
A retired Green Beret, Paul is obsessed with protecting the Land of the Free and with doing his part in the “War Against Terror”. Shot down in combat near Long Thanh at the age of 18, he is now experiencing the effects of dioxin poisoning from more than 30 years ago. The events of 9/11 retriggered his trauma of war and made the ghosts of his past return.

Lana has lived abroad for the last 10 years and returns home after a long absence. She’s an idealist, still trying to define her place in the world and finds her Christian faith in striking opposition to positions taken by the present administration. Paul’s reclusive existence collapses when Lana enters his life. She is his long forgotten niece, and he is the only connection to her mother’s family. When they witness the random shooting of a homeless Middle-Eastern man, they investigate the incident together. On this quest for the truth, their different views of the world collide radically.

Land of Plenty is a darkly humorous and poignant essay on contemporary America, based on the hope that “truth” is not an altogether lost notion in today’s political and social realities.

Genre Drama, Road Movie Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Wim Wenders Screen-play Michael Meredith, Wim Wenders Director of Photography Franz Lustig Editor Moritz Laube Music by Thom & Nackt Production Design Nathan Amondson Executive Producers Peter Schwartzkopff, Jonathan Sehring, Caroline Kaplan, John Sloss Producers In-Ah Lee, Samson Mucke, Jake Abrahaim, Gary Winick Production Companies Reverse Angle International/Berlin, InDigEnt/New York Principal Cast John Diehl, Michelle Williams, Richard Edson, Wendell Pierce, Gloria Stuart, Burt Young, Shaun Toub, Bernard White Casting Ellen Lewis, Victoria Thomas Length 114 min, 3,120 m Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version English Dubbed Version German Subtitled Version German Sound Technology Dolby Digital Festival Screenings Venice 2004 (In Competition) German Distributor Reverse Angle Pictures/Berlin

The single package-delivery woman Dora lives a somewhat reclusive life in a high-rise in Leipzig and gets through everyday life with her dry sense of humor. But her quiet, well-ordered life spins out of control when she has to hide her mysteriously fascinating Polish neighbor Jola - who believes to have accidentally killed someone. Dora is hesitant at first to take her in, but she cannot seem to shake her fascination with Jola. Dora’s trust in the direct, impulsive woman grows - Jola seems to ask exactly those questions no one else dares to ask. When Dora finds out that the accusations against Jola have been lifted, she lies about the status of the police investigation in order to keep her Polish neighbor for herself …

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Franziska Meletzky Screenplay Elke Roessler Director of Photography Alexandra Czok Editor Juergen Winkelblech Music by Elke Hosenfeld, Moritz Denis Production Design Leonie von Arnim Producers Lydia Elmer, Jan Philip Lange Production Companies Eikon Media/Berlin, JUNIFILM/Berlin, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Film & Fernsehen "Konrad Wolf" (HFF/B)/Potsdam-Babelsberg RBB/Potsdam-Babelsberg Principal Cast Dagmar Manzel, Grazyna Szapolowska, Joerg Schuettauf Length 88 min, 2,517 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version English Sound Technology Dolby SRD Festival Screenings Montreal 2004, Warsaw 2004 With backing from Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg

Franziska Meletzky was born in 1973 in Leipzig. After studying German, Media Studies and English at Leipzig University, she made the short film Blind Date (1996) and staged Saxonian Classics and The Ice Princess in 1997 at the Oberhausen Theater. She then enrolled at the "Konrad Wolf" Academy of Film & Television (HFF/B). Her other films include: the shorts Mad About It (Filmverrueckt, 1998), Mitgerissen! (1998), Scent (Duft 1999), To Weimar (Weg nach Weimar, 1999), 39 1/2 (2000), Knife and Fork Only (Alles mit Besteck, 2001), Only the Beloved Soul (Gluecklich ist allein, 2002), and the feature Wanted! (Nachbarinnen, 2004).
Germany, 1942. The Hitler regime is at the peak of its political and military power. Seventeen-year-old Friedrich Weimer, from the Berlin working-class district of Wedding, is a gifted boxer. Thanks to his talent, he receives an offer to study at an elite National-Political School, the NAPOLA of Allenstein, which trains the future leaders of the German Reich. Friedrich sees this as the chance of a lifetime to free himself from the restrictions of his class and enrolls in the school, which is located in an old castle, against the will of his parents. There, in a disconcerting world dominated by harsh Nazi discipline, he experiences both fierce rivalry and unexpected camaraderie – until a barbarous raid against escaped prisoners of war and his growing friendship with the quiet and sensitive Albrecht Stein, the son of a high-ranking official, force him to make an important decision, one that will also mark the end of his youth.

Director Dennis Gansel has transformed his award-winning screenplay (German Film Award 2003 for Best Unproduced Script), co-authored with Maggie Peren, into the gripping, nuanced portrait of a friendship between two young men caught in the barbaric mechanisms of the Nazi system.

**Genre** Drama, History  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2004  
**Director** Dennis Gansel  
**Screenplay** Dennis Gansel, Maggie Peren  
**Director of Photography** Torsten Breuer  
**Editor** Jochen Retter  
**Music by** Normand Corbeil  
**Musical Themes** Angelo Badalamenti  
**Production Design** Matthias Muesse  
**Producers** Molly von Fuerstenberg, Viola Jaeger, Harald Kuegler  
**Production Company** Olga Film/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film/Munich, SevenPictures Film/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Max Riemelt, Tom Schilling, Devid Striesow, Joachim Bissmeier, Justus von Dohnányi, Michael Schenk, Florian Stetter, Claudia Michelsen  
**Length** 110 min, 3,150 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Karlovy Vary 2004 (In Competition)  
**Awards** German Film Award 2003 for Best Unproduced Script, Best Leading Actor Karlovy Vary 2004  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA)  
**German Distributor** Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

**Dennis Gansel** was born in 1973 in Hanover. Following his civil service duty, he studied at the Academy of Television & Film (HFF/M) in Munich. His films include: The Wrong Trip (short, 1995), Living Dead (1996), Im Auftrag des Herrn (short, 1997), the award-winning The Phantom (TV, 2000), Girls on Top (Maedchen Maedchen, 2001), and Napola (2004).
In February 1942, Abbé Henri Kremer, a priest from Luxembourg, is released from the Dachau concentration camp and sent home. Kremer soon realizes the Nazis are displeased with his bishop for refusing to cooperate with the German occupation forces, and that they want to use Kremer to provide public support for Hitler’s policy regarding the Church. All it entails is his making a “small” compromise. Untersturmfuehrer Gephardt of the Gestapo, himself under pressure from the high command, gives Kremer nine days … or return to the living hell he has just escaped from …

Genre Drama
Category Feature Film Cinema
Year of Production 2004
Director Volker Schloendorff
Screenplay Eberhard Goerner, Andreas Pflueger
Director of Photography Tomas Erhart
Editor Peter R. Adam
Music by Alfred Schnittke
Production Design Ari Hantke
Producer Juergen Haase
Production Company Provobis Film/Munich, in co-production with Videopress/Luxembourg, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg
Principal Cast Ulrich Matthes, August Diehl, Bibiana Beglau, Hilmar Thate
Length 97 min, 2,787 m
Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
Original Version German
Subtitled Versions English, French
Sound Technology Dolby Digital
Festival Screenings Locarno 2004 (Piazza)
Awards Bernhard Wicki Award 2004

With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Film Fund Luxembourg

German Distributor Progress Film-Verleih/Berlin

Volker Schloendorff was born in Wiesbaden in 1939. He made his debut as a film director in 1965 with Young Toerless which won the German Film Award in 1966 and the Max Ophuels Award. His most well-known films include: Baal (1970), The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach (1971), the filming of Heinrich Boell’s The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum (1975, in co-direction with Margarethe von Trotta), Fangschuss (1976), Germany in Autumn (1976, together with Stefan Aust, Alexander Kluge, et al), Circle of Deceit (1980/81), Swann in Love (1983), Death Of A Salesman (1985), A Gathering of Old Men (1987), The Handmaid’s Tale (1990), Voyager (1990), The Ogre (1996), Palmetto (1998), The Legends of Rita (1999), the documentary Ein Produzent hat Seele oder er hat keine (2001), a contribution to the cycle of shorts Ten Minutes Older: The Cello (2002), and The Ninth Day (2004). In 1979, his adaptation of Guenter Grass’ The Tin Drum was the first film by a German director to be awarded a Golden Palm in Cannes. A year later, it was the first German film to be awarded an OSCAR for Best Foreign Language Film.
Jed and Chloe are in their early twenties, in love – and mentally handicapped. When Jed accidentally causes the death of Chloe’s cat, which she loves almost as much as Jed, Chloe retreats into silence and loses her will to live. Convinced that there must be something else in life to give it meaning, something that will help revive Chloe’s spirit, Jed sets out to find it. Led to believe that a scrapmetal dealer, Max, knows the precious answer, Jed cautiously enters the eccentric world of this solitary man. Yet in spite of the bond of friendship that develops between them, Max remains tight-lipped – even after Chloe falls into a coma and Jed begs him to tell him the secret. All that Max reveals is the tragedy that haunts him and pushes him toward self-destruction. In a moment of raw catharsis, Jed realizes that he, he himself, knows what he’s been looking for. Whispering the magic words to Max, Jed saves him from a greater tragedy. Now he must hurry to tell Chloe. But when he arrives at the hospital, her bed is empty …

Niceland is an intimate drama that sensitively portrays the naïve yet uncompromising search of a handicapped young man for the purpose of life.

Genre Love Story, Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Fridrik Thór Fridriksson

Screenplay Huldur Breidjord Director of Photography Morten Soborg Editor Sigvaldi J. Karason, Anders Refn Music by Mugison Production Design Arni Pall Johannsson Producers Skúli Fr. Malmquist, Thor S. Sigurjónsson Production Company Zik Zak Filmworks/Reykjavik, in co-production with Tradewind Pictures/Cologne, Nimbus Film/Hvidovre, Film & Music Entertainment/London Principal Cast Martin Compston, Gary Lewis, Kerry Fox, Peter Capaldi, Shauna Macdonald, Gudrun Bjarnadottir, Timmy Lang, Gudrun Gisladottir Casting Liora Reich Length 86 min, 2,509 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version English Subtitled Versions French, English Sound Technology Dolby Digital Festival Screenings Karlovy Vary 2004 (In Competition) With backing from Eurimages, FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Filmstiftung NRW, Icelandic Film Centre, Nordic Film & TV Fund, The Danish Film Institute

Fridrik Thór Fridriksson was born in 1954. Self-educated in filmmaking, he started making 16 mm short films while still at school. He ran the Icelandic University film club from 1974-1978 where he promoted popularized film classics and art films. He was also founder, editor and film critic of Iceland’s first film magazine. Fridriksson was a driving force in establishing the Reykjavik Film Festival in 1978 and has been one of its leaders ever since. His films include: White Whales (1987), the OSCAR-nominated Children of Nature (1991), Cold Fever (1994), Movie Days (1994), Devil’s Island (1996), Angels of the Universe (2000), On Top Down Under (2002), Falcons (2002), and Niceland (2004).

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“It takes courage to love life,” says Eva, and the pregnant 22-year-old should know. She has a low-paying, unrewarding job, a mother who refuses to see what she doesn’t want to, a father who is losing his mind, and a baby growing inside her from a boyfriend who left her. Yet Eva loves life. And when she suddenly realizes that there is a little human being within her, listening to her every word, she decides against an abortion. Little by little, she begins to share her love of life with the child in her womb. With words, music and sounds, she describes the world to her baby, shyly at first, then more and more confidently. Her spirits rise even more when she meets and falls in love with the sensitive Michal, who is perhaps her guardian angel — or a fallen angel. Just as she is reaching an inner freedom, she learns that her delivery will be difficult and that there is a chance her child could die. By now, however, Eva has found the courage to face every challenge: through her unborn child, who responds to her and urges her to go on — for its sake, and for hers.

Ono is an emotionally complex study of a young woman whose unwanted pregnancy becomes a precious gift.
Peppers and Nudes – The Photographer Edward Weston

He discovers beauty and abstraction in places where nobody had seen them before. In a pepper, for example. And he never ceases doing nude photography. His photographs become icons of the modern age and influence whole generations of photographers. Peppers and Nudes is a portrait of the American photographer Edward Weston (1886 – 1958).

At the age of 37, the photographer moves to Mexico. For him, an emergence into modern times. He photographs revolutionaries, artists and, again and again, his beloved Tina Modotti. Back in California he settles in Carmel. Fascinated by the dramatic rocky coastline of the Pacific, he sets up his studio here. He comes to photograph one place right on his doorstep for the rest of his life. Point Lobos, washed by spray and waves. His black-and-white pictures are photography pure: objective, abstract and yet full of magic.

The life of Edward Weston – on the trail in California. A journey to Carmel and Point Lobos, to the sand-dunes of Oceano and through the bizarre rocky outcrops of Death Valley. And a very personal history of modern American photography.

Genre Art Category Documentary Cinema & TV Year of Production 2004 Directors Joachim Haupt, Sabine Pollmeier Screenplay Joachim Haupt, Sabine Pollmeier Director of Photography Roland Wagner (BVK) Editor Gisela Castronari-Jaensch (BFS) Producer Sabine Pollmeier Production Company Parnass Film/Munich, in co-production with ARTE/Strasbourg, NDR/Hamburg, Narrator Jean-Luc Julien Length 27 min, 770 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.66 Original Version English Dubbed Versions German Sound Technology Dolby SR Festival Screenings Karlovy Vary 2004 (Documentary Competition)

Joachim Haupt studied Modern German Literature, Modern History and Sociology in Mainz, Geneva and Munich. In 1993, he had his directorial debut with a documentary on the underground techno scene in Berlin.

India before independence, a carpet factory in the countryside near Calcutta. For Ravi and Masha, who are forced to work as child laborers, it is the beginning of a tragic love story. Realizing that money determines whether one is free or enslaved, the ambitious and resolute Ravi works his way up from common worker to best carpet knotter, with just one goal - to leave the factory behind him. Learning that the factory owner plans to keep Masha for himself, Ravi sacrifices all his savings to buy Masha’s freedom. As she leaves, Masha promises to wait for him in Calcutta’s biggest Shiva temple at every full moon. Years later, after having earned enough to buy his way out, Ravi becomes a carpet seller and rises to prosperity. Masha, who has become a sought-after dancer in a brothel, still goes to the temple hoping to find Ravi. He also visits the holy site, but fate prevents them from finding each other. Although they marry others, whose affections they return, they keep their true love for one another. When they unexpectedly meet again, they enjoy a few moments of bliss before their love threatens to destroy them. Masha is willing to abandon everything for Ravi, but once again, the lovers are separated. Time passes, casting its shadows on the old and the new, the changing and the unchanging, the never-ending cycle of love …

Defiantly romantic, emphatically emotional, this epic love story evokes the days when grand passions ruled the movies and cast their spell on ill-fated lovers and rapt audiences alike. The first full-length feature film by young OSCAR-winning writer and director Florian Gallenberger (Quiero ser), Shadows of Time was produced by OSCAR-nominated Helmut Dietl (Schtonk!) and Norbert Preuss (The Experiment).

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Florian Gallenberger Screenplay Florian Gallenberger Director of Photography Juergen Juerges Editor Hansjoerg Weissbrich Music by Gert Wilden Jr. Production Design Amardeep Behl Producers Helmut Dietl, Norbert Preuss Production Companies Diana Film/Munich, Fanes Film/Munich, in co-production with CP Medien/Ludwigsburg, Mondragon Films/Berlin Principal Cast Prashant Narayanan, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Irrfan Kahn, Tillotama Shome Casting Dilip Shankar Length 122 min, 3,355 m Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version Bengali Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR, Dolby SRD With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM German Distributor TOBIS Film/Berlin

Five beautiful women. Five talented actresses. One night and a thousand drinks.

They meet at a casting for a TV movie. At first they size each other up, but soon they start talking – about the screenplay, about their reasons to act in the film, about their private lives. By now they realize that none of them really wants the acting job, so they follow the spur of the moment and together they leave to escape their frustrations for a day.

Dana’s secretly kept pregnancy will soon unable her to work as an actress. Barbara is growing all the more suspicious that the man she loves will leave her. Kandis is having a complicated affair, while Geno likes women, which doesn’t make life easier for her. And yet none of them realizes the strong desperation that is leading Karin to an unforeseen and final decision.

Somehow these five women are not able to break away from each other, so what started as a day-trip becomes a journey into the night. And in the course of this night, longings, hopes and fears are gradually revealed.
Sergeant Pepper

Felix’s parents are worried. He is six years old and instead of playing with other kids, he hides in a tiger costume all day, invites no one but a turtle to his birthday party, insists that his stuffed animals are talking to him and has not a single human friend to speak of – nor does he want one. But everything changes the day Sergeant Pepper enters Felix’s life. After discovering what seems to be a lost little dog hiding in the backyard, Felix soon learns that there is much more to this cute canine than meets the eye. Pepper has inherited a fortune from his old master, and he has a very special gift: he can talk to children who believe in miracles. Unfortunately, the master’s heirs would kill to get their hands on Pepper’s house and Pepper is in dire need of some human help. As Felix finds out what it’s like to have a real friend, he gets ready to face the world on its own terms, bravely teaming up with his big sister for an adventurous journey to save the life of his new pal.

After winning international recognition with Mostly Martha (Bella Martha, 2001), a hit in European theaters and one of the most successful German films ever in the U.S., director Sandra Nettelbeck reveals an equal skill in the family genre and a sure hand with young actors in this delightful feature.

Screenplay Sandra Nettelbeck Director of Photography Michael Berti Editors Ewa J. Lind, Joerg Langkau, Carlos Domeque Music by Guy Fletcher Production Design Renate Schmaderer, Peter Schwab Producer Andreas Bareiss Production Company MTM Medien & Television/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film/Munich, Bavaria Film/Munich, Sgt. Pepper/London, Mikado Film/Milan Principal Cast Ulrich Thomsen, Johanna ter Steege, Barbara Auer, Oliver Broumis, August Zirner, Peter Lohmeyer, Neal Thomas, Carolyn Prein, Michael Brandner Casting Heta Mantscheff, Marilyn Johnson Special Effects Snow Business International Length 98 min, 2,695 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Stereo With backing from FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern German Distributor Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

Sandra Nettelbeck was born in Hamburg in 1966 and completed her high school education in 1984. She was a production assistant on several films between 1984-1985 and began studying Film at San Francisco State University in 1987, producing among others A Certain Grace (Best Short Film, San Francisco 1992). She made her feature debut Loose Ends (Unbestaendig und kuehl) in 1995 and wrote and directed Mammamia (Best Screenplay & Best Film, Saarbruecken 1998) in 1997. Her other films include Mostly Martha (Bella Martha, 2001), and Sergeant Pepper (2004).

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When mom still runs your life, when candy is your only pleasure, when you’re old enough to get up and go but don’t – only a miracle can save you. Or an outlaw, driven by the raw force of despair. Meet Frankie and Marc, mama’s boy and devil, two oddballs with just about nothing in common except their refusal to grow up and face the world. Marc thinks he’s killed someone and has to flee. So while Frankie’s mother shops, Marc takes off in her camper, along with Frankie in it. Two men on the run, destination Tangiers. On the endless highways, Frankie’s fear gives way to hesitant trust. Through the cracks in Marc’s tough-as-nails shell, Frankie sees a vulnerable core and a son in search of his father. Soon they’re joined by Ilvy, an angelic blonde, a vision of freedom without ties. She gives herself to one, flirts with the other, disappears, re-appears, living one day at a time. Just like Frankie and Marc. Headed for Tangiers. One to find his father, the other to find … himself?

In this sweetly screwy, touching road movie and debut feature by Cyril Tuschi, leads Fabian Busch (Learning to Lie) and Stipe Erceg (The Edukators) embark on a journey to find themselves and each other, their goals and their true feelings.

**Genre** Coming-of-Age Story, Road Movie  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2004  
**Director** Cyril Tuschi  
**Screenplay** Ole Ortman, Cyril Tuschi  
**Director of Photography** Peter Doerfler  
**Editors** Dirk Goehler, Andreas Wodraschke  
**Music by** Benjamin Biolay, Blackmail, Plaid, Tribalistas, Womble  
**Production Design** René Roemert  
**Production Companies** Lala Films/Berlin, Friends Production/Munich, BR/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Stipe Erceg, Fabian Busch, Lilja Loeffler, Martin Clausen, Daniela Ziegler, Heinrich Giskes, Helmut Ruehl, Fernando Rebollo, Hans Pawliczek  
**Length** 96 min, 2,750 m

**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1  
**Festival Screenings** Hof 2004  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg  
**German Distributor** Academy Films/Stuttgart

**Cyril Tuschi** was born in 1969 in Frankfurt. After studies in Philosophy in the US in the late 1980s, he opened a nightclub and worked at a theater in Stuttgart. In 1992, his first short film, Frankfurt at the Seaside (Frankfurt am Meer) was invited to several festivals in Germany. He then enrolled at the Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg. His other films include: Nightland (Nachtland, 1995) – which screened at Berlin and won the New York Academy Camera Prize in 1996, Turn (1997), and his feature debut Slight Changes in Temperature and Mind (SommerHundeSoehne, 2004).

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Tobi and Achim have been best friends for years. As cox and oarsman, they have helped their team win several rowing cups in the past and are now looking forward to the big regatta in the countryside. But this trip is no summer camp anymore and the first problems soon arise. As Achim’s relationship with Sandra grows more serious, Tobi starts to realize that his feelings for Achim run deeper than he’s willing to admit to himself. He feels confused, unsure of himself and increasingly left out. When Sandra’s girlfriend Anke shows interest in him, this only adds to his anxiety. Then it turns out that the much-anticipated Berlin girls’ team has been replaced by a team of athletic, cliche-bursting young gay men. Tobi and his teammates are suddenly forced to grapple with their prejudices, their fears, and, perhaps, their hidden longings. As the tension grows, Tobi, Achim and the others head towards a confrontation as fierce and, ultimately, liberating as the summer storm gathering over the lake …

Summer Storm spotlights the emotional confusion of a young man at the threshold of adulthood. Bolstering the film’s authenticity is the dazzling characterization of Tobi by award-winning young Robert Stadlober (Best Leading Actor at the Montreal Film Festival, 2001).

Genre Drama/Comedy Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Marco Kreuzpaintner Screenplay Thomas Bahmann, Marco Kreuzpaintner Director of Photography Hansjoerg Weissbrich Music by Niki Reiser Production Design Heike Lange Producers Uli Putz, Thomas Woebke, Jakob Claussen Production Company Claussen+Woebke Film/Munich Principal Cast Robert Stadlober, Kostja Ullmann, Alicja Bachleda-Curuś, Miriam Morgenstern Casting Simone Baer Length 98 min, 2,818 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SRD Festival Screenings Munich 2004 Awards Audience Award Munich 2004 With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmstiftung NRW, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg German Distributor X Verleih/Berlin

Marco Kreuzpaintner was born in 1977. After studying Art History, he worked as an assistant to Edgar Reitz and Peter Lilenthal. His films include: Entering Reality (short, 1998), Nebensaechlichkeiten (commercial, 2000), Der Atemkuenstler (short, 2000), REC – Kassettenjungs/ Kassettenmaedchen (TV, 2001), and the features Ganz und Gar (2002), and Summer Storm (Sommersturm) (2004).
One of Europe’s most loved folk tale characters comes for the first time to colorful life in the animated version of the adventures of **Jester Till**, the original class clown. Till is a free spirit representing the simple wisdom and earthy humor of the peasant folk. In countless legends, he wanders the landscape of the late Middle Ages getting in and out of trouble and making fun of the rich and powerful. He has the universal appeal of a clown or court jester, instantly understood and embraced in every country.

In this totally new adventure, young Till is on his way to the bustling city of Boomstadt to visit his dear old grandfather, the slightly off-center wizard Marcus. The old man and his faithful assistant, the owl Cornelius, are cooking up a special magic potion of happiness for Till to give to the people of the city. Unfortunately, however, the potion is sabotaged by Marcus’ old enemy Dr. Death, a skeletal figure, and Marcus disappears in a terrible explosion. Now, Cornelius and Till have to find him …

**Genre**  Family Entertainment, Comedy  **Category**  Animation, Feature Film  **Year of Production**  2003  **Director**  Eberhard Junkersdorf  **Screenplay**  Christopher Vogler, Eberhard Junkersdorf & Peter Carpentier (story outline)  **Character Design**  Carlos Grangel  **Editor**  Uli Schoen  **Producers**  Eberhard Junkersdorf, Roland Pellegrino, Linda van Tulden  **Production Company**  Munich Animation Film/Munich, in co-production with CP Medien/Ludwigsburg, De Familie Janssen/Antwerp  **Voice of Till**  Lee Evans  **Length**  84 min, 2,500 m  **Format**  35 mm, color, 1:1.85  **Original Version**  English  **Dubbed Versions**  Flemish, German  **Sound Technology**  Dolby SRD  **Festival Screenings**  Palm Springs 2003, Cinema Epicuria 2004, Seattle 2004, Sprockets Toronto 2004, Zlin 2004  **Awards**  Audience Choice Award for Best Animation Toronto 2004  **With backing from**  Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Eurimages, MEDIA, BKW, VAF, De Nationale Loterij  **German Distributor**  Solo Film Verleih/Munich

Eberhard Junkersdorf has produced more than 55 feature films, including Volker Schloendorff’s OSCAR-winning *The Tin Drum* (Die Blechtrommel) and *Voyager* (Homo Faber), Margarethe von Trotta’s *Rosa Luxemburg*, *The Promise* (Das Versprechen), and *Die Bleierne Zeit* – winner of a Golden Lion at Venice, as well as Reinhard Hauff’s *Knife in the Head* (Messer im Kopf) and Stammheim – winner of a Golden Bear at Berlin. In 1995, he founded the production company Munich Animation and co-directed the animated feature *The Fearless Four* (*Die Furchtlosen Vier*, 1997). In 2002, he produced *Help! I’m a Fish* (Hilfe! Ich bin ein Fisch), founded Neue Bioskop Film and produced Oskar Roehler’s Berlin competition feature *Angst* (Der alte Affe Angst). *Jester Till* was nominated in 2003 for an Academy Award in the category Best Animation.
Paula Hartnagel works as a cleaning woman, leading an ordinary life. She loves life but, being a dreamer, she lives in a world of her own. When Paula believes to have found the man of her dreams in Mustafa, a Turkish security guard, her quite ordinary life suddenly starts to change. Paula mistakes politeness for love, however, and when Mustafa doesn’t show up at work one day she starts to look for him, stumbling into the greatest adventure of her life. Driven by the faith in a miracle, she follows Mustafa to the large Turkish city Adana, although she has neither address nor phone number…

**Genre** Comedy, Road Movie

**Category** Feature Film Cinema

**Year of Production** 2003

**Directors** Stefan Hillebrand, Oliver Paulus

**Screenplay** Stefan Hillebrand, Oliver Paulus

**Director of Photography** Mathias Schick

**Editor** André Bigoudi

**Music by** Erdal Tosun

**Production Design** Nicole Hartmann

**Producer** Frischfilm/Mannheim, in co-production with Motor-film/Dornach, Mathias Schick

**Production Company** Duesseldorf, Far Horizons/Cologne

**Principal Cast** Isolde Fischer, Helga Grimme, Can Senguel, Tuelay Goenen, Arcan Arican

**Casting** Stefan Hillebrand, Oliver Paulus

**Length** 81 min, 2,250 m

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

**Original Version** German/Turkish

**Subtitled Versions** English, French, Spanish

**Sound Technology** Dolby SR


**With backing from** Migros Kulturprozent, Kanton Solothurn, Bundesamt fuer Kultur (CH), MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, Filmstiftung NRW, Solothurner Filmfeste

**German Distributor** Kool Filmdistribution/Freiburg i. Br.


“Before Sept 11th I was an Asian. Now I’m seen only as a Muslim.”

Yasmin is the exciting and emotional story of a modern Pakistani woman living in England. Yasmin is trying to break through traditional rules set by her family and her unloved husband when the 11th of September jumps into her life. Everything changes now, she has to find her true identity and her true love and one day she has to make a decision.

Yasmin is about being a British national Paki in 2003. The film gives insight into a community that exists on the other side of the street but remains a mystery to most of the white population.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2004 Director Kenny Glenaan Screenplay Simon Beaufoy Director of Photography Tony Slater Ling Editor Kristina Hetherington Music by Stephen McKeon Production Design Joseph Carlin Producers Sally Hibbin, Jonathan Olsberg Production Company Parallax Independent Productions/London, in co-production with EuroArts/Berlin

Principal Cast Archie Panjabi, Renu Setna, Syed Ahmed, Rae Kelly Casting Victoria Beattie Length 80 min, 2,187 m Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version English Sound Technology Dolby Festival Screenings Locarno 2004 (In Competition), Edinburgh 2004 With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Scottish Screen, Channel 4

Kenny Glenaan is active as an actor (Silent Scream, 1990 and This Is Not A Love Song, 2002) and director: The Cops (aka Stanton Blues, TV 1998), Duck (1998), City Central (TV, 1998), Hope & Glory (TV, 1999), the episode User Friendly (TV, 2000) of the series Attachments, Gas Attack (2001), Buried (TV, 2003), and Yasmin (2004).
The pictures of a suicide victim jumping in front his train just can’t be forgotten by underground train driver Achim Maerz. Tortured by his memory of that fateful day, Achim embarks upon a lonely period of soul searching. The suicide victim’s last look appears to have stirred something deep inside Achim that he cannot escape.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** Year of Production 2004  
**Director** Nicolai Rohde  
**Screenplay** Hannes Klug, Nicolai Rohde  
**Director of Photography** Hannes Hubach  
**Editor** Bettina Boehler  
**Music by** Rainer Oleak  
**Production Design** Alexander Scherer  
**Producer** Ulrike Hauff  
**Production Company** MTM Medien & Television/Munich, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz  
**Principal Cast** Richy Mueller, Nicolette Krebitz, Solveig Arnarsdottir, Peter Kurth, Ernst Stoetzner, Thomas Meinhardt, Lars Gaertner, Ralf Mueller  
**Casting** Sigrid Emmerich  
**Length** 88 min, 1,010 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Ophuels Festival Saarbruecken 2004 (In Competition)  
Berlin 2004 (Perspectives German Cinema), Schwerin 2004 (In Competition), Montreal 2004  
**Awards** German Cinematography Award 2004  

Nicolai Rohde was born in Bremen in 1966 and studied Art at the local art college, followed by a year at the Vienna Film Academy. He then studied Directing at the "Konrad Wolf" Academy of Film & Television (HFF/B) in Potsdam-Babelsberg. His short film *Sleeper* (Schlafmann, 1999) received several national and international festival prizes. *Between Night and Day (Zwischen Nacht und Tag)*, 2004 marks his feature film debut and received the German Cinematography Award 2004.
People are crushed into a freight wagon, the train starts moving, a German soldier is seen running after the train as it disappears into the night. A voice off-stage asks “Why are we digging up the past again?” The answer lies in this story, told in the form of a flashback. It is set in a small Bulgarian town in 1943.

Walter, a young German officer, spends a few quiet weeks in this occupied country far from the front lines. He is not a fanatical soldier by any means, gets on well with the local people and pursues his drawing hobby, both on and off duty. A convoy of Jewish prisoners arrives. One of the prisoners is Ruth, a young woman who asks him to help a pregnant woman. "All Germans are the same, they are all wolves," says Ruth when Walter appears unwilling to help at first. Initially unaware of the prisoners’ fate, he asks his friend Kurt: “What is Auschwitz?” He is better informed and replies: "A place of no return!" Walter is shaken by Ruth’s accusation and her probable fate which he begins to suspect with a fair degree of certainty. Walter wants to help her escape. However, his friend Kurt has not told him the truth about the prisoners’ departure and his preparations are too late. All he sees is the departing train.

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**Genre** Drama **Category** Feature Film Cinema **Year of Production** 1959 **Director** Konrad Wolf **Screenplay** Angel Wagenstein **Director of Photography** Werner Bergmann

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**Editor** Christa Wernicke **Production Design** José Sancha **Producers** Siegfried Nuernberger, Wyltscho Draganow **Production Companies** DEFA/Potsdam-Babelsberg, Studio fuer Spielfilme/Sofia **Principal Cast** Sascha Kruscharska, Juergen Frohriep, Erik S. Klein, Stefan Pejetschew, Georgi Naumow, Ivan Kondow, Milka Tujkowa **Length** 92 min, 2,515 m **Format** 35 mm, b&w, 1:1.37 **Original Version** German **Subtitled Versions** English, French, Spanish **Sound Technology** Optical Sound **Festival Screenings** Cannes 1959, Edinburgh 1959, Weltaufführung der Jugend und Studenten Vienna 1959, Melbourne 1960, Sydney 1960, Ophuels Festival Saarbruecken 1995, San Francisco Jewish Film Festival 1997 **Awards** Special Jury Prize Cannes 1959, Gold Medal Vienna 1959 **German Distributor** Progress Film-Verleih/Berlin

Konrad Wolf was born in Hechingen in 1925 and died in Berlin in 1982. In 1933, his family emigrated to the Soviet Union. At the age of 18, he joined the Red Army and came to Germany as a lieutenant in 1945. He studied Directing at the Moscow Film School in 1949 and worked as an assistant director to Kurt Maetzig at the DEFA Studios in 1953. His first feature film was Einmal ist keinmal (1955). From 1965, Wolf was president of the East German Academy of Arts. A selection of his films includes: Genesung (1956), Lissy (1957), Sun Seekers (Sonnensucher, 1958), Stars (Sterne, 1959), The Divided Heaven (Der geteilte Himmel, 1964), I Was Nineteen (Ich war 19, 1967), The Naked Man in the Stadium (Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz, 1974), and Mama, I’m Alive (Mama, ich lebe, 1977).
Die Bleierne Zeit

MARIANNE AND JULIANE

Two women in Germany, two sisters, both were born during the war and grew up during the “leaden times” of the 1950s. Marianne and Juliane fight for social change during the 60s, however their means are totally different. While Juliane makes her way as a committed journalist, Marianne joins the political underground. After Marianne is arrested and put into jail, Juliane remains her only connection to the outside world. During a holiday in Italy, Juliane learns of Marianne’s sudden death. The “official” cause of death: suicide. However, Juliane is convinced that her sister did not kill herself. Risking losing her material security and her relationship to her boyfriend, Juliane throws herself into isolation to uncover the true circumstances of her sister’s death.


Margarethe von Trotta ranks among the most important female directors in German cinema since the 1970s, during which time she also made a name for herself as an actress. Today primarily active as a screenwriter and director, her most well-known films include: The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum (Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum, 1975, in co-direction with Volker Schloendorff), The Second Awakening of Christa Klages (Das zweite Erwachen der Christa Klages, 1977), Sisters or the Balance of Happiness (Schwestern oder Die Balance des Gudecks, 1979), Marianne and Juliane (Die Bleierne Zeit, 1981), Sheer Madness (Heller Wahn, 1983), Rosa Luxemburg (1985), The African Woman (Die Rueckkehr, 1990), The Long Silence (Il Lungo Silenzio, 1993), The Promise (Das Versprechen, 1994), and Rosenstrasse (2003), among others.
A middle-class man wants to just once break out of his routine life and his dull marriage and throws himself into the hustle and bustle of the big city nightlife. Attracted to all the temptations, he goes to a dancing bar with a prostitute, where one of her colleagues is trying to take advantage of a naive man during a gambling game. But when the man wins against all expectations, the women lure him to an apartment, rob him and then murder him. The middle-class man followed the women and when the police arrive, they arrest him as a suspect. In desperation, he contemplates suicide in his prison cell, but just in the nick of time, the real killers are found. The man who was just looking for a new experience then meekly returns home where his wife, without a word, serves him the warmed up soup from the night before.

Karl Grune was born in 1890 in Vienna and died in 1962 in Bournemouth/England. He studied under Max Reinhardt, followed by work as a director and actor for various theaters in Berlin and Vienna. He began his film career in 1919 with the film Der Maedchenhirt. In 1932, he emigrated to England where he continued to work as a producer and director. A selection of his films includes: The Street (Die Strasse, 1923), Schlagende Wetter (1923), Jealousy (Eifersucht, 1925), At the Edge of the World (Am Rande der Welt, 1927), Waterloo (1928), Abdul the Damned (1935), and The Marriage of Corbal (1935), among others.
Edmund, a desperate young boy, scrambles for survival in the dilapidated remains of post-WWII Berlin, trying to support his family and his sick father by thieving and scavenging in the streets. One day he meets up with a former school teacher, who lectures him on Nazi ideology and Social Darwinism, telling him that only the strong will survive. As a result, Edmund poisons and kills his own father. Then trying to deal with the painful realization of what he has done, his only escape is to end his own life.

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The Export-Union of German Cinema is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 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.

**Shareholders** in the limited company are the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers, the Association of German Film Exporters and the German Federal Film Board (FFA).

The members of the advisory board of the Export-Union of German Cinema are: Peter Dinges, Antonio Exacoustos, Alfred Huermer (chairman), and Michael Weber.

The Export-Union itself has eleven permanent staff members:
- Christian Dorsch, managing director
- Andrea Rings, assistant to the managing director
- Mariette Rissenbeek, public relations
- Cornelia Klimkeit, PR assistant
- Angela Hawkins, publications editor
- Julia Basler, project coordinator
- Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator
- Martin Scheuring, project coordinator
- Konstanze Welz, project coordinator
- Petra Bader, office manager
- Ernst Schrottenloher, accounts

In addition, the Export-Union shares foreign representatives in nine countries with the German Federal Film Board (FFA).

**The Export-Union’s budget** of presently approx. €4.1 million (including projects, administration, foreign representatives) comes from film export levies, the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the FFA. In addition, the **seven main economic film funds** (Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Filmstiftung NRW, Medien- and Filmgesellschaft Baden-Wuerttemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, and Nordmedia) have made a financial contribution, currently amounting to €0.3 million, towards the work of the Export-Union. In 1997, the Export-Union and five large economic film funds founded an advisory committee whose goal is the “concentration of efforts for the promotion of German film abroad” (constitution).

The Export-Union is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, an amalgamation of 23 national film-PR agencies (Unifrance, Swiss Films, Holland Film, among others) with similar responsibilities to those of the Export-Union. The organization, with its headquarters in Hamburg, aims to develop and realize joint projects for the presentation of European films on an international level.

**Export-Union’s Range of Activities:**
- Close cooperation with the major international film festivals, e.g. Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Montreal, Toronto, San Sebastian, New York, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, Moscow, Warsaw;
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international TV and film markets;
- Staging of Festivals of German Cinema worldwide (Rome, Madrid, Paris, London, Los Angeles, New York, Sydney, Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Cracow, Moscow and Scandinavia);
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, video, and television;
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation and German films being shown;
- Organization of the annual “Next Generation” short film program, which presents a selection of shorts by students of German film schools and is premiered every year at Cannes;
- Publication of informational literature on the current German cinema: German Films Quarterly and German Films Yearbook;
- An Internet website (http://www.german-cinema.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, as well as information and links to German and international film festivals;
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the OSCAR for Best Foreign Language Film.

**The focus of the work:** feature films, documentaries with theatrical potential and shorts that have been invited to the main sections of major festivals.
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Scene from "Agnes and his brothers"
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### German Film Award

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