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NORTH FACE
by Philipp Stoelzl
THE HEART OF JENIN
by Leon Geller & Marcus Vetter

AT MONTREAL
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Maren Ade is a director, scriptwriter and producer. She was born in Karlsruhe in 1976, and lived there until she took her final school examinations. Ade was already interested in film during her schooldays, often going to the cinema and using her super 8 video camera to make a first, half-hour film “with friends by the local quarry pond” about a girl who refuses to speak. Immediately after finishing school, Ade spent several months as an intern at Claussen+Woebke Filmproduktion in Munich. From 1998, she studied (initially) in the Production class at the Munich University of Television & Film (HFF). In 2000 she made and wrote the screenplay for her first short film as a director, Ebene 9, which was premiered at the Hof Film Festival. In the same year, together with fellow student Janine Jackowski, Ade founded the production company Komplizen Film. Together with this company, she has produced all of her own films to date, as well as several films by other directors. Her transfer to the Direction class at the HFF was followed by Vegas, a short exercise in direction about a man addicted to gambling, and in 2003 by Ade’s first full-length feature film The Forest for the Trees (Der Wald vor lauter Baeumen). After its premiere in Hof it screened at many international festivals including Toronto in 2004 and Sundance in 2005, where it won the Special Jury Award. As well as several other international prizes, that year the film was also nominated for the German Film Award. In the meantime, Ade has completed a new film as a director, Alle Anderen (working title), and continues to work as a producer (most recently on Hotel Very Welcome, 2007).

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Maren Ade is a rare diamond on the German film scene, for she demonstrates a quality not generally attributed to the Germans, or at least to German films: she has a sense of humor.

Her films are full of amusing and even absurd situations, which are occasionally difficult for the audience to digest — until laughter provides a release. Usually, we laugh along with the main characters and not at them. It is a quiet, fine, almost invisibly subtle humor, inconceivably different from those vulgar, thigh-slapping gags that many consider the sole form of German mirth; a humor that does not exclude the possibility of laughing at something that is also rather sad. An adult humor, but humor, nonetheless: “You have to admit that my characters realize when they are behaving foolishly in a particular situation. That is what interests me about humor. Something deliberated. I am aware of most of the situations that my characters experience, I have encountered them personally in a similar form. That is what I make concrete, heightening it. I find there is no other way to create humorous scenes in particular.”

Maren Ade (photo courtesy of Komplizen Film)
When Ade’s feature film debut The Forest for the Trees – a low-budget production for only €160,000 made in 25 shooting days – was presented to an international audience in Toronto and at Sundance, the effect was astonishing, but also a liberating experience. A small, quiet German film success in a sphere far away from the pushy, prestigious film world. The film centers on a young teacher who moves from her provincial home to the city in order to begin her first job in a school. This also represents a new beginning in her private life. We observe her first attempts to explore the new environment, which frequently go hand in hand with embarrassment, making us laugh at first – she is quite lovable in a gauche kind of way.

Gradually, however, the film’s tragedy is revealed: Ade shows the audience her main character as an outsider who grows more and more isolated and develops a scurrilous, even sick side. Far from all stereotypes and with no false sentimentality, here Ade succeeds in creating a wonderful “comodie humaine” full of depth.

“To date, I have always started with a character whose inner life I investigated for some time. I am then able to extract a narrative from his or her desires, longings and fears. While still searching, I am tuned into the world around me, enjoy observing people, let myself be led by what I meet in the way of stories, people – and films, of course.”

Such exercises in observation sometimes develop into ideas and screenplays. At the same time, Ade emphasizes that her characters often reflect aspects of her own person: “It’s not usually until later that I recognize how many links there are between the characters and me personally.”

Ade always wanted to tell her own stories in the cinema. “Even as a child, I always enjoyed writing.” The fact that she applied to the Production class at the Munich University of Television & Film in her early twenties, after a long period as an intern in production, had to do with the fact that she wasn’t bold enough to try direction, quite honest, I still have to catch up on some classics of film history. I didn’t discover ‘watching films’ until I left the film academy.”

After putting the final touches to the film, Ade will be concentrating her energies on the production company again: “Right now, we are in the process of developing our company and have initiated several projects. We value established connections, and intense, open cooperation between production and direction is one of our leading priorities.” Like Sonja Heiss, also a fellow student from Munich, whose successful film Hotel Very Welcome was produced by Komplizen Film. “That success creates a bond, naturally – it is confirmation that encourages us to continue.”

The 44 days of shooting followed a lot of preparation together with the main actors and her cameraman Bernhard Keller, who was also the cameraman for various other successful films including Gegenuber, Fallen, Sehnsucht and Falscher Bekenner. “Excellent cooperation: images are what make the cinema, after all.”

Ade believes that cinematic role models are less important to her than to some other directors: “I have a very emotional, concrete interest in the cinema. Of course I really enjoy watching films and spend time doing so, but there are no definite role models, and to be quite honest, I still have to catch up on some classics of film history. I didn’t discover ‘watching films’ until I left the film academy.”

Then she intends to make another film of her own: “The challenge when making Alle Anderen was to master a delicate psychological dramaturgy, so I may be looking for a more powerful story next time. As I have the feeling that I ought to write it myself, it will probably take some time.”

Maren Ade spoke with Ruediger Suchsland

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director’s portrait
Dennis Gansel was born in 1973 in Hanover. After gaining some theater experience playing “the cheeky son” in local amateur dramatics, he decided his future was in the cinema. A weekend seminar entitled “How To Do Your First Movie” provided all the knowledge he needed to launch a glittering career, although the resulting magnum opus, which premiered the following Monday, was deemed far too experimental (Gansel prefers to see it as merely ahead of its time). But the bug had bitten and he was hooked. He then made several short films, mostly to impress the local girls, only to discover that film wasn’t ‘sexy’ at the time; rock music was. Nonetheless, he did his civil service duty and then studied at the University 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 Phantom (TV, 2000), Girls on Top (Maedchen Maedchen, 2001), Napola (2004), and The Wave (Die Welle, 2008).

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He’s tall, Dennis Gansel, at 1.84 m. Whatever his parents did, they certainly fed him properly. And the California sun has definitely done him good. Back from a tour of Los Angeles and a round of meet’n’ greets with various producers, agents and heads of production at the likes of Warner Bros., Columbia and Universal, Gansel has been enjoying the success and interest stoked by his most recent film, the pedagogical experiment goes horribly, tragically, wrong drama and audience hit that is The Wave. “I had 80 meetings,” he says. “It was quite a whirlwind. But I want to work in L.A. and that means starting again from zero. My agent, David Gersh, set it all up.”

He’s aware of the pitfalls awaiting European talent which is taken to Hollywood’s bosom and then smothered. “It’s important to make a US film when you’re ready. They have a studio system and it’s about making your own film within that system. They don’t just want good work but something special with its own signature.”
“I was astounded at how young they all are,” Gansel continues. “Vice President of Production at Warner Bros., Sarah Schechter, is about thirty. She was totally open, highly intelligent, and had seen The Wave. I didn’t encounter the cliché of evil Hollywood at all! If anything, there was a great curiosity and readiness.”

But Gansel does know a lot about fighting for a film.

“I had to fight for four years to make The Wave. We all have to fight to make films here in Germany. I want to make my own material and will continue to work at the European level, too. German film, especially, is very exciting at the moment. I really liked Pool of Princesses and am glad it won at the German Film Awards.”

Gansel’s film tastes run a very broad gamut and he’s very happy to enjoy Hollywood’s offerings on their own merits, such as I Am Legend where, like most of the world, he “found the first hour great. I was a big fan of the novel and they changed it a lot.”

Not surprisingly though, he is still very busy with The Wave. “I’m now making the video diary for the DVD,” he explains. But, as with all filmmakers he’s hoping to get going on something new. “A director always starts again from the beginning. I don’t want to do Napoleon 2 or The Wave 2. I hope to get some partners together and go from there.”

Go where, exactly?

“I want to make my own things. I have two scripts, one with vampires, the other is a political thriller about the links between terrorism and the state. I made The Phantom about the third generation of the RAF, the murder of a left-liberal banker. It’s about how the state uses terror to exercise control over its citizens.”

Vampires in Germany? There’s probably a law against them but … Bring em on!

“I love vampires,” Gansel enthuses. “It’s a love story in contemporary times — with vampires! It’s been my dream project since my twenties. The time could be ripe! I’m so looking forward to German genre films, like horror, thrillers, love stories. They’re undeveloped at the moment and I’m hoping for more.”

Aged just 34, Gansel’s track record is impressive for his ability to deliver quality films whose depth doesn’t exclude them from being popular with a wide audience.

“It’s very important to entertain,” he says. “You don’t want the audience falling asleep.” At which point his button has been pressed and he cites his influences: films, books, writers, directors, actors.

“Take someone like the late Sydney Pollack. He is one of the most underestimated, but,” Gansel says, just getting into his stride, “that’s going to change when people reevaluate him and his work. Bertolucci is another super director. David Fincher with Seven and Fight Club. Luc Besson with Nikita and The Big Blue.”

“Among actors, I’m fascinated by George Clooney, Sean Penn. Here in Germany, I’ve got all the time for Moritz Bleibtreu, Juergen Vogel and Max Riemelt. I like working with him. He had his big breakthrough with Naopla.”

“As for films that I love and which have influenced me, there are so many! Three Days of the Condor. Fight Club, again. The Big Blue.”

Gansel glances over at his extensive DVD collection. “Seven, Das Boot, Boogie Nights — what a great character study that is. It’s incredibly worked out and directed. City of God. Trainspotting. Terry Gilliam’s Brazil. Rosemary’s Baby.”

I manage to break in with a question. Where did it all come from?

“From my father,” Gansel replies. “He and I would watch late night cinema on TV. We saw the French classics. Jean-Pierre Melville, Godard. I grew up with them and that’s where I get my love of film.”

Of course, it’s not all film in Gansel’s life: he spends quite a lot of time reading!

“Everything possible I can get my hands on!” he enthuses. “Classic literature to factual books, modern novels, lots of German literature, modern US literature. I’m a big fan of Philip K. Dick and Richard Matheson. I was always a big Stephen King fan and I’m happy the critics are finally recognizing him. In twenty years time people will see just how intelligent he is. The Shawshank Redemption is unbelievably good, as is the film by Frank Darabont, or Stand By Me from Rob Reiner or Kubrick’s The Shining. I wanted to film The Mist: I loved the book. It has psychological depths, the paranoia of the 1980s is brilliantly captured. He’s influenced, for example, Johnny Darko. I do think, however, quite a few of the films made from his books have not always met the psychological portraits he creates on the page.”

Coming back to something he’s mentioned previously and is a common thread throughout his filmmaking career to date, Gansel again stresses “how important it is to entertain. I am very influenced by the New Hollywood from the 1970s. The Godfather, Apocalypse Now, All the President’s Men — they all dealt with very big themes but were also entertaining. Three Days of the Condor dealt with the CIA and is gripping entertainment.”

The biscuits are finished, it’s time to go. Gansel’s wearing blue jeans and a white t-shirt. “James Dean?” I ask. “No,” he answers, “Shia LaBeouf in the new Indiana Jones!”

Dennis Gansel spoke with Simon Kingsley
“From the outset, we tried to be really topical and socially relevant,” says Clementina Hegewisch about her collaboration with Laurens Straub in the production company NextFilm.

The company was initially launched by Straub’s then wife, film director Pia Frankenberg. When Straub joined the company, their first production together was Hermine Huntgeburth’s The Trio with Goetz George, Christian Redl, Jeanette Hain and newcomer Felix Eitner, which was released by Warner Bros. in 1999.

Straub and Frankenberg parted ways during the development of their second project, Jochen Kuhn’s Fisimatenten, with Maximilian Schell and Alexandra Maria Lara in her first appearance on the big screen. Hegewisch joined NextFilm as a new partner when Fisimatenten was released in the cinemas in 2000.

As Hamburg-born Hegewisch explains, “Laurens and I had known one another and been friends since 1984 when I moved to Munich. It made sense to me to team up with him because with NextFilm he already had a structure in place – but only on the condition that the company would operate from Berlin!”

The first production the two developed and produced together was Winfried Bonengel’s Fuehrer Ex based on the autobiography of Ingo Hasselbach, Die Abrechnung – ein Neonaazi steigt aus, which was also published by Random House in the USA under the title of Fuehrer Ex. The film’s world premiere was in the Official Competition at Venice in 2002, followed by festival screenings in Toronto, São Paulo, and Tallinn, among others.

“We then did two documentaries followed by our next feature Max und Moritz Reloaded, a rather typical production for Laurens,” Hegewisch recalls. Director Thomas Frydetzki was one of his former students, screenwriter Eckhard Theophil a good friend and Straub himself took part as co-writer and producer. A couple of years before, he had produced a seven-minute short called Der Cowboy.
weint, with Theophil directing and Frydetzki and Theophil writing.

Max and Moritz Reloaded also marked the beginning of a close cooperation with Kinowelt, significant for both Straub and NextFilm. "In the last two years of his life, Laurens worked as writer and co-director on Reverse Shot – Rebellion of the Filmmakers (Gegenschuss – Aufbruch der Filmmacher), a documentary produced by Rainer Koelmel and Kinowelt about the history of Filmverlag der Autoren. Kinowelt also handled world sales for the documentary Coffee Beans for a Life which I produced in 2005."

Directed by Helga Hirsch, Coffee Beans for a Life follows 84-year-old Polish Jew Naftali Satischuetz who, having emigrated to the USA, returns with his US-born daughter and grandchildren for the first time to his native village in Poland to retrace his roots. As Hegewisch notes, "the film was very personal and ambivalent in its message and consequently the subject of much discussion," winning the First Prize and Audience Award at the 14th dokumentArt in Neubrandenburg.

"We were in the middle of developing our next feature about the Berliner Bank scandal [dir: Ulrich Stein] when Laurens was diagnosed with cancer," she continues. "It really stopped us in our tracks and the company was in limbo from that point on. Nothing much was done until his death in April 2007."

"I thought for quite a long time about what I should do, whether I should look for another partner," Hegewisch says, "and then decided to carry on by myself." Connie Walther's Long Shadows was the next project after that and, being a co-production, it helped her a lot in making that decision.

Ulrich Noethen (Runaway Horse) plays the ex-RAF terrorist Bernd Widmer who is released back into the community after serving 22 years in prison, and Franziska Petri (Forget America) is his young neighbour Valerie who turns out to be the daughter of a man Widmer was alleged to have also killed during the attack on a bank president.

"The project was a stroke of luck. Michael Jungfleisch of Gambit Film, who raised a major part of the financing, asked me if I would be interested in taking over production of the film. I was very attracted to the project because it deals with the effects of political events my generation grew up with and with which I personally am very familiar. When I was a kid, Ulrike Meinhof often came to our house because my youngest sister was in the same class at school as the Meinhof twins."

Hegewisch was eleven and just beginning to develop an interest in politics when Meinhof went to Lebanon and took her twins. "I was interested in the way Connie was very personal in her approach to the story," Hegewisch adds. "She didn’t try to make it into a political commentary about that time, but is more concerned about the emotional aspects. I see Long Shadows as a new start as well as a classical project in the tradition of NextFilm – with a small budget and reflective of contemporary themes. I am really proud of the team and what we have achieved."

The beginning of this year saw the production of NextFilm’s eighth feature film Unter Strom, the second feature by Zoltan Paul. "I liked the screenplay [by Paul and Uli Bree] right away," Hegewisch recalls. "It is situated between all genres: it is grotesque, an ensemble piece and a comedy. In fact, it has everything that people in Germany say doesn’t work! For me, the script works particularly well with the use of intelligent puns, and I have never before had a screenplay where I had so few problems getting the cast I wanted together. I sent the script off and usually within two days the actors replied with a big ‘Yes!’.”

Shot in 24 days on location in and around a hunting lodge near Jena, the co-production with cine plus Media Service boasts a who’s who of German cinema, theater and TV actors, ranging from Robert Stadlober and Ralph Herforth through Harald Krassnitzer, Catrin Striebeck, Hanno Koffler, and Anna Fischer to Tilo Nest, Franz Xaver Zach and, last but not least, Sunný Melles.

Hegewisch particularly enjoys initiating film ideas and working closely with screenwriters and directors in the development phase rather than just acquiring the rights to completed screenplays.

At the same time, she is still working on projects originally set in motion by her late partner. A case in point is Ulrich Stein’s planned film Das Milliardenst€$el (working title) about the Berliner Bank scandal. "In actual fact, Uli is a documentary filmmaker, but he has worked on a lot of reenactments in the past couple of years for films, for example, about Peter Graf and the German secret service BND," Hegewisch explains, adding that the project has received support from BKM and broadcasters NDR and ARTE and will be co-produced with TV presenter Sandra Maischberger’s Hamburg-based company Vincent Film. "I see it as both a political thriller and a feature film which is extremely close to reality."

In addition, she is pursuing another of Laurens’ ideas for a documentary about the children of the exchange students from Socialist countries who came to former East Germany in the 1960s and 70s. Another feature documentary in development is a co-production with Hamburg’s Filmfaktor, to be directed by Andreas Goldstein, about the 1972 chess world championship in Reykjavik between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky.

Moreover, 2009 could see NextFilm embarking on its first English-language international co-production with an adaptation of Helga Hegewisch’s novel Die Totenwaescherin (working title), to be directed by veteran Dutch filmmaker Ben Verbong from a screenplay by Hardi Sturm.

"When my mother’s novel was translated into Dutch I gave Ben a copy and, as soon as he read it, he asked if I had ever thought of making it into a film," Hegewisch recalls. "The novel actually covers five generations of women undertakers, but we have chosen one figure for a story set in 1850 at the beginning of the industrialization of Germany."

"It is a wonderful and heartbreaking love story, but not only that. It is also a story about strength and believing in your own abilities and consequently about emancipation. Visually, Ben and I are thinking about Tess and Girl with a Pearl Earring" she notes, pointing out that she would like the film to be shot in English as an international co-production because I truly think it’s a global story."

Clementina Hegewisch spoke with Martin Blaney
Jessica Schwarz, born in May 1977 in Michelstadt/Odenwald, began her TV career as a presenter on the VIVA music channel and made her film debut in 2000 in Dominik Graf and Michael Althen’s TV movie Munich – Secrets of a City (Muenchen – Geheimnisse einer Stadt). In 2003 she received the Adolf-Grimme-Award for her performance in Graf’s Die Freunde der Freunde. The next year she was nominated as Best Actress at the German Television Awards for the TV movie Cold Spring (Kalter Fruehling, dir: Dominik Graf). 2005 saw her win the Best Actress prize (Bavarian Film Awards) for Off Beat (Kammerflimmern, dir: Hendrik Hoelzemann). The same year she was also nominated for Best Actress at the German Film Awards. Other roles have included the teacher, Frau Rose, in Wild Chicks (Die wilden Huehner), and Luise in Dominik Graf’s The Red Cockatoo (Der rote Kakadu). In Perfume – The Story of a Murderer (Das Parfum – Die Geschichte eines Mordlers), directed by Tom Tykwer, she played the prostitute and murder victim, Natalie. She voiced Rita the Rat in the German version of the animated film Flushed Away and also the pretty penguin lifeguard, Lani, in Surf’s Up. This was followed by the TV movie Ich wollte nicht toeten (dir: Dagmar Hirz), Lulu (dir: Uwe Janson) and the feature films Wild Chicks in Love (Die wilden Huehner und die Liebe, dir: Vivian Naege), Impossibly Yours (Der Liebeswunsch, dir: Torsten C. Fischer), Nothing But Ghosts (Nichts als Gospenster, dir: Martin Gypkens) and Warum Maenner nicht zuhoeren und Frauen schlecht einparken (dir: Leander Haussmann). She was recently in front of the camera for Heinrich Breloer’s cinema version of Buddenbrooks, in which she plays the female lead, Antonie. The start date is slated for the end of December 2008. And she has just finished working alongside Mads Mikkelsen in Die Tuer (dir: Anno Saul). This summer she reprises her role as Frau Rose in Die wilden Huehner 3, and in August she will begin shooting the TV movie Romy (dir: Torsten C. Fischer).

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A portrait of Jessica Schwarz was born in May of 1977 in Michelstadt/Odenwald. She began her TV career as a presenter on the VIVA music channel and made her film debut in 2000 in Dominik Graf and Michael Althen’s TV movie Munich – Secrets of a City (Muenchen – Geheimnisse einer Stadt). In 2003 she received the Adolf-Grimme-Award for her performance in Graf’s Die Freunde der Freunde. The next year she was nominated as Best Actress at the German Television Awards for the TV movie Cold Spring (Kalter Fruehling, dir: Dominik Graf). 2005 saw her win the Best Actress prize (Bavarian Film Awards) for Off Beat (Kammerflimmern, dir: Hendrik Hoelzemann). The same year she was also nominated for Best Actress at the German Film Awards. Other roles have included the teacher, Frau Rose, in Wild Chicks (Die wilden Huehner), and Luise in Dominik Graf’s The Red Cockatoo (Der rote Kakadu). In Perfume – The Story of a Murderer (Das Parfum – Die Geschichte eines Mordlers), directed by Tom Tykwer, she played the prostitute and murder victim, Natalie. She voiced Rita the Rat in the German version of the animated film Flushed Away and also the pretty penguin lifeguard, Lani, in Surf’s Up. This was followed by the TV movie Ich wollte nicht toeten (dir: Dagmar Hirz), Lulu (dir: Uwe Janson) and the feature films Wild Chicks in Love (Die wilden Huehner und die Liebe, dir: Vivian Naege), Impossibly Yours (Der Liebeswunsch, dir: Torsten C. Fischer), Nothing But Ghosts (Nichts als Gospenster, dir: Martin Gypkens) and Warum Maenner nicht zuhoeren und Frauen schlecht einparken (dir: Leander Haussmann). She was recently in front of the camera for Heinrich Breloer’s cinema version of Buddenbrooks, in which she plays the female lead, Antonie. The start date is slated for the end of December 2008. And she has just finished working alongside Mads Mikkelsen in Die Tuer (dir: Anno Saul). This summer she reprises her role as Frau Rose in Die wilden Huehner 3, and in August she will begin shooting the TV movie Romy (dir: Torsten C. Fischer).

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“It was very good work, very exciting, very educational. There was a great team spirit. I never had so much tension – I had to go to the doctor! I strained my thighs because there was so much running and fighting! It’s interesting to play someone who doesn’t know what’s happening when you, as an actress, do know. Pretending to be blind and naive is very interesting.”

“Unfortunately I only had two days with Tom Tykwer on Perfume but I liked it very much. Being killed is very interesting. I was praised for my performance as a corpse! You really do have to decide how to play it.”

“You do it as a kid,” she continues, “playing dead. It’s fun. But then it’s also scary. You don’t breathe, you don’t move. You have to switch off and yet still experience everything. It’s hard to imagine what being dead is really like.”

She then talks about her upcoming role as actress Romy Schneider: “I’m very involved with the theme; her truth and openness to the roles and characters. It will be very hard to play Romy Schneider but I wouldn’t have said no. I tried saying no and it wasn’t right.”

Moving from presenting on the music channel VIVA to acting was “no great transition. Things were relatively stable but I didn’t know they would go on. But if I had stayed presenting it would’ve been harder to become an actress. It wasn’t an easy decision. I asked too many people and got too much advice. You have to go by your own feeling. Then VIVA was finally over for me and I had to do it.”

Working on Buddenbrooks was – she smiles and bites her finger – “great. I had twobrothers! I love my sister, of course, but it was great having brothers, especially the way they stuck together and strengthened each other.”

Looking at her work to date, it’s clear Jessica Schwarz has landed in the quality end of the market. Has she been lucky with her choice of scripts?

“I read them and like them or not,” she replies, making it sound so simple. “How strong does it stay in my mind? It’s just like with a novel. Some stay for ages and get you thinking, others are gone almost immediately. I like the possibility of playing something great, but in the end you read them and say yes or no.”

She sounds like she’s a director’s dream, as far away from the egomaniac cliché of a star as it’s possible to get. She talks about how she wants the director to be her partner with whom (here she laughs and has another pause for thought) “you can search for the same humor, the same frustration, the same arguments; a real partnership just like in real life. I can feel something in the character but can’t always express it. It’s great when the director can tell me and then it becomes even stronger when played.”

Uncomfortable at watching herself (“I’m very critical. I’d rather leave the cinema than watch and hear myself!”), Schwarz is also very relaxed about nominations and awards. She laughs, is almost embarrassed: “My hotel plan takes me so far away from talking about me and awards – I can’t do it! It’s very exciting to be nominated but also sad when you don’t win. I really wanted to thank so many people for the last ten years and didn’t get the chance.”

So how did it feel playing a cartoon rat?: “It wasn’t so easy,” she answers. “I really admire Kate Winslet but playing her as a rat was great. It was fun. I like dubbing. It can be a routine but this was totally exciting! Totally! It’s my favorite word at the moment!”

Right now, Jessica Schwarz admits she doesn’t “know where I am at the moment in career terms. The roles are changing and I’m getting more responsibility. I’m at a very good point, or at least I think I am. Romy Schneider could be where I fail, but I haven’t failed yet.” A statement of fact, not a boast.

“I’ve done a lot of preparation – reading and listening, watching whatever I can get my hands on, diaries from her friends and family. I’ve still got a few weeks but feel as if I’ve been preparing all my life. The most important thing is to stay true to myself, what I’ve seen and what the director has to say. He already sees a Romy in me and I have my own idea – we’ll see what comes out and what others make of it.”

Schwarz continues to talk about the role that could catapult her into the top echelons of contemporary German actresses with such ease, such relaxation, it’s an object lesson in keeping cool: “I think, as an actress, there’s a certain sort of Romy in me. We just have to see if that’s enough Romy in order to play her! It’s very hard to talk about. I’m only just starting with this one! I think it’s also a cheek to play such a woman! I don’t want to try to be her one hundred percent; that’s impossible. I want to address the people who didn’t know her and convey what she achieved. I want to show her passion and the love she carried within her. But I don’t want to be Romy. I want to give her a platform. It’s a female role you can’t say no to.” She then bursts out laughing: “I actually decided while doing the hoovering!”

What about ’life after Romy’?: “I’m looking for the bigger challenge. I can’t imagine myself as a director,” she says after a trademark moment of thought. “I have lots of people in my life who look out for me and I for them. I’m more of a producer type.”

If any of those producer types are reading this, Schwarz “would love to play a killer! Nikita – I would love to do that role. I’d love to wield a knife and be strong. Like Uma Thurman in Kill Bill. I’d totally love to do this!”

She cites some of her favorite actors and actresses: Cate Blanchett (“She takes a role and totally makes it her own. She gives it everything”), Javier Bardem, Glenn Close and Meryl Streep.

Relaxation time, although with her schedule Schwarz doesn’t seem to get much of it, is spent “chatting, chatting, chatting! I can talk for hours with people, honest! And also stay quiet! Sometimes I observe. There is always the question, what do people have in common when they sit together, where do they come from etc. There are so many people in Berlin and I wonder what they all do and get up to! Some have such charisma I could watch them for hours!”

She lists lying on the couch for an evening as one of her great pleasures, being outside in the country, choosing stuff for her hotel, too. On her dislikes-list there is “my impatience at times. People who want more without giving anything in return; not just from me but in general. I dislike it when good work is not appreciated. That’s very common in film or getting worse at any rate. It’s a pity!”

She takes a slurp of her cappuccino and stares out the window. Then she asks, “Is that enough?” Totally, Jessica! Totally!

Jessica Schwarz spoke with Simon Kingsley
10 YEARS STRONG IN MADRID

Falling admissions in the Spanish cinemas – there wasn’t any sign of this at the 10th Festival of German Films in Madrid, held from 3 – 8 June 2008! With some 6,000 sold tickets, the festival, in its jubilee year, almost broke the attendance record of the first edition in 1998.

The festival in the Cine Palafox opened in front of an enthusiastic audience with the comedy Rabbit Without Ears by Til Schweiger. Lead actress Nora Tschirner was on hand to present the film. Other guests at the festival included the directors Pepe Danquart (To the Limit), Volker Einrauch (The Other Boy), Martin Gypkens (Nothing But Ghosts), Martin Theo Krieger (Beautiful Bitch) and Maggie Peren (Special Escort), whose film also received the festival’s Audience Award. The main program also presented the first feature film by Oezguer Yildirim, Chiko, and the TV film Duel in the Night, which was recently awarded the German TV Crime Drama Prize. Films that have successfully run in Spain’s cinemas in past years after the festival were shown in a retrospective.

Particular highlights for around 1,000 spectators were the two silent movie screenings of Fritz Lang’s Metropolis. The live musical accompaniment to the film was performed by the trio of Aljoscha Zimmermann (piano), Sabrina Hausmann (violin) and Martin Fuchs (drums).

Once again, it was clear that there still is great interest in Spain for German cinema as shown at the annual Distributors’ Dinner hosted by German Films for Spanish distributors and German sales agents.
**DOWN UNDER WITH THE AUDI FESTIVAL OF GERMAN FILMS**

Now in its seventh year, the **Audi Festival of German Films**, organized by German Films and the Goethe-Institut Australia in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, attracted over 19,000 cinemagoers, some 40% more than in the previous year.

The romantic comedy **Rabbit Without Ears** by Til Schweiger, which already had the makings of a hit during its advance ticket sales, was awarded the Golden Gnome Audience Award and sold during the festival to Palace Films.

Practically all of the screenings were sold out in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth – in particular, **The Counterfeiters** by Stefan Ruzowitzky, **The Wave** by Dennis Gansel, **The Edge of Heaven** by Fatih Akin and **Cherry Blossoms** by Doris Doerrie met with enthusiastic audiences and a very good response from the media. Due to the great demand, there were several additional screenings.

**NRW’S SUMMER OF DIRECTORS**

With support from **Filmstiftung NRW**, Stephen Frears, Wayne Wang and Lars von Trier will all be in North-Rhine Westphalia this summer shooting their new films. While Frears and his leading actress Michelle Pfeiffer are already shooting the literary adaptation **Cheri** in the Cologne-based MMC Studios, Wayne Wang and Lars von Trier will be preparing for their shoots to take place toward the end of the summer. Wang will be doing the studio shooting for his film **920 Sacramento** in NRW. This historical film will tell a true story from Chinatown in San Francisco at the end of the 19th century. Sienna Miller and Annette Benning are planned for the leading roles.

A married couple, trying to cope with the death of their child in a secluded forest cottage, are the main figures of Lars von Trier’s thriller **Antichrist**. This will be the first time that the Danish director himself will shoot a film on location in NRW. So far, the Filmstiftung NRW also cooperated with von Trier on his films **Dogville**, **Dancer in the Dark** and **Manderlay**.

**ON FOREIGN SCREENS**

This year numerous feature and documentary films produced in Bavaria are being shown at international festivals. **FilmFernsehFonds Bayern** also presented the “Made in Bavaria” film week at the beginning of April in Bucharest. Next on the agenda, Bavarian films are crossing the Atlantic for two presentations on the North American continent: within the framework of the 32nd Montreal World Film Festival at the end of August, FFF Bayern, together with Bavarian directors and producers, will present Bavaria as a media location.

A selection of some of the films screening at the festival include: Marcus H. Rosenmüller’s new film **Bavarian Rebel**, Peter Sehr and Marie Noelle’s **The Anarchist’s Wife**, Guillaume Ivernel and Arthur Qwak’s **Dragon Hunters**, and Veit Helmer’s **Absurdistan**. The Bavarian production scene will then be presented at the end of September in Los Angeles. The presentation will accompany the new Bavarian films of the “German Currents-Focus Film Bavaria” film week, presented by the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles and the American Cinematheque.
SHANGHAI FOCUSES ON GERMANY FOR THE 4TH TIME

The fourth annual Focus Germany at this year’s Shanghai International Film Festival opened on June 16th with Tom Zenker’s film Blind Spot. Ahead of the festival, German Films, in cooperation with the Consulate General, organized a reception to honor the participants of this year’s Focus Germany section. Swiss Films also partnered the event on the occasion of the festival seminar Focus on Female Filmmakers from Germany, Switzerland and China.

More than 20 films in the festival prove that German films are continuing to convince Chinese audiences. The German competition entry My Mother’s Tears was awarded the prize for Best Cinematography. And quite a few filmmakers made the trip to Shanghai to present their films personally: Jan Bonny (Counterparts), Rainer Kaufmann (Runaway Horse), Pepe Danquart (To the Limit), Marc Meyer (Family Rules!) and Miriam Dehne (Little Paris). Local press and cinema-goers were so impressed with the great variety of German films – including Wolf Wolff’s thriller Virus Dead – that German Films and the festival in Shanghai have already agreed to continue their cooperation for the festival in 2009.

GERMAN SHORTS SUCCESSFUL AT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

In the last months numerous German short films were successful at international festivals. At the Seattle International Film Festival, the short fiction Felix by Andreas Utta won the Best Short Film Golden Space Needle Award. At the Annecy International Animated Film Festival, one of the biggest and most important animation film festivals in the world, Milen Vitanov’s My Happy End received the Jury Special Award in the competition for graduation films. Jan Zabeil’s documentary What Would the Drop Know About That? won the Sterling Short Award at Silverdocs in Washington in June. Two further German films were also successful at the Cinemalove Festival in Valencia: once again Reto Caffi won an award for his film On the Line, receiving the Silver Luna de Valencia, and Hannah Schweier got a Special Jury Mention for her film Stand Straight. On the Line also won the Award for Best Narrative Short at the Brooklyn International Film Festival and took the “Lutin” for the Best European Short film in Paris. More information on German short films is available at: www.shortfilm.de

MFG BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

Since October 1995 the MFG Filmförderung has been supporting the development of culturally significant film projects, as well as the cinema scene in south-west Germany. The funder’s annual budget of some 10 million Euros goes into the areas of screenplay development, pre-production planning, production, incentive funding, distribution and sales, film theater support and numerous structural measures. Particular concentration is given to the support of up-and-coming filmmakers.

Tulpan was produced by Germany’s Pandora Film in

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collaboration with Russia and Switzerland. The next suspenseful MFG supported project is *Tandoori Love*, an international co-production between Pandora Film in Cologne and Vienna and the Zurich-based Cobra Film.

**FESTIVAL DIVERSITY – WAY UP NORTH**

More than 10 different film festivals in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein will be presenting a variety of productions in the coming weeks and months. The spectrum ranges from science fiction to horror and thrillers at the 22nd Fantasy Film Fest Hamburg (13 – 20 August), music documentaries and portraits at the 2nd International Music Film Festival “Unerhoert Hamburg” (4 – 9 August), and current nature film productions at the 2nd Green Screen International Nature Film Festival in Eckernfoerde.

Further important festivals with national and international programs include: the 16th Filmfest Hamburg (25 September – 2 October), the 6th Children’s Film Fest Hamburg (26 September – 1 October), the 23rd Husumer Film Days (2 – 8 October), the 19th Gay and Lesbian Film Days (21 – 26 October), the 8th Flensburg Short Film Days (23 – 25 October), CineFest 5. Internationales Festival des deutschen Film-Erbes (15 – 23 November), the 20th Filmforum Schleswig-Holstein (29 October – 2 November), and the traditional film festival Nordic Film Days in Luebeck (29 October – 2 November), which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The North German Film Award will once again be presented in Luebeck this year.

**MEDIENBOARD PRESENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2007**

Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, the central intra-regional agency for location marketing and film funding, awarded 29.8 million Euros in support funds to some 270 projects in the year 2007. The support funds led to a total turnover of 132.8 million Euros in the capital city of Berlin and surrounding areas – a regional effect of 446 percent!

Films “made in Berlin-Brandenburg” continue to win international and national awards, including the Oscar® in 2007 for *The Lives of Others* and in 2008 for *The Counterfeiters*, a Silver Bear in Berlin for *Yella*, four “Lolas” (German Film Awards) in 2007 and 12 in 2008, among others. The Medienboard is also supporting the film and media industries in the Berlin-Brandenburg region for the crossover into a new digital world. Based on its current success, the funds for the pilot program for support of digital content for web, mobile and games is being doubled to 1 million Euros. 2007 also saw the introduction of new formats, such as the Berlinale Keynotes, the German Games Days and a successful Medienwoche.

Detailed information and the comprehensive 2007 annual report can be found at www.medienboard.de.

**“ON THE LINE” TAKES HOME THE STUDENT OSCAR®**

Reto Caffi’s *On the Line* has been awarded this year’s Honorary Foreign Film Award/Student Oscar®. The awards ceremony took place on 7 June in Beverly Hills. *On the Line* is Caffi’s graduation film from the Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM). The 30-minute German-Swiss co-production had already impressed juries and audiences alike at numerous international film festivals, and received, among others, the Grand Prix at this year’s Clermont-Ferrand short film festival and was named Best Student Film in Aspen.
DER FILM IN PRAGUE

From 1 – 6 October, the 3rd annual Festival of German Language Films DER FILM will take place in Prague. More than 20 feature and documentary films from German-speaking countries will be presented in the Cinema Svetozor. Following the festival, from 6 –

9 October, the Cinema Aero will show films dedicated to the events of the year 1968 which left their mark on Germany and Europe and to this day continue to have an effect. DER FILM is organized by the Goethe-Institut Prague, the Austrian Cultural Forum Prague and the Swiss Embassy. German Films and the regional funder MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg are also financially supporting the event this year. Further information is available at www.derfilm.cz.

BOOK MEETS FILM AT FILMFEST MUNICH 2008

After its successful premiere last year, Bavaria’s Cluster audiovisuelle Medien (CAM) once again organized Book Meets Film during this year’s Filmfest Munich, where publishers were invited to present their books for film adaptation. Thirteen publishing representatives had three minutes each to pitch their titles to some 130 screenwriters and producers. The reception afterwards brought the film and publishing scenes together to exchange ideas and make first direct contacts. Participants from the publishing industry included Random House, Suhrkamp, C.H. Beck, Diogenes and others. The producers’ side was represented by Uschi Reich (Bavaria Film), Ulrich Limmer (Collina Filmproduktion) and Molly von Fuerstenberg (Olga Film), among others. We can certainly look forward to the upcoming options for adaptations that were made possible by Book Meets Film.

Book Meets Film is a CAM event in cooperation with the Association of Publishers & Booksellers in Bavaria and Cluster Print Media. CAM is a department of FilmFernsehFonds Bayern.
STUDIO HAMBURG YOUNG TALENT AWARD

The winners of the 11th Studio Hamburg Young Talent Awards were announced in April by an expert jury. The Best Feature Film Award went to Jonas Dornbach, as producer of the docu-sci-fi-drama Auf Nummer Sicher? by David Dietl. For his graduation film Robin, Hanno Olderdissen received the Best Director Award. Felix Hassenfratz' writing skills, as demonstrated in his short Der Verdacht, were honored with the Best Screenplay Award. Winner of the Audience Award for the Best Short Film was Shift by Nico Zingelmann. Best Young Actors were Robert Gwisdek for his performance in Vaeter, denn sie wissen nicht, was sich tut and Karoline Schuch for her work in the Tatort episode Bevor es dunkel wird. Winner of the first Hamburg Crime Award, was Eoin Moore as director of Polizeiruf 110 – Jenseits.

Studio Hamburg is one of Germany’s leading film and television producers and recognizes up-and-coming talent every year. An independent jury made up of renowned filmmakers, producers, broadcasting representatives and journalists selects the winners. 2008 marks the first year of the Hamburg Crime Award, in honor of the late director, author and journalist Juergen Rolands. This prize is endowed by the Senate of the Free and Hansa City Hamburg.

GERMAN FILMS PREVIEWS 2008 IN COLOGNE

For the second time, the German Films Previews took place in Cologne from 10 – 13 July 2008. On the invitation of German Films, 78 international distributors from 24 countries made their way to North Rhine-Westphalia for this 8th annual preview event to see new films, make new contacts and pave the way for new deals. 23 films, including many which were shown for the first time at a market event, were presented in three theaters at Cologne’s Cinedom complex.

The Previews main program was complemented by a series of promo reels and trailers of upcoming films, as well as with a DVD library of further films. After a long day in the cinema, the guests were well taken care of with a diverse evening program, including a magical kick-off dinner by the Filmstiftung NRW at the Cologne Triangle Tower, an evening at the German Sports and Olympic Museum, a farewell evening with Dinner, Dancing and Fireworks high up over the River Rhine in the Cologne Tower, and a city tour on the final day before departure.

This year’s successful event was once again generously supported by the State Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia for National, European and Media Affairs, the Filmstiftung NRW, the City of Cologne, MEDIA Antenne Duesseldorf, and the perfume manufacturer 4711.
As usual, Treut has selected very strong and impressive women for her protagonists.

**Ina Busch**’s credits include the latest Wim Wenders film, the 2008 Cannes selection *Palermo Shooting, Maria an Callas* and the 2005 German Film Award-winning *Alles auf Zucker!* Her own awards include the Hessian Film Award 2004, the Max Ophuels Audience Award 1999 and the Adolf-Grimme-Award 1997.

The two Taiwanese actresses are, of course, unfamiliar to audiences here in Europe, but **Ko Huan-Ju** and **Hu Ting-ting** are familiar film and TV faces in Taiwan. And eagle-eyed viewers and film buffs might well recognize Hu since her overseas credits include Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (2004) and the recently deceased Anthony Minghella’s *Breaking and Entering* (2006).

Actor **Jack Kao** is also known to Western audiences through his work in such films as *One Armed Swordsman*, *The Conman*, *Time and Tide*, *Mona’s Dad*, *Fall... in Love*, *Reflections*, *God Man Dog* and, most recently, *Sniper*.

Monika Treut, who takes director, co-writer and producer credits on **Ai-Mei** is the co-founder (together with director and camerawoman Elfi Mikesch) and now sole owner of Hamburg-based Hyena Films.

Why the name?

“Monika Treut has a fondness for hyenas. You could almost call it a fellow feeling. After all, in hyena society, the female is dominant and moreover, these are beasts which survive by scavenging for scraps, fearlessly standing up to larger predators for a share of the spoils. Such is the life of an independent filmmaker … For many years, she has worked to the point of exhaustion to carve out a niche as an international filmmaker, writing and directing all her films, raising the production finance herself, editing, promoting and even, on occasion, distributing the finished product” — excerpted from Colin Richardson’s “Monika Treut: An Outlaw At Home,” in *A Queer Romance*, edited by Paul Burston and Colin Richardson (London, New York 1995).
Die Bienen

Type of Project  TV Movie  Genre  Thriller  Production Company  Wasabi Film/Munich, in co-production with SAT.1/Berlin  With backing from  FilmFernsehFonds Bayern  Producers  Martin Kircher, Hendrik Feil  Executive Producer  Patrick Simon (SAT.1)  Director  Michael Karen  Screenplay  Nicole & Uli Bujard, Anette Simon  Director of Photography  Jochen Staeblein  Editor  Stefan Essl  Music by  Sigi Mueller  Production Design  Ina Kirchhoff  Principal Cast  Janin Reinhardt, Stephan Luca, Klaus J. Behrendt, Sonja Kirchberger, Paula Schramm, Patrick V. Blume, Rolf Kanies, Peter Benedict  Special Effects  Dirk Lange  Format  16 mm, color, 16:9, Dolby SR  Shooting Language  German  Shooting in  Mallorca, April-May 2008

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High-end family drama set among an outbreak of killer bees on that most popular of tourist destinations, Mallorca! And you thought not getting a sun bed by the pool was a problem!

Not to be confused, however, with a genre film, Die Bienen, which originated from a conversation between Wasabi Film’s Martin Kircher and SAT.1’s Patrick Simon, deliberately avoids “taking the already hackneyed, straightforward, genre B-movie approach,” Kircher says. “We wanted more emotion and drama in our film.”

Hence, the backdrop involves a race against time as young doctor Karla searches for the serum to save her desperately ill father who has been stung by one of the little buzzers. Aided by the charming biologist Ben, they stumble on the origins of the deadly creatures, the work of entomologist Dr. Alvarez who now uses all means possible to stop them revealing what he’s done. To make matters worse, Karla and Ben are also now wanted by the police, who are about to take some drastic and potentially catastrophic action of their own.

“It’s common knowledge that bees, certainly in the United States, have been vanishing,” Kircher explains. “Nobody knows why, but this CCD, Colony Collapse Disorder, is a growing phenomenon. And, as Einstein said, ‘If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man.’ ”

Whereas the recent M. Night Shyamalan film, The Happening, tackles the same theme, that of man needing to take responsibility for what has happened, as Kircher tells it, not having $60m at his disposal was a plus!

“We had to go the character-, and not effects-driven, route for the simple reason that this is a TV movie,” he says. “But it works all the better because if you cannot relate to the protagonists and their plight, then there is little reason to watch.”

Mallorca was chosen as the setting because it’s familiar to so many audiences. Plus, it gives the next family holiday a bit of a tingle!

W.C. Fields advised against ever working with children and animals, “and we have horses and bees!” Kircher exclaims. “It’s a very bad mixture! It took time to find the right bee wranglers and they’re unpredictable anyway!” (The bees that is, not the trainers!). “Our lead actress got stung, her face swelled and she had to stop work for two days! Bees fly in every direction, not straight lines! They are also very sensitive creatures so we took the best possible care of them. I don’t believe any were harmed in the making of our film,” he adds.

Wasabi Film was founded by Kircher and Hendrik Feil in 2006. With a background in commercials and image films, the company is now making solid moves into cinema and TV movies, with various projects in development and pre-production.

SK
Chandani – Die Tochter des Elefantenfluesterers

Type of Project (Semi-) Fictional Documentary
Director Arne Birkenstock
Screenplay Arne Birkenstock
Director of Photography Marcus Winterbauer
Principal Cast K.G. Chandani Renaka Ratnayake, K.G. Sunamabanda
Format HD, color, blow-up to 35 mm, Dolby Digital

Shooting Language Sinhalese
Shooting in Sri Lanka, June – September 2008
German Distributor Alpha Medienkontor/Weimar

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In Chandani – Die Tochter des Elefantenfluesterers ("Chandani – The Daughter of the Elephant Whisperer"), writerdirector Arne Birkenstock tells the story of 16-year-old Chandani from Sri Lanka. The young woman is very close to an injured young elephant that has just been delivered to the elephant orphanage at Pinnawela National Park. If she can succeed in bringing the animal back on its feet, mentally as well as physically, then her father Sunamabanda, the chief mahout in the orphanage and known as the Elephant Whisperer throughout the country, will train her to be the first female mahout in Sri Lanka. If she fails and the animal dies, then her dream will be buried along with it and her family’s long tradition of being mahouts will also come to an end.

Producer Thomas Springer “came up with the idea when a baby elephant was born about two and a half years ago at the Cologne zoo. The crowds were enormous and when I saw elephants, especially baby ones, attract people of all ages I realized this was a story with huge potential.”

Also, since this is a semi-fictional documentary, whilst the film will have a happy end, the tension is real because Chandani herself has yet to pass the test and see the orphaned elephant accepted by the herd. The truth is that many do not survive due to being rejected. “We’re filming until almost the end of the year,” Springer says, “and hope it works. The end is open in real life, not so in the film.”

The Horse Whisperer but with elephants. As Springer says, “Sunamabanda is someone who knows more about elephants than can be summed up in rational words. There is a very deep connection. The story is totally different, too. This is about whether a daughter will follow in her father’s footsteps.”

Based on Birkenstock’s track record so far, Chandani – Die Tochter des Elefantenfluesterers looks set to give us something to shout about.

SK
Endstation der Sehnsuechte

**Type of Project** Documentary Cinema

**Production Company** Flying Moon Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with 3sat/Mainz

**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Hessische Filmförderung, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmstiftung NRW, BKM, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Producers** Helge Albers, Roshanak Behesht Nedjad

**Director** Sung-Hyung Cho

**Screenplay** Sung-Hyung Cho

**Directors of Photography** Axel Schneppat, Ralph Netzer, Stefan Grandinetti

**Editor** Sung-Hyung Cho

**Format** HD, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby

**Shooting Languages** German, Korean

**Shooting in** South Korea, Spring & Summer 2008

**German Distributor** ZORRO Filmverleih/Munich

**Company** Flying Moon Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Hessische Filmförderung, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmstiftung NRW, BKM, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Région Alsace, Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg, Württemberg, Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Région Alsace, Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg

**Producers** Sabine Holtgreve, Thomas Tielsch, Hejo Emons, Philippe Avril, Susanne Schneider

**Screenplay** Susanne Schneider

**Director** Jens Harant

**Director of Photography** Jens Klueber

**Production Design** Olivier Meidinger

**Principal Cast** Katharina Schuettler, Iris Berben, Jacques Frantz, Sebastian

**Endstation der Sehnsuechte**

A local politician Kim Du Kwan on the island of Namhae, some 400 kilometers south of Seoul, came up with the idea of establishing a “Dogil Maeul”, a “German Village”, to make the ex-pats and their German spouses feel ‘at home’. He had relatives of his own in Germany and visited Korean communities there in 2001 to present the concept. Similar settlements have also been built with an American or Japanese theme since 2003.

“The film raises the question of how you can live between two cultures which are so different and how far you can or want to let go of your own culture,” Albers continues. “There are also elements which go over and above this German-Korean relationship and where you have another level talking about identity and cultural misunderstandings in a very bizarre and amusing manner.”

“**Endstation der Sehnsuechte** will definitely feel quite different from **Full Metal Village** because there isn’t such an obvious structure in the film leading to a big event like the heavy metal concert,” Albers adds. “Everything is more subtle in the way it is told and develops more from within the characters themselves. That is a new challenge for Sung-Hyung as a filmmaker.”

This production comes as Flying Moon has two films currently in post-production – Anne Hoehg Krohn’s music film **Lovesong** (Lebesied), starring Jan Plewka and Nicolette Krebitz, and Uli Gaulke’s documentary **Pink Taxi** whose DoP Axel Schneppat was also behind the camera for **Endstation der Sehnsuechte**. Flying Moon is also represented in this year’s Official Competition in Locarno with the international co-production of Ben Hopkins’ **The Market**.

MB

**Es kommt der Tag**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Drama

**Production Company** Wueste Film Ost/Potsdam, in co-production with Filmtank/Stuttgart, Wueste Film West/Cologne, Unlimited/Strasbourg, SWR/Baden-Baden, WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg

**With backing from** MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Région Alsace, Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg

**Producers** Sabine Holtgreve, Thomas Tielsch, Hejo Emons, Philippe Avnl

**Director** Susanne Schneider

**Screenplay** Susanne Schneider

**Director of Photography** Jens Klueber

**Production Design** Olivier Meidinger

**Principal Cast** Katharina Schuettler, Iris Berben, Jacques Frantz, Sebastian
A family secret reaches back into that time known as the ‘German Autumn’, when the country faced the threat of left-wing terrorism in the form of the Red Army Faction, the RAF.

Thirty years after she was born, Alice Rybka meets her mother for the very first time. Judith Mueller is living in a small winery in Alsace, with a new family and new identity. She put Alice up for adoption at the very first time. Judith now wants her mother to face up to her past. But Judith has no regret for her actions.

Just how far may a person go for their political ideals? That is the question posed by *Es kommt der Tag* (“The Day Will Come”), because, as the unwritten second half of the film’s title has it, the day will come … when we all have to answer for our actions.

Writer-director Susanne Schneider is best known for her scripts “Solo fuer Klarinette” (1998, dir: Nina Grosse), *Solo fuer Klarinette* (1998, dir: Nico Hoffmann), and quite a few episodes of the Tatort series. Already an experienced TV director, with *Es kommt der Tag* she now makes her cinematic directorial debut.

What is there to say about Iris Berben that hasn’t been said before? In April 2008, at the Adolf-Grimme-Awards ceremony, she was given a Special Award for her life’s work. In *Es kommt der Tag* she returns to her first starring role in a feature film after many years absence on the big screen.

**Sebastian Urzendowsky** was discovered by a casting agent whilst still a child, aged eight. His first lead role was in Hendrik Handloegten’s highly acclaimed TV-movie, *Paul is Dead* (1999). Two years later he made his cinema debut in Dominik Graf’s much lauded Berlinale Competition entry, *Der Felsen*. Since then he has appeared in films such as *Schwesternherz* (dir: Ed Herzog), *Pingpong* (dir: Matthias Luthardt), *Die Felscher* (dir: Stefan Ruzowitzky) and *Anonyma* (dir: Max Faerberboeck).

As you’d expect from a Wueste Film production, *Es kommt der Tag* looks set to deliver in all departments. The day will come when you should see it.

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**The Last Station**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Drama, History, Love Story

**Production Company** Egoli Tossell Film/Halle, in cooperation with The Production Center of Andrei Kanchalovsky/Moscow

**With backing from** Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt

**Producers** Jens Meurer, Chris Curling, Bonnie Arnold

**Director** Michael Hoffman

**Screenplay** Michael Hoffman, based on the novel of the same title by Jay Parini

**Director of Photography** Sebastian Edschmid

**Editor** Patricia Rommel

**Production Design** Patrizia von Brandenstein

**Principal Cast** Helen Mirren, Christopher Plummer, James McAvoy, Paul Giamatti, Anne-Marie Duff, Kerry Condon, John Sessions

**Casting** Leo Davis

**Special Effects** Markus Degen, Sven Pannicke (Rise F/X)

**Format** 35 mm, color, Dolby SRD

**Shooting Language** English

**Shooting in** Halle, Leipzig, Stuelpe, Pretzsch, Kleineutersdorf, April – June 2008

**German Distributor** Warner Bros. Entertainment/Hamburg

An Oscar®-winning British actress, a Hollywood legend, a young shooting star, one of America’s best character actors, and an experienced German production company all come together in *The Last Station*, a film so rich in talent, on- and off-screen, that it should have an off-shore bank account!

It is Russia, 1910. Against the background of the last year in the life of Leo Tolstoy, *The Last Station* tells the moving story of the young private secretary Valentin Bulgakov (*James McAvoy*), who becomes caught between the fronts of the 20th century’s greatest marital dispute.

The world famous writer, played by Christopher Plummer, is locked in clinch with his deeply beloved wife Sofia (*Helen Mirren*). She, who over forty years of marriage has born him 13 children and was his closest adviser on his most important novels, can and will not accept that he, the world’s best-selling author, wishes to give away all his rights and adopt the simple life.
Between Leo Tolstoy and Sofia stands Chertkov (Paul Giamatti), an intriguer, and the naive Bulgakov who has fallen head over heels in love with the young revolutionary and Tolstoy adherent Masha (Kerry Condon).

The dramatic and bitter struggle over the author’s legacy escalates constantly. Exasperated, Tolstoy decides to seek peace and quiet in escape, and departs on a last, breathless, journey through southern Russia, pursued by Sofia, Chertkov and Bulgakov and a bunch of paparazzi in tow.

Director and scriptwriter Michael Hoffman (A Midsummer Night’s Dream, One Fine Day, Restoration) presented his cast at a press conference in Berlin. Responding to a question as to how she felt about getting the part of Sofia after Meryl Streep pulled out, Helen Mirren replied, “I can only say, ‘Meryl, you made a mistake!’”

James McAvoy’s credits include Atonement, The Last King of Scotland and Becoming Jane. His latest, the action film Wanted, opened to great critical and audience response in the United States. This young Scottish actor, who has already gained a Golden Globe nomination for Atonement, is definitely a face and name to watch.

Christopher Plummer (The Insider, A Beautiful Mind) has, in acting terms, seen and done it all. In a career which stretches over a great many years, he was won two Emmy Awards from six nominations, and two Tony Awards for his stage work. Despite not yet succeeding in ringing any bells with the Academy Awards, this Canadian-American actor is a constantly in-demand character actor and one of the finest thespians of his generation.

Paul Giamatti, who broke through and out with Sideways, new discovery Kerry Condon (Rome) and Anne-Marie Duff (The Magdalen Sisters) as Tolstoy’s youngest daughter Sasha, round off the cast.

It should also be noted that production designer Patrizia von Brandenstein’s accolades include two Oscar® nominations, for Ragtime and The Untouchables, as well as taking the coveted statuette home in 1985 for her work on Amadeus.

Egoli Tossell Film, as “European producers with a passion for great stories and storytellers”, has produced numerous heavy-weight German-international co-productions. The company’s previous credits include Alexander Sokurov’s Russian Ark which screened In Competition in Cannes in 2002, Paul Verhoeven’s Black Book which screened In Competition in Venice in 2006, and Michael Caton-Jones’ highly-acclaimed Shooting Dogs. Their current slate includes, apart from The Last Station, Sandra Nettelbeck’s Helen (starring Ashley Judd and Goran Visnjic) and a biopic about Germany’s grandest and coolest post-war star, Hildegard Knef (starring Heike Makatsch).

Laura

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Tragicomedy Production Companies Elsani Film/Cologne, 3L Filmproduktion/Dortmund, in co-production with CTM Films/Hilversum, Borderline Pictures/Amsterdam, MMC Independent/Cologne With backing from Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Dutch Film Fund Producers Aneta Elsani, Ulf Israel Co-Producers Werner Wirsing, Denis Wigmann, Frank Pardaan, Bastie Giere, Eric Benz

Director Ben Verbong Screenplay Katja Kittendorf, Karin Howard

Director of Photography Theo Bierkens

Editor Menno Boerema

Music by Konstantin Wecker

Production Design Benedikt Herforth

Principal Cast Katharina Schubert, Julia Maria Koehler, Senta Berger, Christiane Paul, Anna Boeger, Jan Decler, Jan Gregor Kremp, Mark Waschke

Casting Anja Dihlberg

Format 35 mm, color, ds, Dolby

Shooting Language German


German Distributor 3L Filmverleih/Dortmund

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Recent years have seen Dutch-born director Ben Verbong focusing in his cinema work on the family entertainment genre with such films as Das Sams, Sams in Gefahr, Merry Christmoose (Ein Elch ist entsprungen) and Mr. Woof (Herr Bello).

But now he has arguably taken a return “back to the roots” for his new project Laura which is based on an original idea from producer Anita Elsani and marks her second German feature film production after Angelina Maccaroni’s Vivere.

“I was in the USA in 2002 visiting an actress friend of mine whose sister had recently died,” Elsani recalls. “In between all of the many tears, my friend could still find some funny things to say. This experience left quite an impression on me emotionally and didn’t let go of me. Back in Germany, I worked with Karin Howard on developing a story based on this real event and later brought in Katja Kittendorf to bring out the humorous aspect since my goal was to present a tragi-comedy rather than a straightforward tragedy.”

The Laura of the film’s title is in her late twenties and the youngest of four sisters when she is diagnosed with terminal cancer. Her decision...
to suddenly break off her chemotherapy and return unannounced to her parents’ house is regarded as confounded nonsense by her mother – and her other three sisters, who are as different as chalk and cheese, are similarly not enamored with the idea. After initial resistance, they come back home – with one goal: to persuade Laura to resume her treatment – and then they will clear off again since they don’t really have much to say to one another. But Laura’s goal is quite a different one: to bring her crazy and bickering family back together again ...

“Laura is a very moving and personal story that is very precise in the way it presents the different conceptions of life existing nowadays, at least in the Western world, whilst naturally also showing that there is one thing in life that we will never be able to escape, and that is the family,” producer Ulf Israel says. “I think it is a story where many people will also discover themselves. It is very original in the way a dramatic story about taking leave of a person is told with comic means.”

Elsani adds that just as much attention was paid to finding the right cast for this film. The four sisters are played by Katharina Schubert, Julia Maria Koehler, Christiane Paul, and Anna Boeger, while the role of their parents have been taken by Senta Berger – in her first cinema role since appearing in Doris Doerrie’s Am I Beautiful? (Bin ich schoen?) – and Belgian actor Jan Decleir (Character, Antonio’s Line).

Schubert – who plays the pivotal role of Laura – and Boeger have both appeared on stage in Munich’s Kammerspiele theater and have film credits including Verbong’s previous feature Mr. Woof and Ralf Westhoff’s Shoppen. Koehler is making her cinema debut with Laura after working for television and theater, while Christiane Paul really needs no introduction after her roles in such films as Wolfgang Becker’s Life Is All You Get, Fatih Akin’s Am I Beautiful?, Daniel Brühl’s The Wave.

“I think the film definitely has an international potential given what it has to say about the women’s different conceptions of life, the problems within the family, and about their dreams and desires because that’s how things are, at least in the Western hemisphere,” Israel suggests. “The sisters’ relationship to their parents, the conflicts flaring up between them and the way they deal with Laura’s illness – all of this is very representative for many people’s situation.”

As Elsani explains, over 50% of the film’s financing has come from NRW with three regional production houses – her own company Elsani Film, 3L Filmproduktion and MMC Independent – working together for the first time. “It shows what a good network we have here together with the Filmstiftung NRW, who supported the project from the early stages of the development,” she notes, adding that the sets of the family house constructed on two sound stages at MMC’s Huerth lot “are very impressive. It is quite unusual for a German film with our kind of budget to be shooting in a studio, but it gives us so much more control over lighting and the set-ups and makes us independent of the weather.”

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**Lila, Lila**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Comedy, Love

**Production Companies** Film 1/Berlin, Falcom Media/Berlin, in co-production with Millbrook Pictures/Zug

**With backing from** Filmförderung Köln, MDM, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Producers** Sebastian Zuehr, Henning Ferber, Marcus Welke, Andreas Fallscheer

**Co-Producer** Thomas Sterchi

**Director** Alain Gsponer

**Screenplay** Alexander Buresch

**Photography** Matthias Fleischer

**Editor** Barbara Gies

**Production Design** Udo Kramer

**Principal Cast**

Daniel Brühl, Henry Huebchen

Casting: Simone Baer

**Shooting Format** 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR

**Language** German

**Shooting in** Berlin and Leipzig, June – July 2008

**German Distributor** Falcom Media/Winterthur

**World Sales**

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After the award-winning features Rose and Life Actually (Das wahre Leben), Swiss-born director Alain Gsponer teamed up with fellow graduates from Ludwigsburg’s Film Academy for his latest project Lila, Lila which was shooting in Berlin and Leipzig during June and July.

“We knew Alain from the Film Academy and had followed his career ever since graduation,” recall Sebastian Zuehr and Marcus Welke of the Berlin-based production house Film 1. “An opportunity to work with him came when we joined with Andreas Fallscheer of Falcom Media who had already acquired the film rights for Martin Suter’s bestselling novel Lila, Lila.”

“From the outset, Martin Suter was interested to know who would be doing the adaptation and subsequently met Alain,” Zuehr says. “And he also was keen to know who would be playing the novel’s central hero of David.”

“The project had a very organic development because we all knew each other. Moreover, we had the combination of Alain and the
screenwriter Alexander Buresch who has written the screenplays for all of his films,” Welke adds.

In the original Suter novel, the setting is the author’s Zurich, but this was changed to Berlin for the film adaptation. “In principle, it is set in a big city,” Zuehr explains. “The film is set in Berlin, but it is not one of those typical Berlin films with the Hackescher Markt and Alexanderplatz appearing. We have locations with neighborhoods that you don’t normally see on film. In fact, the story is a universal one which could function anywhere.”

Daniel Bruehl plays a shy waiter David Kern who succeeds in winning the attentions of the young Marie (Hannah Herzsprung) after he pretends to be the author of a novel whose manuscript he found in a junk shop. Everything goes well: the novel – a tragic love story set in the 1950s – hits the bestseller lists and the two become an item – until, suddenly, a tramp appears at a book signing claiming to be the real author of Lila, Lila …

“Daniel was cast from the very outset as David and then we had to find the appropriate partner for him,” Zuehr recalls. “Hannah was a potential candidate since Alain had worked with her before on Life Actually. When we then saw them together, we knew that they would be just right as a couple. And Henry Hübchen as the tramp Jacky comes in and turns everything upside down!”

“There are two strong storylines in the film: the love story between David and Marie, and then the conflict triggered by a lie between Daniel’s character and Henry’s Jacky.” Welke points out, adding that “there are certainly screwball elements in the story because of the lie David is living and they come particularly to the fore in the scenes we have shot at the book fair in Leipzig.”

“As in Alain’s previous films, he treats his characters with great precision and affection,” Zuehr remarks. “While the film is, of course, a comedy, it is not just a series of gags coming one after the other. Rather, it is amusing to see the hapless hero [played by Daniel Bruehl] getting himself into ever trickier situations and the snare closing ever tighter.”

MB

Der Seewolf

Type of Project Mini-Series Genre Adventure Production Company Clasart TV/Munich, in co-production with Gate Film/Munich for ZDF/Mainz & RHI/New York-Los Angeles With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern Producers Herbert Kloiber, Rikolt von Gagern, Robert Halmi Jr. Director Mike Barker Screenplay Nigel Williams, from the novel of the same title by Jack London Director of Photography Richard Greatrex Editor Dean Soltys Music by Richard G. Mitchell Production Design Rob Gray, Terry Quennell, Ian Greig Principal Cast Sebastian Koch, Neve Campbell, Steven Campbell Moore, Tim Roth Casting Stephen Sikder, Jeremy Zimmermann, Stephanie Gorn, Noémí Westergard Special Effects Gary Coates Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR Shooting Language English Shooting in Halifax/Canada, April – July 2008

World Sales TMG International · Carlos Hertel Kaufingerstrasse 24 · 80331 Munich/Germany phone +49-89-29 09 30 · fax +49-89-29 09 31 09 email: sales@tmg.de · www.tmg.de

“Life is a mess. Like yeast. A ferment. A thing that moves and in the end ceases to move. The big eat the little so they can keep moving.” (Wolf Larsen)

But what about the potato?! Fans of the original 1971 version of Der Seewolf (“The Seawolf”) still talk about actor Raimund Harmstorf’s scene of sheer, tuber destroying, muscle power! But whether this new version sees any such vegetable cruelty or not, viewers are still guaranteed top notch, high quality, star driven drama.

Once again, Captain Wolf Larsen (Sebastian Koch), the titular sea wolf, has his sailing ship, Ghost, in an iron grip. Taking aboard a ship-wrecked literary critic, Humphrey van Weyden (Steven Campbell Moore), Larsen forces the young dandy to work as ship’s boy. Caught in Larsen’s diabolical psychological game, van Weyden has to fight for his life and shows a tough side he never knew existed.

But Larsen has an even more dangerous opponent, his brother Death (Tim Roth), whom he is racing for the sealing grounds.

“Money is all that interests me. Oh – and power of course.” (Death Larsen)
Summertime Blues

**Type of Project**  Feature Film  
**Genre**  Coming-of-Age  
**Story**  Production Companies  Bavaria Filmverleih- & Produktion/Geiselgasteig, Bremeria/Bremen, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, ARTE/Strasbourg, Constantin Film Produktion/Munich, Solaris Film/Munich, Muenchner Filmwerkstatt/Munich, Universum Film/Munich  
**With backing from**  Nordmedia, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), FilmFernsehfonds Bayern, Filmförderungsgesellschaft (FFA)  
**Producers**  Bernd Krause, Martin Moll  
**Director**  Marie Reich  
**Screenplay**  Friederike Kopf, Ushi Reich, Robin Getrost, based on the novel of the same name by Julia Clarke  
**Director of Photography**  Egon Werden  
**Editor**  Barbara von Weitershausen  
**Music by**  Youki Yamamoto  
**Production Design**  Heike Lauer Schnur  
**Principal Cast**  Francois Goeske, Karoline Eichhorn, Sarah Beck, Zoe Moore, Alexander Beyer, Christian Nickel, Maja Schoene, Jonathan Beck  
**Casting**  Jacqueline Riezt  
**Format**  16 mm, color, blow-up to 35 mm, Dolby Digital  
**Shooting Languages**  German, English  
**Shooting in**  Bremen and surroundings, South England, July – August 2008  
**German Distributor**  Universum Film/Munich  

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Shooting continued to the middle of August for Marie Reich’s *Summertime Blues* which has been adapted by Friederike Koepf, Ushi Reich and Robin Getrost from Julia Clarke’s 2002 rites-of-passage novel of the same name.  

“When we were looking for a subject for Marie’s graduation film, I gave her the novel to read,” recalls Ushi Reich who is in overall charge of the project’s production. “I like the way the English are able to take on serious subjects and recount them in a light and happy way, but nevertheless with profundity.”  

“In the German cinema of today there are hardly any serious stories about coming of age. I thought of *Les 400 Coups* by Francois Truffaut or the series of childhood memories filmed by Marcel Pagnol. But naturally also films like *Billy Elliot* or — most recently — *Juno*. All of these films tell about the crisis of searching for one’s own way,” she continues. “Age-wise, *Summertime Blues* is geared to girls and boys 12 years and above, who are oriented more than ever to films for grown-ups. And also to their parents, of course.”  

15-year-old Alex (played by Francois Goeske) who was discovered by Reich for the Kaestner adaptation *The Flying Classroom* is coming to terms with his new life after his parents’ marriage breaks up. First of all, he learns that his father’s new girlfriend is expecting a baby, and then his mother (Karoline Eichhorn) decides that they should up sticks from his home town of Bremen and go to live with her new partner (Alexander Beyer) in the south of England. Alex is determined to hate it, but soon meets two different girls (Zoe Moore and Sarah Beck) who affect him in very different ways.  

“The original story by Julia Clarke is set in London and Yorkshire, but we have transposed it to Bremen and the South of England for our film,” Reich explains. “Bremen is an incredibly beautiful city and has wonderful locations for filming which have not yet been really discovered.”  

Marie Reich, who will be making her feature debut with *Summertime Blues* after directing such successful shorts as *Paul* and *Music Only Loud* during her studies, identifies “development and change” as “two important aspects which run throughout the whole story and thereby enrich it.”  

“My film *Summertime Blues* should reflect the various different moods which the story evokes,” the young director suggests. “The title itself says everything to us about the film’s atmosphere. ‘Summertime’, that is lightness, happiness, summer, being unspoiled, joy. ‘Blues’, on the other hand, is the opposite: sadness, melancholy, a certain gravity, transitoriness.”  

“This contrast is what constitutes the charm of this story for me. In all of the difficulties there is constantly the thought of the positive and the sense of humor.”  

MB
**Die Tuer**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Mystery Thriller

**Production Company** Wueste Film/Hamburg, in co-production with Wueste Film Ost/Potsdam, Senator Film Produktion/Berlin  

**With backing from** Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DIFF)  

**Producers** Ralph Schwingel, Stefan Schubert, Christoph Mueller **Director** Anno Saul  

**Screenplay** Jan Berger, based on the novel *Die Damaltstuer* by Akif Pirinçci  

**Director of Photography** Bella Halben  

**Production Design** Boerries Hahn-Hoffmann  

**Special Effects** Roland Tropp  

**Principal Cast** Mads Mikkelsen, Jessica Schwarz, Thomas Thieme, Valeria Eisenbart, Tim Seyfi, Heike Makatsch  

**Casting** Deborah Congia  

**Format** 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby Digital Surround EX  

**Shooting Language** German  

**Shooting** Berlin, Brandenburg and Hamburg, March – May 2008  

**German Distributor** Senator Film Verleih/Berlin

It was rather like a family reunion on the set of Anno Saul’s latest feature film *Die Tuer* (“The Door”) since it was his second collaboration with the Hamburg-based production house Wueste Film after the 2005 comedy Kebab Connection. That film had also been co-written by screenwriter Jan Berger who, in turn, has previously worked with Wueste Film producers Ralph Schwingel and Stefan Schubert on FC Venus and Eine andere Liga in 2006.

What’s more, this new project saw Saul working again with Boerries Hahn-Hoffmann who had been responsible for the production design on the director’s debut feature Green Desert (Grüne Wueste) in 2001.

*Die Tuer* is based on the 2001 novel *Die Damaltstuer* by Akif Pirinçci who is best known for his “cat crime fiction” series centered on the feline detective Felidae, which spawned an animation film under the same name by Senator Film in 1994.

“It is an adaptation of the novel, but we have been relatively liberal in the way we have approached the structure and the end of the story,” Schwingel explains. “We are a little less speculative and more concerned about showing what happens when you are in the past and get a second chance.”

The mystery thriller’s action centers on the formerly successful painter David (played by internationally famous Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen) who has lost control over his life after being responsible for the death of his seven-year-old daughter Leonie through a fatal decision. One day, seven years later, he discovers a door which will give him the opportunity to start all over again. However, what initially appears to be a wonderful chance for a new beginning, soon turns out to be a veritable horror scenario, since not everything in the past is quite as it seems …

“I was immediately enthusiastic when Jan [Berger] told me the film’s plot,” Anno Saul recalls, admitting that neither of them are out-and-out genre film connoisseurs. “Some of our favorite films have been somewhat inspirational, but I couldn’t say that there is one particular film which served as a model. Moreover, we didn’t want to make a specifically German film. The film’s setting and other little things like the car license plates should be such that you can’t really identify the country, in the same way as they did in the Spanish film *El Orfanato*. The film will have a more universal European appeal so there should not be any restriction to a particular nationality.”

While the mystery thriller genre might be new territory for Saul and Berger, what they have done to Pirinçci’s novel immediately convinced co-producer Christoph Mueller of Senator Film Produktion, which had co-produced and distributed Saul’s last feature, *Where is Fred?* (Wo ist Fred?).

“Anno is so passionate and convincing in the way he has tackled this story,” Mueller explains. “And this project was so unique from what one usually gets to see in Germany where the thrillers are often reduced to cheap showmanship and the requisite body count.”

Meanwhile, Schwingel notes that, during the project’s development, it had been mooted whether they should shoot the film in English. “But we returned to the idea of German when it became clear that we would have a chance of attracting top-notch actors for the cast,” he recalls. “As this project is really new territory for us as far as the genre is concerned, it was good that we were working in our own language.”

The idea of casting the Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen as David was given added weight after Wueste Film’s experiences of working with him a year ago on Ole Christian Madsen’s *Flame & Citron* which was the big Danish box-office hit this spring. “We had seen then how good he is and his level of dedication as an actor,” Schwingel says.

The other cast members are of the same quality: Jessica Schwarz (Buddenbrooks) as David’s wife Maja who parted from her husband after the death of her daughter; Thomas Thieme (The Lives of Others) as their next-door neighbor Siggi; Tim Seyfi (Head-On) as David’s best friend Max; child actress Valeria Eisenbart as the daughter Leonie; and Heike Makatsch (Love, Actually) as David’s fateful love interest Gia.

*Die Tuer* could be ready for a festival premiere in early 2009 followed by a theatrical release by Senator Film Verleih.
Vorstadtkrokodile

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Children’s Film, Family Entertainment Production Companies Westside Filmproduktion/Krefeld, Rat Pack Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion/Munich With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Christian Becker, Anita Schneider, Lena Oelbrich Co-Producer Martin Moszkowicz Director Christian Ditter Screenplay Christian Ditter, based on a script by Martin Rizzenhoff from the novel by Max von der Gruen Director of Photography Christian Rein Editor Ueli Christen Production Design Eva Stiebler Principal Cast Nick Romeo Reimann, Fabian Halbig, Manuel Steitz, Leonie Tepe, Axel Stein, Jacob Matschenz, Oktay Oezdemir, Nora Tschirmer, Smudo, Maria Schrader, Martin Semmelrogge, Ralf Richter Casting Daniela Tolkein Special Effects Ben Koetter, Andreas Korth, TRIXTER Animation/Munich Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in North-Rhine Westphalia, June – August 2008 German Distributor Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

It appeared in 1977 as a novel, sold more than 800,000 copies, was issued as an audio book, is even used across the country in classrooms and has countless fans across all age groups, Die Vorstadtkrokodile has impressed and fascinated a whole generation. Now, for the first time, this exciting book for young people is being adapted for a different medium. Here, he keeps the unique charm of the original novel while adapting it for a different medium.

Vorstadtkrokodile stars upcoming, young, German talent, in particular Nick Romeo Reimann (The Wild Soccer Bunch 3 – 5), Fabian Halbig (drummer with the band Killerpilze), Leonie Tepe (Taco und Kaninchen) and Manuel Steitz (The Robber Hotzenplotz, Mr. Woof).

Director and scriptwriter Christian Ditter proved he can reach, as well as entertain, a young audience with his French for Beginners. Here, he keeps the unique charm of the original novel while adapting it for a different medium.

For Rat Pack Filmproduktion, producer Lena Oelbrich’s previous credits include Neues vom Wixxer, Was nicht passt, wird passend gemacht and Der Wixxer.

Vorstadtkrokodile is produced by Westside Filmproduktion and Rat Pack Filmproduktion in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion. Familiar names, certainly, but they are also the names behind such box office successes as Bang Boom Bang, Hui Buh – The Goofy Ghost, the aforementioned French for Beginners as well the recent Dennis Gansel hit, The Wave.

With Vorstadtkrokodile audiences can expect another imaginative, entertaining and, at the same time, high-quality reason to go to the cinema.
Cologne, Recklinghausen, Hamm and surroundings, June – August 2008

**German Distributor** Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

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It’s been a busy summer for Munich producer Uschi Reich as she oversees the production of her daughter Marie’s directional debut *Summertime Blues* as well as collaborating again with Peter Zenk on the third outing by the *Wild Chicks* franchise, based on the successful books by bestseller author Cornelia Funke.

“This time round, the film is about taking leave of one’s childhood and the Wild Chicks saying farewell to their girl gang. The trilogy then marks an end for these child actors,” Reich explains.

Following the motto of ‘never change a winning team’, Reich has Vivian Naefe onboard again as director and co-writer, with Thomas Schmid joining this time as a screenwriter.

In *Die wilden Huehner 3* (“Wild Chicks 3”), the trials and tribulations of first love come to the fore during a class trip: Sprotte, the leader of the girl gang, suffers her first real bout of lovesickness, while the other Chicks have their own emotional ups-and-downs to cope with …

While the Chicks and the boy gang of the Pygmies feature the child actors of the previous two *Wild Chicks* films, which attracted over 2.2 million admissions in Germany, the adult roles have been cast with such well-known players as Veronica Ferres, Benno Fuermann, Jessica Schwarz and Doris Schade.

Principal photography is exclusively in North Rhine-Westphalia “because this is the home of the Chicks and has a lot to do with the conditions for shooting with children, as we can work with them for eight hours on the set there.”

Although this is set to be the last *Wild Chicks* film for the cinema, their adventures and tussles with the Pygmies will soon be coming to the small screen.

As Reich reveals, a 13-part series has been commissioned by public broadcaster WDR to be produced from next year, with an option already in place for another 13 episodes as well.

“We will be starting afresh – both aesthetically and with different actors for the Chicks and Pygmies,” Reich says. “While the basic idea will remain the same, everything else will be quite different and much younger with nine to ten-year-olds playing the members of the two gangs.”

**Wuestenblume**

**Type of Project** Feature Film
**Genre** Cinema
**Production Company** Desert Flower Filmproduction/Munich, in co-production with Majestic Filmproduktion/Berlin, ARD Degeto Film/Frankfurt, BR/Munich, MTM West/Cologne, BSI International Invest/Hamburg, Mr. Brown Entertainment/Berlin, Dor Film/Vienna, BAC Films/Paris
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Eurimages, NRW Bank, Oesterreichisches Filminstitut, ORF, FilmFonds Wien
**Producer** Peter Herrmann
**Co-Producers** Martin Bruce-Clayton, David P. Kelly, Waris Dirie, Gerhard Hegele
**Director** Sherry Hormann
**Screenplay** Sherry Hormann
**Director of Photography** Ken Kelsh
**Editor** Clara Fabry
**Production Design** Jamie Leonard
**Principal Cast** Liya Kebede, Sally Hawkins, Meera Syal, Craig Parkinson, Juliet Stevenson, Timothy Spall
**Casting** Hubbard Casting/London
**Shooting Language** English/Somali
**Format** Super 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby 5.1

**German Distributor** Majestic Filmverleih/Berlin

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One of the producers of Caroline Link’s Oscar®-winning *Nowhere in Africa*, Peter Herrmann says that he had always had an interest in the kind of stories told in Waris Dirie’s autobiography Desert Flower, especially given the fact that he had studied Ethnology at university.

In her bestseller, the former supermodel recounted the story of coming from a life among Somali nomads to the world’s leading fashion cat walks. Then, at the pinnacle of her career, she recalls in an interview the brutal practice of female circumcision which she underwent at the age of five. From this point on, Dirie decided to devote her life to campaigning against the archaic ritual.

“When the book first appeared in Germany in 1999, I found out that the film rights had already been secured by Elton John’s production company,” Herrmann recalls. “But then they came back onto the market and I met with Waris to begin negotiations.”
After acquiring the film rights, Herrmann then set about looking for a director and his choice fell on German-American Sherry Hormann whose previous films had included such titles as Frauen sind was Wunderbares, Widows and Männer wie wir.

“We spent a couple of years developing the screenplay together, the financing began in early 2007, and principal photography started just over a year later,” Herrmann continues.

Structured as a €11 million European co-production with Austria’s Dor Film and France’s BAC Films onboard, together with several regional and national public funders, broadcasters, private investors and other co-producers, Wuestenblume (“Desert Flower”) takes place in four countries on three continents.

Three weeks were spent shooting in and around Djibouti which was formerly part of Somalia with Somali nomads appearing in front of the camera.

“The majority of the story is set in London and we developed a concept where the exteriors for London and New York were shot at original locations, but all of the interiors were done in studios – we had six sets built in an empty factory building in Cologne – at suitable locations in Germany,” Herrmann explains. For example, during a 10-day shoot in Berlin, the House of World Cultures (the former Kongresshalle) stood for the New York U.N. building and the ICC conference center for a Heathrow terminal.

Herrmann adds that hundreds of young women were invited to casting calls in London, Paris, Kenya, South Africa, Los Angeles and New York before they decided on the Ethiopian Liya Kebede to play Dirie as an adult. “I didn’t know at the time when I saw the casting tape that she was a model,” he recalls. “She was the black face of Estée Lauder, but has also had acting experience in such films as The Good Shepherd.”

“Sherry has had great fun working with the English actors such as Sally Hawkins, Juliet Stevenson and Timothy Spall, and it is her first feature film for the cinema shot in English.”

“It was our desire not to have a film with a German look,” Herrmann says, pointing out that Hormann is working again here with American DoP Ken Kelsh. “The film’s story doesn’t have anything to do with Germany and we don’t have any German actors, at least not in the main roles. On set, the languages spoken were American English, British English and German and it was interesting to see how differently people work. That was a very fruitful experience.”

**Die zwei Pferde des Dschingis Khan**

**Type of Project** Documentary Cinema  
**Genre** Road Movie  
**Production Companies** Grasland Film/Munich, Atrix Films & Davaa Byambasuren/Munich  
**With backing from** Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)  
**Producers** Beatrix Wesle, Byambasuren Davaa  
**Director** Byambasuren Davaa  
**Screenplay** Byambasuren Davaa  
**Director of Photography** Martin van Broekhuizen  
**Editor** Monika Schindler  
**Music by** Urna Chahar Tugchi  
**Principal Cast** Urna Chahar Tugchi  
**Format** Super 16 mm, blow-up to 35 mm, color 1:1.85, Dolby SR  
**Shooting Language** Mongolian  
**Shooting in** Mongolia, June – August 2008  
**German Distributor** Polyband Film/Munich  
**World Sales**  
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The romance of foreign adventure and places lost in myth and history comes to the fore in Die zwei Pferde des Dschingis Khan (“The Two Horses of Genghis Khan”), as the internationally acclaimed singer Urna travels to Mongolia in search of the origin of the folk song which gives this film its title.

Armed only with the book The Secret History of the Mongols, and a camera team, Urna follows the old myths of Genghis Khan, the music of her country and the smaller and bigger secrets of the fascinating mainland of Central Asia.

She travels to Khentii Aimag (the birth place of Genghis Khan), to the holy mountain Burchan Chaldun and to the old capital of the Mongolian Empire – Karakorum, meeting people on her way who tell her stories of their homeland and about the Khan. The traditional violin maker Khicheengui builds her an instrument and sends her on a search for traditional tunes. The shaman at the holy mountain Burchan Chaldun inspires her for new lyrics.

Genghis Khan by virtue of his background, experience and personal growth, highly valued virtues such as fidelity and loyalty. This is reflected in the song “The Two Horses of Genghis Khan”, a metaphor also for the traditional values of the Mongol people. The legend says that two horses belonging to the Khan escaped, returning repentantly to...
their master years later. Instead of punishing the animals, the Khan honored their return and set them free to live on the grasslands, never to be work horses again.

The renowned Mongolian singer, Urna Chahar Tugchi, descends from a family of shepherds from the Ordos county, southwest of Inner Mongolia (today China). From childhood she learned and collected hundreds of traditional folk songs. She studied Yangquin (Chinese zither) at the music academy in Shanghai from 1989 to 1993 and in 1994 began her singing and performing career.

Byambasuren Davaa was born in Ulaanbaatar (Outer Mongolia). From 1989 to 1994 she worked as TV host and assistant director for Mongolian Public Television and at the same time completed her studies in Law. In 1998, Davaa took a second degree at the Film School in Mongolia and continued studies at the University of Television & Film Munich in 2005.

In 2003 she made The Story of the Weeping Camel, together with Luigi Farloni. The picture won numerous awards and was also nominated for the Academy Awards 2005 for Best Documentary. Davaa also received national and international acclaim for her graduation film The Cave of the Yellow Dog.
A train accident!

Four of the passengers awake at the beach. It’s sunny, warm, the sky is blue and the seagulls are screaming. Why not take a bath in the sea? ... Or do they drift from the here and now to the hereafter?

Genre Animation Category Short Year of Production 2008
Sound Technology Dolby SR Festival Screenings Annecy 2008 (In Competition), Cracow 2008 (In Competition)

Izabela Plucinska was born in 1974 in Koszalin/Poland. After studying at the School of Art & Design and Animation at the Film School in Lodz, she received a scholarship for the “Konrad Wolf” Academy of Film & Television in Potsdam-Babelsberg. A selection of her films includes: Castling (1998), Backyard (1999), Twin (2000), On the Other Side (2002), Jam Session (2005), which screened in the Short Competition at Berlin in 2005 and received the Silver Bear for Best Short Film, Breakfast (2006), Marathon (2008), and 7 More Minutes (2008).
It’s a typical day at a busy airport, with planes continually taking off and landing with clockwork precision … until suddenly, catastrophe strikes. Two planes collide in mid-air, resulting in the tragic deaths of 83 people …

One year later, flight controller Markus still wrestles with feelings of guilt and depression over his failure to prevent it. His wife Franziska, no longer able to bear his emotional burden, seeks comfort in a selfish affair …

The two are completely unaware that yet another tragedy awaits them at the hands of Erik, a physicist broken by the loss of his beloved wife and daughter in the plane crash and consumed by a twisted need for revenge. His single-minded vengeance is thrown into question when the young and bubbly Daniela enters his life.

Harald was one of the first cops on the scene of the terrible air crash. Despite suffering panic attacks brought on by the brutal memories of that horrible day, he is determined to catch Erik.

As they wrestle with their own personal demons, these five are unaware that their fates are swiftly rushing toward a common and shocking destiny.

**Genre** Drama  |  **Category** Feature Film Cinema  |  **Year of Production** 2008  |  **Director** Nicolai Rohde  |  **Screenplay** Soenke Lars Neuwoehner, Sven S. Poser, Nicolai Rohde  |  **Director of Photography** Hannes Hubach  |  **Editor** Gergana Voigt  |  **Music by** Rainer Oleak  |  **Production Design** Yesim Zolan  |  **Producers** Anne Leppin, Sigrid Hoerner  |  **Production Company** money-penny filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz, ARTE/Strasbourg  |  **Principal Cast** Marie Baeumer, Sebastian Blomberg, Filip Peeters, Hannah Herzsprung, Wolfram Koch, Harald Schrott, Anna Loos, Matthias Ziesing, Rolf Kanies, Irm Hermann  |  **Casting** Sigrid Emmerich  |  **Special Effects** Neil Reynolds  |  **Length** 90 min, 2,500 m  |  **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  |  **Original Version** German  |  **Subtitled Version** English  |  **Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1  |  **With backing from** Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA)  |  **German Distributor** Alamode Film/Munich

**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 in Potsdam-Babelsberg. His films include: *Sleeper* (*Schlafmann*, short, 1999) – winner of several national and international festival prizes, *Between Night and Day* (*Zwischen Nacht und Tag*, 2004) – winner of the German Cinematography Award 2004, and *10 Seconds* (*10 Sekunden*, 2008).
They haven’t seen each other in what seems like forever: the seriously-ill Manni with his Ferrari and his three best friends. Sometimes you just lose touch …

Upon their reunion however, one of them realizes that he no longer loves his wife, but she doesn’t love him either. Another one has to come to terms with the fact that his wife and his mistress both dump him, at the same time. And the third one realizes that work isn’t everything and that the greatest pleasure in life can be found by spending time with your friends.

And Manni? Well, Manni’s gonna die. But before he does, his three friends have to find Rosi, the woman with whom he was happiest but whose heart he broke.

They race around with Manni’s Ferrari and prove that men today don’t really grow up until they reach their late 40s …

With Age and Beauty, producer Stefan Arndt (X Filme Creative Pool) continues in the successful tradition of such films as Good Bye, Lenin!, Go for Zucker!, and Summer in Berlin.

Age and Beauty is an actors’ film with the best German actors of the “adult” generation: Henry Huebchen, Armin Rohde, Burghart Klaußner, Peter Lohmeyer and Sibylle Canonica, under the direction of and based on the screenplay by Michael Klier.

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Berlin underground techno live DJ and composer Martin (known as DJ Ickarus) is touring with his manager and girlfriend Mathilde from club to club around the globe and is about to release their biggest album to date. However, all of his plans are thrown out of kilter after Ickarus is submitted to the emergency ward of a psychiatric clinic high on drugs after a gig …

From the director of One Day in Europe (Berlinale 2005 in Official Competition) and Berlin is in Germany (Berlinale 2001 Panorama Audience Award) Hannes Stoehr.

**Genre** Music, Tragicomedy  
**Category** Feature Film Cinematography  
**Film** Berlin Calling

**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Hannes Stoehr  
**Screenplay** Hannes Stoehr  
**Director of Photography** Andreas Doub  
**Editor** Anne Fabini  
**Music by** Paul Kalkbrenner  
**Production Design** Sebastian Wurm  
**Producers** Karsten Aurich, Hannes Stoehr  
**Production Company** sabotage films/Berlin, in co-production with stoehrfilm/Berlin

Principal Cast: Paul Kalkbrenner, Rita Lengyel, Corinna Harfouch, Araba Walton, Peter Schneider, Mehdi Nebbou, Megan Gay, Erdal Yildiz, Udo Kroschwald, Henriette Mueller, RP Kahl, Dirk Borchardt

**Casting** Karen Wendland  
**Length** 109 min, 2,998 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85

**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English

**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital

**Screenings** Locarno 2008 (Piazza Grande) With backing from German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg (RBB), Filmstiftung NRW, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) German Distributor Movienet Film/Munich


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Agnes, a scientist, has got her life under control. Her career, her research work and her intact family life with her husband Walter and daughter Leni are all perfectly organized. As far as her time allows, she also has a good relationship with her sister, Karola. One day Karola suddenly decides to go away and hands a surprised Agnes the keys to an apartment where she is to look after the plants. The apartment looks as if it has been left in a hurry and, for some strange reason, Agnes feels mysteriously drawn towards it. She begins to visit on a regular basis and gradually takes over the place as if it were her own. The wife died in an accident on the way to her lover. Bruno, the widower, must have simply abandoned the flat. One day Agnes falls asleep in the apartment. She wakes up to feel a man lying behind her. It is Bruno. Although she doesn’t really look at him or talk to him, they make love. He doesn’t ask who she is or where she comes from. Agnes begins to visit Bruno regularly. Her life and her marriage begin to go off the rails. Agnes is just drifting and Bruno is trying to repress his grief. They begin to live like an ordinary pair of lovers. But they are not lovers – they are only using each other. And they know that their relationship has no future.


Lola Randl was born in Munich in 1980 and studied at the Academy of Media Arts (KHM) Cologne from 2001-2006. She also participated in the Munich Screenwriting Workshop in 2007. Her films include: Vom Bett aus bedacht (short, 2001), Bluehende Sahara (documentary short, 2002), Geh aus mein Herz (documentary short, 2003), Nachmittagsprogramm (short, 2004), Verena Verona (documentary short, 2005), Wohlfuehlwochenende (short, 2006), Morbus Bechterew (short, 2007), and her feature debut Days In Between (Die Besucherin, 2008).

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german films quarterly 3 · 2008 new german films 36
Germany in the 1960s: Peaceful times in the West can start at last, if only Irene Striesow could manage to shake off the past. She is homesick for East Germany, mistrustful of the cease fire, and most of all, distraught about her husband Dieter’s other women. She would rather die young and she doesn’t make any efforts to hide it from Dieter and her three children Ute, Wasa and Flori. As their living room begins to look more like a war zone, their children decide to take matters in their own hands. They want their mother to finally be happy, that Dieter can crack light-hearted jokes about East Germany again, and that, if possible, the third world war doesn’t happen after all …

**Genre** Drama

**Category** Feature Film Cinema

**Year of Production** 2008

**Director** Neele Leana Vollmar

**Screenplay** Ruth Toma, adapted from a novel by Birgit Vanderbeke

**Director of Photography** Pascal Schmit

**Editor** Florian Drechsler

**Music** by Oliver Thiede

**Production Design** Stephanie Schlienz

**Producer** Caroline Daube

**Production Company** Royal Pony Film/Geiselgasteig, in co-production with BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg, Odeon Pictures/Geiselgasteig, Lunaris Film- & Fernsehproduktion/Munich, Neue Kinowelt Filmproduktion/Berlin

**Principal Cast** Katharina Schubert, Oliver Stokowski, Nina Monka, Leonie Brill, Tamino Wecker, Axel Prahl

**Length** 98 min, 2,792 m

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

**Original Version** German

**Subtitled Version** English

**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD

**Festival Screenings** Munich 2008

**With backing from** Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Distributor** German

The Heart of Jenin tells the story of a unique gesture of peace.

The Khatib family lives in the West Bank, in a refugee camp called Jenin. A year ago the Palestinian Ismael Khatib lost his 12-year-old son Ahmed.

Ahmed was shot by an Israeli soldier while he was playing “Arabs and Jews” with two friends. The soldier took his toy gun for a real weapon and killed him. Despite his grief, Ismael decided within hours to donate his son’s organs to save the lives of four Israeli children.

A year has passed since then. Ismael travels from Jenin to the northern hills on the Lebanese border, passing through the Holy City of Jerusalem, down to the edge of the Negev Desert in the south to visit the children who received his son’s organs. The film is a journey throughout today’s Israel which not only leads to the recipient families, but also attempts to reconstruct the events that took place in Jenin in 2005.

The Heart of Jenin leads us to Israel, to the occupied territories and to people who have learned to live with the every day conflict and violence and who still haven’t given up their hope of peace.

Leon Geller focuses all of his films on social issues. His work includes TV productions as well as features, including the award-winning films Heavy Twenty, Shevet-Voice, and Roads, which was also nominated for an Academy Award in the student’s short section during the Tribeca Film Festival in New York 2008.

Marcus Vetter has directed numerous prime time documentaries and has received three Adolf-Grimme-Awards. His feature documentary The Tunnel is one of the best-selling German documentaries in recent years. His feature documentary My Father, the Turk recently won the Golden Gate Award in San Francisco.
Lulu & Jimi is about sweeping love, rock & roll and getting rid of all that stale air of post-war Germany. You’ve got the good guys – that’s Lulu and Jimi – and the bad guys: Lulu’s mother Gertrud, her secret lover Schultz, the chauffeur, and a wicked old shrink, von Oppeln, crouching in his gloomy office like a spider waiting to pounce on his prey Lulu.

Light and darkness, bright garish colors, hot rock & roll and wild dance numbers mark this hilarious road movie about lovers fleeing from the evil powers of a deeply bigoted society.

**Genre** Road Movie, Romantic Comedy  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Oskar Roehler  
**Screenplay** Oskar Roehler  
**Director of Photography** Wedigo von Schultzendorff  
**Editor** Bettina Boehler  
**Music by** Martin Todsharow  
**Production Design** Eduard Krajewski  
**Producers** Gabriela Sperl, Uwe Schott  
**Production Company** sperl+schott film/Munich, in co-production with X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, Marc Rothemund/Berlin, Elzewir Films/Paris, EMC Produktion/Remagen, in cooperation with NDR/Hamburg, WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg  
**Principal Cast** Jennifer Decker, Ray Fearon, Katrin Sass, Udo Kier, Rolf Zacher, Bastian Pastewka, Ulrich Thomsen, Hans-Michael Rehberg  

**Casting** Nina Haun, Juliette Menager  
**Length** 95 min, 2,599 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German/English  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR, Dolby SRD  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmstiftung NRW, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Filmförderungsanstalt (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 Munich Filmfest 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 Lügen* 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 Abschnuppuniversum*. He has lived in Berlin since the early 1980s and also works as a freelance journalist and author. For *No Place To Go* (2000) he received the German Film Award in 2000. His other films include: *Greedy* (1998), *Suck My Dick* (2000), *Angst* (2003), *Agnes and His Brothers* (2004), *Elementary Particles* (2006), and *Lulu & Jimi* (2007).
**Mikado** is a story about AIDS, lies, love relations and an invisible network.

Frieda, a therapist, has been cheated on by her husband Daniel. He makes love to Dorothea. Dorothea is married to Philip. Philip has an affair with Maggie. Maggie is in love with the florist Michael. Michael is married to Barbara. Barbara has a lover, her boss Marko. Marko is engaged to Simone Stern, a singer. Simone loves Leon, Leon …

All of these secret liaisons could remain undiscovered, if Simone Stern weren’t so worried about having AIDS. Without waiting for the test results, she informs her fiancé Marko about her apprehension of being positive. Within a few hours the fear of being infected by the disease circulates within this group of people. Lies become transparent, secrets are uncovered, relations break up, and Philip pays with his life.

**Mikado** is a dense, yet witty kaleidoscope of contemporary human relationships.

**Genre** Drama, Tragicomedy  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Silvia Zeitlinger  
**Screenplay** Silvia Zeitlinger  
**Director of Photography** Peter Zeitlinger  
**Editors** Silvia Zeitlinger, Peter Zeitlinger  
**Music by** Stefan Weber  
**Production Design** Michaela Kratzer  
**Producer** Holger Gotha  
**Production Company** the independents/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Joel Basman, Birgit Doll, Holger Gotha, Marisa Growaldt, Joerg Hartmann, Antje Hochholdinger, Stefanie Klimkait, Markus Moessmer, Safia Monney, Thomas Mueller, Erol Nowak, Anna Schaefer, Roland Schaefer, Michael Stange, Julia Sohl, Silvia Vas  
**Length** 103 min  
**Format** HDV, color, 1:1.78 Blow-up 16 mm  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Stereo 24 bit

**Silvia Zeitlinger** was born 1967 in Steyr/Austria. She studied Art and Acting in Vienna, New York and Greece, followed by engagements in theaters and film in Austria, Germany and England. She is also active as a photographer, in particular with Werner Herzog on his documentaries, and as a screenwriter. **Mikado** is her debut feature film.
Summer 1936. Toni and Andi are passionate mountain climbers. There’s one mountain in particular that fascinates them: the Eiger North Face, the most dangerous rock face in the Alps, which has yet to be scaled. Being the first means not only a longed-for boost of their social standing, but also Olympic gold. As they get ready for their climb, they meet Luise, Toni’s childhood sweetheart, a journalist who has been sent to report about the conquest of the mountain with her fellow reporter Arau, a Nazi follower. Though she and Toni fall in love again, Luise also feels drawn to Arau. Nonetheless, the now distraught Toni begins the ascent with Andi. On the way they meet Willi and Edi, their most tenacious rivals.

Everything goes smoothly and they make good progress. On the terrace of the Grand Hotel at the foot of the Eiger, the four men are being watched with telescopes by enthusiastic crowds and the world press. Luise, too, is among them, and she realizes that Toni is still her real love. But suddenly the weather turns, and Willi injures himself. It looks as if the Eiger is going to win again. While a dramatic struggle for survival unfolds on the North Face, Luise sets out to save her lover. A race against time and the forces of nature begins …

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2008 Director Philipp Stoelzl Screenplay Christoph Silber, Rupert Henning, Philipp Stoelzl, Johannes Naber Director of Photography Kolja Brandt Editor Sven Budelmann Music by Christian Kolonovits Production Design Udo Kramer Producers Danny Krausz, Boris Schoenefeld, Rudolf Santschi, Benjamin Herrmann Production Companies Dor Film-West/Munich, Medienkontor Movie/Berlin, Dor Film/Vienna, Triuna Film/Zurich, BR/Munich, ARD Degeto Film/Frankfurt, SF/Zurich, Majestic Filmproduktion/Berlin, Lunaris Film/Munich Principal Cast Benno Fuermann, Florian Lukas, Johanna Wokalek, Simon Schwarz, Georg Friedrich, Ulrich Tukur Length 126 min, 3,448 m Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German Subtitled Versions English, French Sound Technology Dolby SRD Festival Screenings Locarno 2008 (Piazza Grande) With backing from Filmförderungssamt (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehfonds Bayern, Filmstiftung NRW, ORF Oesterreichisches Filmsinstut, ORF Film-/Fernsehabkommen, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), EDI Bundesamt fuer Kultur Schweiz, Zuercher Filmstiftung German Distributor Majestic Filmverleih/Berlin

Philipp Stoelzl studied Set Design at the Muenchner Kammer-spiele theater. He then worked as a freelance set designer and exhibition architect with, among others, Robert Wilson. He gained international recognition with his video productions and the British design magazine Shots praised his work. His videos for Garbage and Madonna however led the way to his international breakthrough. His films include: Morituri te salutant (short, 2000), Baby (2002), and North Face (Nordwand, 2008).
The 13-year-old Carlos lives in the Barrio – a Nicaraguan shanty town. His greatest wish is to become a “coplero” (the poet and lyricist) in a Gigantona group. Dance, theater and rhymes are combined and presented in these traditional groups of children. The huge Gigantona doll represents an oversized Spanish woman who dances round the “Enano” – a small indigenous man – accompanied by wild drumming. Carlos dances as the Enano while Isabel, a couple of years older than him, provides the rhythm.

After vying for the position of coplero, Carlos gets kicked out of his group. At first he hides his expulsion from his family, but when his father walks out, it comes to light and Carlos is forced to earn money as a laborer.

In spite of everything, Carlos finds his own Gigantona group with Isabel. The group makes its way to an old poet to try to get a scholarship for their work. Carlos’ limitless optimism is put to the test as it becomes clear that there is no chance of a scholarship. Left in the lurch by his companions, he is forced to accept that his dream of having his own Gigantona group is over. Through his disappointment Carlos realizes who is really there for him: Isabel. Carlos is now faced with the biggest challenge of his life – responsibility.

**Genre** Children and Youth, Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Family, Music

**Category** Feature Film Cinema

**Year of Production** 2008

**Director** Andreas Kannengiesser

**Screenplay** Catrin Lueth

**Director of Photography** Stephan Fallucchi

**Editor** Martin Reimers

**Music by** Martin Spange

**Production Design** Tanja Baumgartner

**Producers** Kirsten Kunhardt, Susanne Wischnewski

**Production Company** KW Kunhardt & Wischnewski Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Film & Fernsehen ‘Konrad Wolf’/Potsdam-Babelsberg

**Principal Cast** Mario José Chavez, Cristel Sofia Sanchez Hernandez, Katherine Mercedes Molina Zelaya

**Length** 88 min

**Format** Digital/DigiBeta PAL

**Original Version** Spanish

**Subtitled Versions** English, German

**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1, Dolby Stereo LTRT

**With backing from** BZM Bundesministerium fuer wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

**Andreas Kannengiesser** was born in 1978 in Nordhausen (in the former GDR) and grew up in Bergen on the island of Ruegen. He completed an apprenticeship in Hamburg at NDR and worked in Berlin as an assistant director, in casting and production. In 2004 he took up studies at the Film & Television Academy “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg. A selection of his films includes: the shorts AUS ist der Krieg (2004), Knaßfilme (2005), Der lockere Stand (2005), Clearing Perry and Many (2005), Herz Hart Still (2006), and his feature debut Planet Carlos (2008).
Grandpa Giorgi never tires of telling his two little grandchildren tales of their superhero dad, a giant of a man who’s on an important secret-agent mission. The truth is too dispiriting: their dad, Dato, is a simple meteorologist who’s spent the last couple of years innocently languishing in jail... When Dato is released, he returns home to find that his wife has fallen for a circus strongman, and his children refuse to believe that he’s their dad. Dato is shattered and begins to despair of ever finding happiness again. But then Lia, a cheerful young pilot, swoops down into his life like an angel. Though she wouldn’t mind becoming Dato’s new wife, she nevertheless helps Dato see what is really important to him: his wife and children. Then, one day, the sorrowful meteorologist discovers that he can do more than just observe nature: he can turn summer into winter and create fanciful double rainbows! He has the power to control the forces of nature! Maybe he can use his gift to win back his family?

Genre Drama, Love Story
Category Feature Film
Cinema Year of Production 2008
Director Nana Djordjadze
Screenplay Irakli Kvirikadze
Director of Photography Walther Vanden Enden
Editor Irakli Kvirikadze
Music by Paul M. van Brugge
Production Design Vaja Djalagania
Producer Oliver Damian
Co-Producers Joost de Vries, Leontine Petit, Tero Kaukoma, Paolo Maria Spina, Andrey Razumovsky, Niels Rinke
Production Company 27 Films Production/Berlin, in co-production with Blind Spot Pictures/Helsinki, Lemming Film/Amsterdam, Fora-film M/Moscow, Revolver Film/Rome
Principal Cast Merab Ninidze, Ramaz Chkhikvadze, Anja Antonowicz, Chulpan Khamatova, Nino Kirtadze, Toomas Urb, Elene Bezarashvili, Iva Gogitidze
Length 94 min.
Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
Original Version Georgian
Subtitled Version English
Sound Technology Dolby Digital
With backing from Eurimages, Russian Federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography, MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, Dutch Film Fund, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Hessen Invest Film, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), Filmstiftung NRW, Finnish Film Foundation, MEDIA, WDR/ARTE, YLE, Elektrofilm, Digital Film Finland, Finn-Lab, Studio 99

Nana Djordjadze was born in Tblisi/Georgia in the former USSR. She studied Architecture in Tblisi and was active as an architect until 1973. She then studied Film and worked as a costume designer, set designer and actress before receiving the Golden Camera in Cannes for her feature debut Robinsonade, or my English Grandpa. Her other films include: the Academy Awards-nominated A Chef in Love (1997), the critically acclaimed 27 Missing Kisses (2000), and The Rainbowmaker (2008).
When a big gob of curried ketchup lands on his trendy suit, Robert Zimmermann, 26, suddenly feels definitely, seriously, uncool. And since the hip videogame designer has an important presentation coming up, the jacket has to be cleaned on the spot. Which leads to Monika, who works at the local cleaner’s. A statuesque beauty who immediately enthralled Robert, turning him into an insecure puddle of sputtering emotions. But with his starter kit of seducer’s tricks, he ventures forth to win over the lady who has a son about his own age but currently no man in her life. Monika is flattered, embarrassed, giddy. And Robert? While trying to understand his feelings, he discovers what crazy entanglements love can lead to: his dad, who gets a motorcycle and a second spring; and his lesbian sister, who didn’t tell her lover that she’s pregnant …

But strange things are also happening to Robert and Monika as they attempt to bridge the generation gap. And after some relationship-defining calamities, they decide that if it looks like love and feels like love, then maybe it is love …

Leander Haussmann presents a romantic love story that zigzags across the borders of age and milieu and charms with its unconventional humor and irony.

**Genre** Comedy, Love Story  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Leander Haussmann

**Screenplay** Gernot Gricksch  
**Director of Photography** Jana Marsik  
**Editor** Mona Braeuer  
**Music by** Element of Crime  
**Production Design** Udo Kramer  
**Producers** Sonja Schmitt, Claus Boje, Detlev Buck  
**Production Company** Boje Buck Produktion/Berlin, in cooperation with NDR/Hamburg  
**Cast** Tom Schilling, Maruschka Detmers, Christian Sengewald, Adam Oest, Marlen Diekhoff, Annika Kuhl, Bettina Stucky  
**Length** 102 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**With backing from** Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), BKM  
**German Distributor** Delphi Filmverleih/Berlin

Leander Haussmann was born in Quedlinburg in 1959. After attending the Ernst Busch Acting Academy in Berlin, he acted in the theater for several years before becoming a director. He was the artistic director of Bochum’s Schauspielhaus from 1995-2000, during which time he also appeared in Detlev Buck’s film Jailbirds. His big breakthrough as a film director came with *Sun Alley* (*Sonnenallee*, 2000), followed by *Berlin Blues* (*Herr Lehmann*, 2003), *NVA* (2005), *Kabale und Liebe* (TV, 2005), *Warum Maenner nicht zuhoeren und Frauen schlecht einparken* (2007), and *Robert Zimmermann is Tangled Up in Love* (Robert Zimmermann wundert sich ueber die Liebe, 2008).
The Japanese student Aki Onodera travels in her family’s tracks from Tokyo to Germany. In idyllic East Allgäu she meets the Webers, who take her in as their guest. But soon, the situation of the family becomes turbulent by her appearance …

**Genre** Drama

**Category** Feature Film Cinema

**Year of Production** 2008

**Director** Marie Miyayama

**Screenplay** Marie Miyayama, Christoph Tomkewitsch

**Director of Photography** Oliver Sachs

**Editor** Marie Miyayama

**Music by** Helmut Sinz

**Production Design** Gabriele Mai, Shinji Shimizu

**Producers** Martin Blankemeyer, Miyako Sonoki

**Production Company** Muenchner Filmwerkstatt/Munich, in co-production with Chase Film International Co/Tokyo, FGV Schmidle/Munich, Hochschule fuer Fernsehen und Film Muenchen (HFF/M)/Munich

**Principal Cast** Yuki Inomata, Hans Kremer, Orlando Klaus, Imke Buechel, Zora Thiessen, Shinya Owada, Mikiko Otonashi, Yuu Saito, Toru Minegishi, Toshihiro Yashiba, Nahoko Fort-Nishigami

**Casting** Hanna Hansen, Kinya Yagi

**Length** 82 min, 2,331 m

**Format** Super 16 mm

**Blow-up** 35 mm, color

**Original Version** German/Japanese

**Subtitled Versions** English, French, German

**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1

**Festival Screenings** Montreal 2008 (First Films World Competition)

**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Manfred Durniok Foundation

**Marie Miyayama** was born in Tokyo in 1972 and studied Film Science and Creative Writing at Waseda University. In 1995 she moved to Germany, where, after studying Dramatology at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, she has been studying Film Directing at the Munich University of Television & Film. **The Red Spot (Der Rote Punkt)** is her graduation project and her debut feature. Intercultural themes are central to her work. She has also directed a number of short films and documentaries, including: **Maikas Wochenende** (short, 2001), and **between earth and sky** (documentary, 2004).
After two decades in prison, Widmer, a former German RAF-terrorist, is released. He meets Valerie, his next door neighbor. The young woman tries to get her life back on track after she lost custody of her little son. She shows some interest in Widmer, the two of them seem to have something in common. They discreetly enter into the secrets of their lives. Until the truth comes between them.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2008 Director Connie Walther Screenplay Ulrich Herrmann, in cooperation with Connie Walther and Peter-Juergen Boock Director of Photography Birgit Gudjonsdottrir Editor Karen Loenneker Music by Rainer Oleak Production Design Agi Dawaachu Producers Clementina Hegewisch, Michael Jungfleisch Production Companies NextFilm/Berlin, Gambit Film/Ludwigsburg, in co-production with BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg Principal Cast Ulrich Noethen, Franziska Petri, Uwe Kockisch, Tatja Seibt, Christoph Bach, Mehdi Nebbou, Eva Mattes Casting Sabine Schwedhelm Length 92 min, 2,704 m Format 16 mm Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology DTS Digital With backing from MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) German Distributor Salzgeber & Co. Medien/Berlin

Connie Walther studied Sociology and Spanish before switching over to Photography. After gathering experience as a lighting gaffer and production and directing assistant, she studied at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin and landed her first success with her graduation film Das erste Mal (1996), which was named Best Graduation Film from a German film academy in that year. Since then, she has demonstrated her talents with various genres and formats with films such as: Boersday Blues (short, 1992), Der Clown II (TV, 1997), Tic Tac Toe (TV documentary, 1998), Hauptsache Leben (1998), Offene Rechnung (TV, 1999), Never Mind the Wall (Wie Feuer und Flamme, 2001), Im falschen Leben (TV, 2001), Und Tschuess, ihr lieben (TV, 2002), Ei in Japan (documentary, 2005), Mord in aller Unschuld (TV, 2006), 12 Means: I Love You (2007), and Long Shadows (Schattenwelt, 2008).
Since the British train privatization went so well, the German government has decided to follow their lead and privatize their own rail service. German Rail, once a Mercedes among Fiats, is now ready for the stock market, but what happened to all of those German Rail employees we always loved to hate …

**Genre** Animation  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Directors** Jim Lacy, Kathrin Albers  
**Screenplay** Jim Lacy  
**Director of Photography** Jim Lacy  
**Editor** Georg Krefeld  
**Music by** Edward Harris  
**Production Company** Stoptrick/Hamburg  
**Voices of** Gustav-Adolph Arzt, Erik Schaeffler, Kristina v. Weltzien, Joey Cordevin, Monty Arnold, Isabella Grothe, Ole Jacobsen  
**Special Effects** Stoptrick/Hamburg  
**Length** 10 min 51 sec  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** International Short Film Festival Hamburg 2008, Filmfest Schleswig-Holstein 2008  
**Awards** Audience Award Hamburg 2008, Short Film Award Schleswig-Holstein 2008  
**With backing from** Filmfoerderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA)  
**German Distributor** KurzFilmAgentur/Hamburg  

Jim Lacy and Kathrin Albers are the creative team behind the animation studio Stoptrick in Hamburg. Since 2001 the two have written and directed their own prize-winning animated shorts and they have also directed several well-known television commercials and trailers in Germany.
Freshly graduated from a German university, Anberber returns to his native Ethiopia. Hoping to put his newly acquired knowledge to good use and eager to strengthen and rebuild his homeland that has become impoverished under the military junta, he both inspires hope and faces disillusionment, feeling estranged from his own people.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema**  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Haile Gerima  
**Screenplay** Haile Gerima  
**Director of Photography** Mario Masini  
**Editors** Haile Gerima, Loren Hankin  
**Music by** Vijay Iyer, Jorga Mesfin  
**Production Design** Patrick Dechesne, Alain-Pascal Housiaux, Seyum Ayana  
**Producers** Haile Gerima, Karl Baumgartner  
**Production Companies** Negod-gwad Production/Addis Ababa, Pandora Film Produktion/Cologne, in co-production with Unlimited/Paris, WDR/Cologne  
**Length** 140 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** Amharish  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Venice 2008 (In Competition), Toronto 2008 (Contemporary World Cinema)  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, WDR/ARTE, Filmfoerderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Hubert Bals Fund, Fonds Sud Cinéma Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication CNC, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères France, EU (Fonds européen de développement), Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg, Région Alsace  

Alex has just arrived in Buenos Aires to visit his dying father. There he meets his family and old friends of his father, who remind him of his childhood in Berlin …

Alex and his family had to flee Argentina in the early 80s. They arrive in Berlin, finding a new home in a factory full of weird people. The factory is the only playground for Alex, where his childhood memories find their origin. Alex has to find his place in this new country. Over time, Alex grows accustomed to this alien world. But he discovers that he has a gift. He can move things with the power of his thoughts.

In the beginning, his parents, Lizzie and Carlos, have problems settling into a foreign country. But soon, Lizzie starts to shoot documentaries. In contrast to Carlos, her yearning for Argentina is fading. Carlos is completely unable to cope with Berlin. He feels misunderstood and unaccepted by the Germans. The yearning for Buenos Aires keeps him sitting for hours in front of his paintings, listening to Tango music and losing himself in his memories. Slowly, their relationship starts to break down. Alex tries to prevent this with the full power of his gift. But he too is confronted with problems and adventures of his own: a new class in school, Argentina beats Germany in the World Football Championship and – he falls in love for the first time in his life.

**Genre** Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Family **Category** Feature Film Cinema **Year of Production** 2008 **Director** Alejandro Cardenas-Amelio **Screenplay** Alejandro Cardenas-Amelio, Cuini Amelia Ortiz **Director of Photography** Florian Schilling **Editor** Renata Salazar Ivancan **Music by** Andres Odone **Production Design** Natascha Tagwer, Nora M. Stenutz, Henning Niebuhr, Sabine Steutder, Daniel Kolarov **Producers** Nicolas Grupe, Dirk Hamm **Production Company** Filmworker/Cologne, in co-production with Creado Film/Constance **Principal Cast** Roman Russo, Rafael Ferro, Alice Dwyer, Erica Rivas, Fabian Busch, Joachim Paul Assboeck, Volkmar Kleinert, Kristian Kiehling, Adrian Goessel **Length** 95 min **Format** 16 mm/35 mm, color, 1:1.85 **Original Version** German/Spanish **Subtitled Version** English **Sound Technology** Dolby Digital **Festival Screenings** Saarbruecken 2008, Shanghai 2008, Montreal 2008 **Awards** Best Actress (Alice Dwyer) Saarbruecken 2008, Best Cinematography (Florian Schilling) Shanghai 2008

**Alejandro Cardenas-Amelio** was born in 1977 in Peru and grew up in Argentina, Brasil, Italy and Germany. He studied Directing at the German Academy of Film & Television (dffb) in Berlin. Prior to his studies, he had already made numerous short films and completed internships in cinematography, sound, lighting and editing. He received the Adolf-Grimme-Award for his graduation film **Alias Alejandro**.
A film about talking as a means of survival. Six people, who happen to be women, in search of something. Fleeing forwards. Work that is speech, and speech that is work. HB has not checked her emails, although she talks about doing so. But her worries and statements are excellent. Fania Kuehne has to go to a reception in order to… keep talking... do deals... sell things. Emske waits. Waits for someone to call back, to knock, someone from the outside, so that she can shoot and talk and call back herself. Diamond Oil is on course for Better Home’s and Gardens furniture. Ludwigsholm gets into arguments, alone in a director’s booth. Esther, on the other hand, wrestles physically with men in hotels. No, it’s not a hobby, and it’s not a job.

Life is (as nice) … as you believe. Sing a song. Maybe it will come true some day. This call. And then don’t answer it.

**Genre** Tragicomedy  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Gesine Danckwart  
**Screenplay** Gesine Danckwart  
**Director of Photography** Kristian Leschner  
**Editor** Chris Wright  
**Music by** Millimeterton, Vicki Schmatolla, Pascal Stoffels  
**Production Design** Matthias Klemme  
**Producers** Britta Hansen, Gesine Danckwart  
**Co-Producer** Eckhard Winkhaus  
**Production Company** danckwart & hansen film/Berlin, in co-production with ZDFtheaterkanal/Mainz, Ziegler Film/Berlin, Cine Plus Media/Berlin  
**Principal Cast** Kathi Angerer, Maren Kroymann, Caroline Peters, Anne Ratte-Polle, Esther Roehrborn, Bettina Stucky  
**Format** HD, color, 1:1.85  
**Length** 90 min  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**World Sales** (please contact)  
**Winsstrasse 69 · 10405 Berlin/Germany**  
**email: hansen@hansenfilm.de**  

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**Gesine Danckwart** develops projects for theaters and public spaces – for example, in the former East German parliament building or as a part of the “Ping Tan Tales” project in China and Berlin, which was funded by the German Culture Foundation. Her written works have been translated into more than fifteen languages, have appeared in various media and won numerous prizes. A selection of her theater works includes: GirlsNightOut (1999), Ueberall in der Badewanne wo nicht Wasser ist (2000), Traummaschine (2000), Arschkarte (2000), Summerwine (2001), Taeglich Brot (2001), Meinacht (2002), Romeo & Julia (2004), Sollbruchstelle (2005), Und morgen steh ich auf (2006), and Mueller fahrt (2007).
A woman speaks roughly 20,000 words a day. A man might respond with an emphatic grunt while focusing on the sports broadcast. Since the dawn of mankind, evolution has conspired to uphold the insurmountable differences amongst the genders. What happened?

Let’s take a look at two examples: Jan is a successful lawyer, athletic, a sports fan and a womanizer. Katrin is a drop-dead gorgeous career woman and a hopeless romantic. They could be the perfect couple were it not for a few obstacles. Jan cannot resist even the most primitive sexual stimuli – like his secretary Angie’s plunging neckline. Katrin, who is so clearly capable of higher intellect, has no resistance to alpha male Jonathan’s shameless sexual advances. It is clear that both genders display vastly different emotions when faced with the same situation. But a modern environment and common sense has not brought change to our most primal behavioral patterns. Which beckons the question: Have we learned nothing?

**Genre** Comedy  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Leander Haussmann  
**Screenplay** Rochus Hahn, Alexander Stever, based on the international best-sellers by Allan & Barbara Pease  
**Director of Photography** Tilman Buettner  
**Editor** Peter R. Adam  
**Music by** James Last  
**Production Design** Christian Bussmann, Steffi Bruhn  
**Producers** Herman Weigel, Oliver Berben  
**Production Company** Constantin Film Produktion/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Benno Fuermann, Jessica Schwarz, Matthias Matschke, Annika Kuhl, Uwe Ochsenknecht  
**Length** 103 min, 2,809 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern  
**German Distributor** Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

Leander Haussmann was born in Quedlinburg in 1959. After attending the Ernst Busch Acting Academy in Berlin, he acted in the theater for several years before taking over as a director. He was the artistic director of Bochum’s Schauspielhaus from 1995-2000, during which time he also appeared in Detlev Buck’s film Jailbirds. His big breakthrough as a film director came with Sun Alley (Sonnenallee, 2000), followed by Berlin Blues (Herr Lehmann, 2003), NVA (2005), Kabale und Liebe (TV, 2005), Warum Maenner nicht zuhoeren und Frauen schlecht einparken (2007), and Robert Zimmermann wundert sich ueber die Liebe (2008).
Of course it’s crazy: going to Bucharest to meet prospective wives chosen from a catalogue. But it’s OK with Erwin, in his early 40s, who knows little of life and even less of women. Up to now, the only woman in his life has been his mother. In the day, he runs the family gas station with her. In the evening, he watches TV with her. Life in the sticks doesn’t offer much more. A wife is what he needs! But Erwin is momma’s boy, and she isn’t into sharing. This becomes distressingly clear to Irina, the shy young woman Erwin brings back from Bucharest with him. He has three weeks to decide whether he wants to “keep” her. As his mother sharpens her claws, Irina metamorphoses from gray mouse to enterprising, life-loving dynamo. She opens up a bar at the gas station, bringing color and life to the drab mother-son couple. It’s a bit too much for Erwin, who has trouble coping with Irina’s inexplicable moods and demands, her sexuality, her womanhood. And when his mother dies, Erwin realizes how helpless and alone he is. He needs Irina more than ever. The only problem is, she’s gone back to Romania …

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** Year of Production 2007  
**Director** Hans Steinbichler  
**Screenplay** Robert Seethaler  
**Director of Photography** Christian Rein  
**Editor** Christian Lonk  
**Music by** Antek Lazarkiewicz  
**Production Design** Andrea Douglas  
**Producer** Gabriela Sperl  
**Production Company** sper+schott film/Munich, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg, EOS Entertainment/Oberhaching  
**Principal Cast** Monica Bleibtreu, Matthias Brandt, Maria Popistasu  
**Casting** Nina Haun  
**Length** 95 min, 2,599 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Surround  
**Festival Screenings** Toronto 2008 (Contemporary World Cinema)  

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**GERMAN FILMS: A PROFILE**

**German Films Service + Marketing** is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, since 1966 the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company. In 2004, new shareholders came on board the Export-Union which since then continues operations under its present name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

**Shareholders** are the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers, the Association of German Film Exporters, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the Association of German Television Producers, the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, the German Documentary Association, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern and Filmstiftung NRW representing the seven main regional film funds, and the German Short Film Association.

Members of the **advisory board** are: Alfred Huermer (chairman), Peter Dinges, Antonio Exacoustos, Dr. Klaus Schaefer, Ulrike Schauz, and Michael Weber.

**German Films itself** has 13 **members of staff**:
- Christian Dorsch, managing director
- Mariette Rissenbeek, public relations/deputy managing director
- Petra Bader, office manager
- Sandra Buchta, project coordinator/documentary film
- Simon Goehler, trainee
- Christine Harrasser, managing director's assistant/project coordinator
- Angela Hawkins, publications & website editor
- Barbie Heusinger, project coordinator/distribution support
- Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator
- Michaela Kowal, accounts
- Kim Liebeck, PR assistant/festival coordinator
- Martin Scheuring, project coordinator/short film
- Konstanze Welz, project coordinator/television

In addition, German Films has nine foreign representatives in eight countries.

**German Films’ range of activities includes:**
- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Locarno, San Sebastian, Montreal, Karlovy Vary, Moscow, Nyon, Shanghai, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Sydney, Goeteborg, Warsaw, Thessaloniki, Rome, and Turin, among others
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets (Berlin, Cannes, AFM Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Shanghai)
- Staging of the “German Premieres” industry screenings in New York, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and Rome
- 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 about current German films and the German film industry (*German Films Quarterly*), as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- An Internet website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, as well as information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the OSAR® for Best Foreign Language Film
- Collaboration with Deutsche Welle’s DW-TV KINO program which features the latest German film releases and international productions in Germany
- Organization of the “German Films Previews” geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- On behalf of the association Rendez-vous franco-allemands du cinéma, organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting

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