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Almut Getto was born in Rhineland-Palatinate. After studies in Political Science, Communication Science and Sociology in Munich, she began working as a writer and television journalist for various German public and private broadcasters. In 1995, she began studying Film & Television at the Academy of Media Arts KHM in Cologne, graduating with the film Spots & Stripes (1998), which won the Special Jury Prizes at St. Petersburg and Giffoni, the Audience Award Short Cuts at Cologne and the Best Family Prize at Seoul. Her other films include: Marlis Goes to Rock (short, 1996), I Don't Like the Sun Anymore (Mit der Sonne habe ich es eh nicht, short, 1996), Do Fish Do It? (Fickende Fische, 2002), most recently Close to You (Ganz nah bei Dir, 2009), as well numerous television essays and reports.

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A STROKE OF LUCK

A portrait of Almut Getto

The daughter of two teachers, Almut Getto spent her childhood and adolescence in Germersheim in Rhineland-Palatinate. After completing her secondary schooling, she moved to Munich to attend university – and to be near the Alps, where she liked to ski! As communication science students were expected to obtain practical experience, Almut Getto soon found herself back in her home area at the Rhein-Pfalz daily newspaper. Following this, in subsequent semesters she was introduced to the art of radio reporting at Bavarian Broadcasting and had her first breath of TV air at Tele 5. She systematically improved her media competence with another period of practical experience in a Munich PR agency and a semester abroad in London before completing her studies with a Master’s degree in 1989.

Her first bold steps on the road to a professional career in media were as a freelancer for various city magazines in Munich. However, she soon decided to switch to television, shooting current affairs and regional contributions for RTL Munich Live: here, she “got a taste for the visual medium and got hooked on the idea of filmmaking”. Munich was followed by Berlin, where work for RBB and the Deutsche Welle allowed her the opportunity to devote herself to her favorite subject: socio-political features. She then moved to Hamburg and made, among other reports, a documentary about Doctors for Developing Countries, for which she accompanied two female doctors into the slums of Calcutta.

Despite the pleasure she got from filming, however, Almut Getto was also beginning to feel increasing frustration. On the one hand, this was because of the time pressure involved in the daily business of reporting, but on the other hand, she was becoming aware that the reproduction of reality sometimes failed to do justice to her experiences. And so she went back to school, to learn about all the artistic and technical aspects of film. During her studies (1995-1998) at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne, the staged documentaries made by her professor Michael Lentz influenced her further film-aesthetic development most of all. It was also Lentz who persuaded her to take the path of feature film, ensuring that she did not graduate with a documentary film as originally planned, but with a short feature. Made in Sheffield in 1997, her graduation film Spots & Stripes is a tale of adolescence about a 13-year-old girl set in a working class town in the North of England, and it brought her considerable recognition and several festival awards (in Seoul, St. Petersburg, Giffoni).

With her first full-length cinema feature Do Fish Do It? in 2002 – about a 16-year-old boy infected with HIV who falls in love for the first time – Almut Getto, who had seen herself as an author filmmaker from the start, became what the magazine Filmidienst described as “a stroke of luck for German cinema”, because “for once, the existentially decisive question of what it means to escape from normative social pressures when searching for identity and a meaning to life does not become exaggeratedly serious, over-intellectual and a form of emo-
tional torture.” The film received various awards including the German Film Award for the Best Screenplay and was seen by more than 100,000 viewers. It also led to lively and emotional discussions at many school screenings and AIDS support groups.

**MS Constanze**, the dramatic story of a family living and working on the inland waterways, should have been Almut Getto’s second feature film. She wrote the script herself and was due to direct it in 2005. Bettina Brokemper was ready to be executive producer, Axel Prahl had agreed to take on the leading role, and Rainer Klausmann was set to wield the camera – but the co-producing TV channel backed out during casting. However, she still hopes that **MS Constanze** will take to the waters of the Rhine one day. In the meantime, she went to the Binger Film Lab in Amsterdam to improve a treatment that had been lying dormant in her desk drawer for some time. She returned with the completed screenplay, **Days Like This** (*Tage wie diese*), for which she won over some well-known actresses to perform in. But she has yet to find a broadcaster for this tale about three women in the provinces.

In 2007 she agreed to take on the screenplay of **Close to You** by Speedy Deftereos and Hendrik Hoelzemann, which she then rewrote and eventually directed. Although she was unable to assert all her new ideas against the producer’s wishes, this story of a neurotic bank employee who falls in love with a blind cellist still bears her signature. After all, the balancing act between comedy and drama demanded by the story is very much “her thing”: “Making an audience laugh and cry in the same film, I see that as the greatest challenge, and – if it succeeds – as the best compliment I can receive as a director,” Almut Getto comments. When the film – which she would have preferred to give the more associative title **All You Can See** – received the Audience Award at the Max Ophuels Festival 2009, she felt vindicated in retrospect and made her peace with the production.

Her work on **Close to You** certainly underlined her conviction that she would only realize other people’s screenplays in future if she was permitted to alter the original material and stage it according to her wishes. Without this creative freedom she would just feel like the producer’s sidelong – and that contradicts her self-image as an author filmmaker.

Almut Getto thinks it is strange that men who fight for their ideas are said to be capable of asserting themselves or merely eccentric at worst, whereas there is a tendency to mark similar women down as simply being “difficult”. Overall, she still sees a general imbalance between female and male directors: “Although there are as many women as men studying at the film academies nowadays, somehow later it seems more men get the jobs and the big budgets.” With a sarcastic wink, she adds: “Apparently we women can’t handle money or lead a big team effectively.”

Certainly she herself considers communication very important, and this is reflected in her style of directing: in her opinion, a rehearsal period of two weeks with the actors is essential. However, at this stage she allows the actors a lot of scope to improvise, in order for them to discover what the scene and roles are really about. It is important to her that the actors bring the characters across in a credible and authentic way. That is why Almut Getto finds it difficult to imagine working with “quota” actors that producers or TV-editors have set before her—preferring instead to discover and choose her own. In this respect, her main role models are Nordic and British productions and the films by the Belgian brothers Dardenne, who “always seem to be able to pull new, unspoiled faces out of a hat.”

Almut Getto is also open with respect to the cinematographic concept. She doesn’t present the cameraman with a storyboard worked out in great detail, but favors a collaborative approach, discussing the resolution of each scene with her DoP. She likes to shoot long takes so that the actors can express themselves fully, and loves to experiment with small gestures. She’s also interested in slowing down the tempo of certain scenes to enable an audience to appreciate more fully what they are watching. As in **Do Fish Do It?** and **Close to You**, a lot should remain unspoken, should take place between the lines.

And that is why Almut Getto finds the “editing process” and constructive cooperation with the cutting editor so exciting as well – as she sees it, a film is made “four times”: “you write, shoot, edit and set it to a tune.”
Niko von Glasow was born in 1960 in Cologne into a “German-Jewish intellectual family”. He started his career with Rainer Werner Fassbinder at the Actors Studio New York, worked as his production assistant and then with various film distributors, studios and festivals. He trained as a director at the film academy in Lodz/Poland. While he still has a base in Cologne, von Glasow also moved to London 12 years ago to pursue his dream of making English-language films. Niko von Glasow’s films include: *Wedding Guests* (*Hochzeitsgäste*, 1990), *Marie’s Song* (*Maries Lied*, 1994), *Edelweiss Pirates* (*Edelweisspiraten*, 2004), *Schau mich an* (*TV, 2007*) and *NoBody’s Perfect* (2008), which recently won the German Film Award 2009 for Best Documentary. He is also a member of BAFTA and the European Film Academy.

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First you have to find von Glasow’s house – “It’s nr. 14, but the red nr. 14, not the white one!” Then sort out the laptop, assume the position (him at the desk, me on the sofa) and... you’re off on a roller-coaster ride of free association, leaps of imagination and trains of thought leading to all kinds of destinations. Meet Niko von Glasow, award-winning writer-producer-director and genuine never-a-dull-moment! In his own words, von Glasow is “a German-Jewish-Buddhist, disabled, film producer living in London! I’m difficult! You don’t hire difficult!” He continues, laughing: “But I want a job and maybe you should not write that! Or that I’m difficult! Truth is, there are two souls in my breast: I’ve succeeded in becoming a filmmaker with a signature but I also dream of becoming an ordinary director making good films, like *ET*. I would love to have made *The Witness* with Harrison Ford, about the Amish, its simple filmmaking, actors with a brilliant script. That’s my big dream.”

“The problem of filmmaking,” von Glasow explains, “is you have to find the edge between something commercial and highly artistic. You have to, as a filmmaker, try to find it without compromising any of the vision. One of the problems in Germany is that you’re either pushed into the commercial or art corner. It is very difficult to convince people you can do both and you need both. I am living outside this world of subsidized filmmaking thinking, I don’t live in this cloud where the only train of thought is how to get the subsidies. I am living in a ‘normal’ world and the English-speaking film world is much harsher and reminds you of the reality of the international market all the time.”

He then pays tribute to one of the respected names in the international film market, HanWay: “For my intellectual stimulation, brainstorming, I go there. Stefan Mahlmann is my favorite guy there. He’s one of the partners. Lovely guy, German by the way. He’s very professional and very kind.”

Getting into the film business by “walking into Bavaria Studios and asking which way to make films!” von Glasow ended up with Fassbinder. “By luck, and I didn’t even know who he was! I only realised much later what a blessing that was! I learned from him that warmth is the most important quality a director has to have – he was a real dangerous bastard, especially at the end of his career, but at the same time he was a very warm and kind person, and this warmth can be felt in all his films. It’s important to say he was a bastard, but that doesn’t preclude him being a warm one!”

Deciding he wanted to learn more about acting, von Glasow went to Jean Jacques Arnaud and the self-confessed “worst actor in the world” was hired for five weeks to play a monk alongside Sir Sean Connery in *The Name of the Rose*: “I was right. I’m really an awful actor and they cut me out entirely!” So off he went to the Actors Studio in New York...
York. He studied scriptwriting and then went to film school in Lodz, “one of the world’s best film schools at the time,” where he made *Wedding Guests*.

Back in his home town, Cologne, von Glasow made *Marie’s Song*, discovering the then extra, Sylvie Testud. At which point he hands me the DVD with his foot, explaining: “I wanted to make a really poetic film and I succeeded. It’s beautiful if a bit boring – poetic films are not the most driving!”

A move back to America saw the now married von Glasow and his wife working on a joint project, raising children, “which we did very successfully.” After which he embarked on the very under-financed (then DM 1.5m) *Edelweiss Pirates*, about a group of kids fighting the Gestapo in Cologne. Shot on mini-DV in St. Petersburg, starring two-time Oscar®-winner Jan Decleir, Anna Thalbach and Bela B, *Edelweiss Pirates* shows how much can be done with very little, and yet von Glasow admits he broke his own film’s neck. “I couldn’t bring myself to have a reconciliatory ending at the end of the Nazi time. I knew this would drive it against the wall, but I couldn’t bring myself to do that. I studied this in detail. It’s a very interesting question: I think every good film story has to start with a question and the answer must be yes.”

Calling *The Blair Witch Project* “a genius, genius film,” thanks to its script placing the main character’s goal outside the film, von Glasow explains that fulfilling endings count, not happy ones. “*Leaving Las Vegas* – why was it so successful? It’s not about taste, it’s about *Handwerk!* These films are great *Handwerk!* There are many films I hate but they’re still great *Handwerk* … It’s interesting to see why films worked; that’s the key question.”

How about his own film, *NoBody’s Perfect*? Again, von Glasow is open: “It was the first real cinema film, historically, made by a disabled director about disability. It was time to face my demons! I always wanted to avoid the subject of disability. I was like the drinker who didn’t want to admit it. That’s the first step at the AA meeting. I never wanted to admit publicly I’m disabled. My wife said it was time to look the devil in the eye! We started with a very simple question: who could be the hero: answer, me!”

But having himself as the hero wasn’t enough. Von Glasow then asked himself “what’s my biggest fear? In my case it’s public nudity. People stare at me anyway. When I go to a beach with my swimming suit on people stare even more, so I don’t go to beaches. I had to find 11 other thalidomiders who strip naked for a calendar and I became Mr. December. It became a dark but very funny comedy. I did it and now I feel better! More secure: in my soul, in my being, inside. Once you go into it, honesty is very healing.”

Calling *NoBody’s Perfect* “the best black comedy about Thalidomide ever”, von Glasow is rightly proud of his German Film Award: “It’s the greatest honor you can get in Germany and comes with €200,000, which makes the honor even bigger! I really appreciate the award coming from colleagues. It’s basically the ‘German Oscar’.

Among the films he admires, von Glasow lists *Shrek 2*, *The Last King of Scotland*, *Slumdog Millionaire* and *The Baader Meinhof Complex*. He praises this last’s producer, Bernd Eichinger, as “one of the few people in Germany who knows a lot about scripts and distribution. He’s also the kind of person who is very similar to Fassbinder in a way. He is a great filmmaker, he’s tough, but also has a warm heart.”

And now I’ve finally twigged it! The key to von Glasow’s instinct, the key to the man and filmmaker, is that of the gut: “I’ve learned more and more to go with my gut feeling and instinct, even if it seems against your own interests at the time. Don’t do it if it’s not the right thing for you. I think the quality of good character and kindness becomes more and more important in the film business.”

Simon Kingsley spoke with Niko von Glasow
NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

A portrait of UFA Cinema

Even before the first meter of film was shot this summer, UFA Cinema, the new kid on the German production scene, had been regularly grabbing the headlines over the past 18 months.

Eyebrows were raised in the production community at the end of 2007 when UFA – part of RTL Group’s content production arm FremantleMedia – announced the creation of a new producer-distributor to deliver feature films for the German and international markets.

Based in Potsdam and Munich with offices in Berlin and Cologne, the new outfit landed something of a coup from the outset by enticing Thomas Peter Friedl after 18 years at Constantin Film to join UFA CEO Wolf Bauer, teamWorx CEO Nico Hofmann and teamWorx managing director Juergen Schuster in UFA Cinema’s management from April 2008.

GOOD TIMING

The decision to set up UFA Cinema couldn’t have been better timed, according to UFA Cinema’s management.

“Even though the feature film sector continues to be a very volatile and hit-driven business, the market share of German productions has been growing continuously over the years,” observes Wolf Bauer. “In 2008, German films reached the highest level since 1991 with a total market share of 26.6%.”

“The DFFF financing model and the diverse opportunities also opened up to feature films by digitalization have considerably improved the economic parameters for the production and exploitation of feature films,” he continues.
RTL Group’s content production arm FremantleMedia and its German subsidiary UFA launched a new multi-million German film studio, **UFA Cinema**, at the beginning of 2008 to make commercial films for the German and international market place. With Wolf Bauer, Thomas Peter Friedl, Prof. Nico Hofmann and Dr. Juergen Schuster as managing directors, UFA Cinema has offices in Berlin, Munich, Potsdam and Cologne and is represented in all of the major media markets in Germany. Over the past 18 months, the company has selected more than 20 projects from over 80 in active development to be produced over the next three years. UFA Cinema’s production slate includes: adaptations of David Safier’s debut novel **Lousy Karma** and his second novel, the romantic comedy **Jesus Loves Me**, Noah Gordon’s international best-seller **The Physician** (**Medicus**); Ralf Koenig’s comic **Hempel’s Sofa** and his latest book **Prototyp** with an amusing new take on the story of Genesis; Robert Harris’ political thriller **Vaterland**, Leonie Swann’s sheep detective novel **Glennkill** (**Three Bags Full**), Bernhard Schlink’s latest novel **The Weekend** (**Das Wochenende**); Christoph and Wolfgang Lauenstein’s 3-D CGI film **Marnie’s World**; Student Oscar®-winner Toke Constantin Hebbel’s feature debut, the East-West love story **Niemandsland**, with Berlin-based Frisbee Films; the family film **Alles Emma – Oder Was?** based on the interactive book series for teenagers by Gerlis Zillgens; the adventure film **Efram Langstrumpf und die Kannibalen-Prinzessin**, and the political thriller **It’s God’s Will (Gott will es)** based on the novel of the same name by Christian Schoenborn. Production began this July on Granz Henman’s family film **The Devil’s Kickers** (**Die Teufelskicker**), adapted by Christoph Silber from the Frauke Nahrgang books, and the family film **The O’Sullivan Twins** (**Hanni und Nanni**) based on the Enid Blyton series of children’s books. This will be followed by writer-director Lars Kraume’s near future drama **The Coming Days** (**Die kommenden Tage**) and Otto Alexander Jahrreiss’ screwball comedy **Pigeons on the Roof** (**Tauben auf dem Dach**), and in the winter by Roland Suso Richter’s adventure film **Jungle Child**, adapted from the childhood memories of a German woman who lived with her family in the jungle of Western New Guinea from the age of five to 17. In April of this year, Focus Features International (FFI), Universal Pictures International (UPI) and UFA Cinema announced a new strategic partnership between the three companies which will see UPI become the exclusive theatrical and home entertainment distributor for UFA Cinema productions in German-speaking territories. Under a separate agreement, FFI will partner with UFA on key co-productions identified for the global marketplace and also have an option to handle international sales on selected UFA Cinema titles.

“And, finally, the standing of German cinema abroad has grown massively,” Bauer explains. “In the meantime, German films have become an export article in demand again. In short: feature film production on a larger scale again represents a workable business model.”

“We also see that the number of players who can really manage a higher volume of cinema productions each year has been significantly reduced in recent years,” Friedl adds.

“Ten years ago, there were five or six big players who were producing more than four or five films on a yearly basis, but now you only really have Constantin and maybe X Filme. So we felt that there was a gap for someone to come in to produce commercial product on a large scale.”

**GENRE SPREAD**

Looking at the projects UFA Cinema has greenlit to go into production with budgets ranging from 5 to 30 million Euros, Nico Hofmann points out that “UFA Cinema’s portfolio of productions is quite clearly about commercially-oriented filmmakers’ cinema with a wide diversity of genres. We will present a line-up of national and international best-seller adaptations, comedies for various target groups, family entertainment and sophisticated and political cinema by young talents, and this will be radically narrated in cinematic terms as well as having great commercial potential.”

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“it is less about certain genres or subjects, but always about the power of each individual story,” Hofmann explains. “Moreover, we will devote ourselves particularly to the up-and-coming generation of filmmakers.”

Thus, UFA Cinema’s slate includes plans for adaptations of books by screenwriter and novelist David Safier (**Lousy Karma** and **Jesus Loves Me**), comic book supremo Ralf Koenig (**Hempel’s Sofa** and **Prototyp**), **The Reader**’s Bernhard Schlink (**The Weekend**), and Leonie Swann (**Glennkill**) as well as a German-language version of Robert Harris’ political thriller **Vaterland** and an adaptation of Noah Gordon’s best-seller **The Physician** in English for the international market.

A second category is family entertainment which is being kicked off this summer with the principal photography for two projects in North Rhine-Westphalia: Granz Henman’s family film **The Devil’s Kickers**, adapted by Christoph Silber from Frauke Nahrgang’s books, and **The O’Sullivan Twins**, the first feature film to be based on the Enid Blyton series of children’s books.

Comedy is the third genre coming under the spotlight at UFA Cinema because, as Friedl notes, “when you look at the 180 German films coming out each year, the proportion of comedies is small.”

Indeed, one of UFA Cinema’s first productions to go before the camera this summer belongs to this category, with writer-director
Otto Alexander Jahrreiss’ screwball comedy *Pigeons on the Roof*.

Given that cinema audiences are growing older and becoming more demanding, the company has also given itself the task of identifying subject matter to appeal to this age group. “There is much more political cinema made in France, for example, and I see that we have some way to catch up,” Friedl argues. Two projects fitting this category of sophisticated political cinema would be the adaptation of Robert Harris’ controversial novel *Vaterland* and the political thriller *It’s God’s Will* based on the novel of the same name by Christian Schoenborn.

Finally, UFA Cinema’s fifth project category will be seeing the company paying particular attention to the young generation of filmmakers, which is a natural progression from Friedl and Hofmann’s involvement in the annual First Steps Award in Berlin as well as Hofmann’s role as a professor at the film academy in Ludwigsburg.

One of the first projects will be Student Oscar®-winner Toke Constantin Hebbeln’s feature debut, the East-West love story *Niemandsland*, with up-and-coming, Berlin-based Frisbeefilms.

The fourth project to go before the camera this year will be Roland Suso Richter’s *Jungle Child* based on Sabine Kuegler’s best-selling book *Dschungelkind* in the autumn.

According to UFA Cinema’s managing director Juergen Schuster, this project is particularly fascinating “because, when also looking at it from the production logistics, it marks a completely new challenge for us on this scale. I became aware of this ‘at close range’ last year when I was on a research trip deep in the rain forest for this project and made the first contact with the archaic world described in Sabine Kuegler’s novel.”

“But the exciting description of her childhood experiences in the deepest jungle of West Papua where she grew up with her parents and two siblings in the midst of the Fayu People and far away from any kind of ‘civilization’, also contains all the components which I think will make for an exciting, highly emotional feature film set against a terrific backdrop.”

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Meanwhile, this April a strategic partnership was unveiled with Universal Pictures International (UPI) and Focus Features International (FFI), which sees UPI becoming the exclusive theatrical and home entertainment distributor for UFA Cinema productions in German-speaking territories. In addition, FFI may partner UFA on key co-productions aimed for the international market and have an option to handle international sales on selected UFA Cinema titles.

Given his background at Constantin, many industry observers had expected Friedl to want to set up his own in-house distribution arm. But he counters: “In addition to our annual production output of 8-10 films, we would have had to acquire 10 movies. I don’t see this product available on the independent market at the moment. That’s why we chose the option of entering into a partnership with an existing distributor.”

“We looked at the kinds of partnership that were possible and how one could complement one another,” he continues. “From the outset, Universal and Focus Features are our dream partners since a number of important elements came together: it was extremely important for us to have a distribution partner who also produces and has a strong focus on international markets.”

“Although our focus is on German-language projects, we now have quite a number of English ones in development and so we were keen to have a partner who has experience of production, sales and distribution in the global markets,” Friedl says. “It is a strategic partnership which functions in both directions: i.e. we will work together in all those areas where it makes sense. Thus, we could also be involved in projects which Focus or Universal plan to do here in Germany, where we can bring in our know-how.”

“I have realized a dream I had for the past 20 years, including during the time when I was at Constantin – the idea of gathering strong studio product with strong local titles into one distribution structure,” he says. “Nobody had managed to do this consistently up until now. There were always successful periods with local productions at US studios or independent companies like Constantin with US product, but it was never both at the same time. The market is constantly demanding strong studio and local product from one source, and that’s what we aim to provide.”

**THE NEXT CHAPTER**

Meanwhile, the appearance of UFA Cinema in Germany as a new player may only be the beginning of the story. “The idea of taking this UFA Cinema model to other territories is the third step in our strategy,” Bauer explains. “It was agreed with our shareholder to begin with production and then a distribution structure. Once this is successful, we could think about exporting the model to key markets in Europe like France, Spain, Italy and the UK.”

*Martin Blaney spoke with Thomas Peter Friedl, Wolf Bauer, Nico Hofmann and Juergen Schuster*
AS IF DIGITAL CAPTURE DIDN’T HAVE ENOUGH CHALLENGES ALREADY.

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Mokkabar, Kreuzberg, Berlin. Alice Dwyer is wearing jeans, a simple top and her hair loose. She looks natural and sensual, like a young woman who can get along well without putting on a show. She was the one to choose our meeting place, and in a way this alternative, multicultural and perhaps most honest part of Berlin seems representative of her mentality: “I grew up in Schoeneberg and Kreuzberg and I still...”

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wouldn’t want to live in any other part of Berlin.” Why is that? “Because of the different types of people, because of the many social strata, professions and cultures. But I am rather concerned to see that even this district is slowly becoming more and more chic.”

Does she believe that this bastion can be preserved? “Ick hoffe” (I hope so) she answers with an original Berlin accent, beaming broadly.

Hers is a smile that always includes an echoing touch of sympathetic melancholy, as if she is thinking hard to herself about what she has just said. She appears surprisingly adult for a girl of just over 21, conveying a maturity that has surely been shaped by her now more than ten years working as an actress: “It wasn’t until I was sixteen that I began to make films together with people of my own age, before that it was always with adults. I don’t understand people who say that you miss out on your childhood. I think it is a different kind of childhood, a different kind of growing up. It wasn’t quicker, but it was different. I am very grateful for it.” One asks oneself where, at the age of only nine, she found the assurance to bridge a lean time of two years without any doubts in herself? “I suppose it was my stubborn determination not to give up. My defiant refusal to admit to failure.”

Dwyer believed in herself – and after her first roles, the industry believed in her, too: “After Baby, suddenly people recognized me, and also came up and spoke to me. Overnight, I was looked at more closely at castings. I just thought to myself: ‘Wow, so this is how it works.’” Afterwards, attempts were made to pin her down to lascivious roles (“sometimes that has been made to look more extreme than it actually was”), but in the subsequent years Dwyer decided in favor of a remarkably multifaceted series of no-budget, low-budget and independent films, which earned her the reputation of a perceptive, up-and-coming talent for complex roles. Even in numerous TV films, she demonstrated a talent for choosing exacting material with astonishing frequency. “I think it would be a shame to feel bad about acting in TV productions as well,” Dwyer muses. “I try to avoid that attitude. It’s a kind of arrogance that is actually quite ridiculous.”

As far as her actual work as an actress is concerned, she doesn’t differentiate between the media to any extent, and for that very reason, the words that she has often heard ‘Of course, we are only making TV programs’ also make her extremely annoyed. “When TV is always made out to be so bad, it should motivate us even more to make it better!”

Coming from many other young women, this statement would sound like a platitude, but in Dwyer’s case it sounds like an honest doctrine: “It would seem odd to me if I didn’t have those ideals. Perhaps it’s a matter of attitude, of what you’re aiming for, but if I take part in a project that I can only back half-heartedly, it makes me unhappy.” She demonstrates the same passion in her choice of films. There is a conscious tendency towards art, towards complex films with deep content. “I do believe that there is a fresh breeze blowing through the industry, but in my eyes there are still far too many people who don’t have the courage to try things a different way sometimes,” Dwyer responds in answer to my question about the current state of German film and adds: “To be able to play as many facets as possible – sometimes it’s just not permitted.”

Dwyer is eloquent – but nevertheless, she often hesitates noticeably at the beginning of her sentences. Asked about the origin of her enthusiasm for acting she considers for around 15 seconds – and the time she takes to think it over appears honest. “I believe that when you’re acting, over and over again there are scenes that work out and you notice that while it is happening. They are just working; it’s impossible to explain it. You don’t know whether it is something to do with the screenplay or with your acting partner, but these occasional moments are some of the most satisfying you can ever experience.”

While Dwyer uses such fine words to express her ideas about acting, she also reveals considerable interest in her own development process. “What happens afterwards scares me more than anything else. When I cross a red carpet and people take photos, I find myself trembling terribly afterwards, because it is all too much for me. It unsettles me completely to be standing there as ‘myself’ all of a sudden.” She much prefers continual transformation and permanent rediscovery in different people and in her life, she says, and explains: “I need that so much that I grow grumpy if I haven’t done any filming for a couple of months.” But I would like to know why exactly. “Perhaps it’s all about inner, emotional engagement?” Alice Dwyer laughs but then becomes serious again. “I don’t know what it is exactly. But I believe it’s true of almost every creative profession that you love. I’m already familiar with it from my mom, who is a painter. If she doesn’t go to her studio for a few weeks, she goes out of her mind. It’s almost as if your body is demanding it, somehow.”

A few minutes later, her mother actually comes along. Just by chance, on her way to her studio. She is wearing jeans with splashes of paint, a sign of her creativity. Dwyer, who was brought up bilingually, exchanges a few words of English with her mother from New Zealand, then smiles self-consciously and introduces us.

This brief moment of privacy observed by chance merely confirms the abiding media, or rather artistic aura of this young, up-and-coming talent: that of a down-to-earth, independently thinking and creative young woman whose charm and charisma mean she has a real chance: to make it right to the top.

Johannes Bonke spoke with Alice Dwyer
6TH FOCUS GERMANY IN SHANGHAI

The delegation for the 6th edition of FOCUS GERMANY at the Shanghai International Film Festival was the biggest ever. Eight directors presented their films to the audience (Lars Buechel, Ciro Cappellari, Florian Eichinger, Marie Miyayama, Winfried Oelsner, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Sebastian Schipper and Kai Wessel). Short filmmaker Kathrin Albers discussed with the audience the 10 short films presented at the festival in cooperation with AG Kurzfilm, and together with Matthijs Wouter Knol (Berlinale Talent Campus) she covered a session with the theme “Masters to Be” with 65 young filmmakers and students at the SIFF FORUM. German sales agents Telepool, The Match Factory and Riva Film negotiated with the interested buyers at the Shanghai Film Market. The German films – including the competition film A Piece of Me by Christoph Roehl (which was presented by the filmmaker and the two main actors, Ludwig Trepte and Karoline Teska) and the German-Greek co-production Small Crimes by Christos Georgiou were very well received by the Shanghai audience. German films are also performing well in the regular cinemas in China. Philipp Strobl’s North Face will be released this summer, and both The Counterfeiters and John Rabe pulled in impressive admissions in Chinese cinemas. The Cologne-based company Action Concept signed a co-production deal during this year’s festival. After having been successful in the theaters with Final Contract and The Clown, the next project seems to have all it needs for another box office success.

NRW IN LOS ANGELES

Storm, Buddenbrooks, Krabat and Clara are just four of the ten films that will represent the state of NRW as an important European film location from 30 September to 4 October in Santa Monica. The films, being shown in the section “German Currents 2009” have all been shot in North Rhine-Westphalia. They all show what the film industry along the rivers Rhine and Ruhr has to offer. The film showcase is being presented by the Filmstiftung NRW and the Los Angeles Goethe-Institut. Other films in the series will include Berlin Calling and Suburban Crocodiles. The Cologne-based MMC Studios and PICTORION das werk will also be in L.A. to offer their expertise. Also, the upcoming generation will travel with the delegation: KHM film students will present their short films and the Cologne-based ifs international film school will present the results of its Triangle Dialogue, a documentary project among film students in Cologne, Warsaw and Jerusalem. An exhibit of film photography, a grand opening reception and a “film meeting” will round off the event.

Part of the delegation from NRW “on location” in Santa Monica are media secretary Andreas Krautschied and Filmstiftung NRW’s CEO Michael Schmid-Ospach as well as numerous German filmmakers not only from NRW, including the directors and producers of the films being screened. German Films is also supporting the event. More information is available at www.filmstiftung.de or at http://www.goethe.de/ins/us/los/.
11 YEARS OF GERMAN FILMS IN MADRID – FESTIVAL ON UPWARD TRENDS

Despite the general economic crisis, around 5,000 Spanish cinema-goers attended the 11th Festival of German Films in Madrid, which was held from 2 – 6 June 2009.

The festival opened at the Cine Palafox with the film Hilde in the presence of the director Kai Wessel and producer Judy Tossell. The 850-seat cinema was sold out and the audience was very enthusiastic about the film portrait of Hildegard Knef, which also went on to receive the festival’s Audience Award.

Other guests at the festival were the directors Jovan Arsenic (Heroes from the Neighbourhood/Die Helden aus der Nachbarschaft), director Tom Schreiber and screenwriter Oliver Keidel (Dr. Alemán), Hannes Stoehr (Berlin Calling), Stefan Weinert (Face the Wall/Gesicht zur Wand), and the producer Tina Hegewisch (Long Shadows/Schattenwelt). Tim Bollinger traveled to Madrid to represent German Films’ short film program Next Generation 2009 and introduce his five-minute film Between.

The main program also featured A Woman in Berlin (Anonyma – Eine Frau in Berlin) by Max Faerberboeck, A Year Ago in Winter (Im Winter ein Jahr) by Caroline Link, Little White Lies (Die Perlmutterfarbe) by Marcus H. Rosenmüller, and the TV film Das Wunder von Leipzig by Sebastian Dehnhardt and Matthias Schmidt. This year’s retrospective showed films on the subject “20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall” and also included a panel discussion on the documentary Face the Wall in cooperation with the magazine GEO España.

A special highlight to round off the festival was the screening of Fritz Lang’s silent film Spies (Spione) with musical accompaniment to the film provided by the trio of Aljoscha Zimmermann (piano), Sabrina Hausmann (violin) and Markus Steiner (drums).

Spain’s continued interest for German cinema was again evident at the annual distributors’ dinner which German Films hosted for Spanish distributors and German world sales companies.

CHANGES IN THE NORTH GERMAN FILM PRIZE

Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg will increase the total prize money of the North German Film Prize from 55,000 Euros to 75,000 Euros. A new category has also been added: Best Feature Film (TV). Prizes are awarded by a jury in the categories Best Feature Film (Cinema), Best Feature Film (TV), Best Documentary Film and Best Script.

The Special Merit award is awarded in a separate procedure. The North German Film Prize will be presented this year on 7 November within the framework of the Nordic Film Days Lübeck, and for the first time directly by the state governments of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein. Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein will continue to organize the presentation and is happy to answer any queries as to the application modalities: www.ffhsh.de.
DISCOVER BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG

In collaboration with the Film Commission Baden-Baden/Karlsruhe, the film fund MFG Filmförderung is extending an invitation to join a location tour in the Mittlerer Oberrhein region from 24 to 25 September 2009. The motto of the tour is “The Fan City Karlsruhe and its Environ – Fanning Out Locations” and for producers and filmmakers it should be a voyage of discovery to exciting, unspoilt shooting locations (contact: Uschi Freynick, freynick@mfg.de).

Locations in the South West are enjoying growing popularity: the RAF-drama Long Shadows by Connie Walther was filmed in and around Freiburg and received considerable support from the Location Office Region Freiburg. The team from The Day Will Come – cinema debut of writer and director Susanne Schneider, who lives in Tuebingen – also filmed in various locations in the Black Forest. This family drama with Iris Berben and Katharina Schuettler in the leading roles focuses on an ex-terrorist. Already awarded the Thomas Strittmatter Prize during the Berlinale 2008, the film celebrated its world premiere at the Munich Film Festival this year and will be opening in German cinemas on 26 August 2009.

GERMAN-FRENCH SHORT FILM RENDEZ-VOUS

In June 2009, the 10th German-French Short Film Rendez-vous took place in Strasbourg. The event organizers were the Goethe-Institut in Nancy and the Institut Vidéo Les Beaux Jours Strasbourg. In past years, various partners had already participated on the German side (including CineMayance Mainz and the Baden-Wuerttemberg Film Academy in Ludwigsburg). At this year’s 10-year anniversary event, the German Short Film Association and German Films attended for the first time, together with the Institute for Cinema and Film Culture/Cologne. In the run-up to the event, five German and five French short films were selected by the cooperating partners. The German representatives were Shift (15 Minuten Wahrheit) by Nico Zingelmann, Coma by Johannes F. Sievert, Robin by Hanno Olderdissen, Summer Sunday (Sommersonntag) by Fred Breinersdorfer and Sigi Kamml, and Ultima Ratio by Marc Schleiss.

The directors were invited to Strasbourg in order to meet and exchange ideas in two days of discussions, and the selected films were presented in the Musée d’art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg on 11 June 2009. But the main event was a seminar on 12 June 2009: led by director Florian Gaag, this meeting took place in the rooms of ARTE Strasbourg, where the participating directors and interested guests had an opportunity to discuss the differing framework conditions in their home countries as well as matters of film aesthetics.

1ST KIDS REGIO FORUM

With support from the Thuringian Ministry of Construction, Regional Development and Media, from Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (MDM) and members of the Cine Regio network, a conference on the future of European children’s film took place in Erfurt from 24-25 June 2009: The 1st KIDS Regio Forum. More than 100 participants from 17 European countries – authors, directors and producers, as well as sales agents, distributors, cinema owners, TV representatives, funders, and representatives of the existing lobby groups who are active in this field all over Europe, met in Erfurt to discuss the situation of European children’s film in detail, defining basic problems and deficiencies and sounding out possible synergies and solutions. By bringing together the different players from this particular branch of the filmmaking industry, the conference aimed at developing a course of action that can improve the situation of European children’s film. The participants of the 1st KIDS Regio Forum have agreed on an agenda of 5 points – the “Erfurt Declaration”, aiming at a strengthening of the live action feature film for children. The declaration can be downloaded at www.kids-regio.org.
representatives of the German animation scene were also invited to join the juries, Thomas Haegele (director of the Animation Institute at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Film Academy) and Andreas Hykade (director and a professor at the Academy of Arts in Kassel). David O’Reilly’s Please Say Something, the only German entry in the international competition for the Annecy Cristal, was awarded a Special Distinction.

Together with German Films, AG Kurzfilm presented the brand-new DVD screener New German Animations with selected short German animation films at the MIFA. The brochure 100 Years of German Animation, a cooperative production by the DIAF, AG Kurzfilm and German Films, was also presented to the public for the first time. Like last year, the market stand became a meeting point for filmmakers, producers and other representatives of the industry. In the coming year, the aim is to continue the German commitment of AG Kurzfilm and German Films together with additional partners in Annecy.

3rd GERMAN FILMS PREVIEWS IN COLOGNE

All good things come in threes: for the third time, some 80 international film buyers from 31 countries made their way to Cologne to get an overview of the current German production scene. From 12 – 15 July, 21 films were screened at the Cologne Cinedom, most of which had not been seen or screened before at international markets and festivals. Participation from Asia was particularly impressive: in addition to distributors from China, Taiwan and South Korea, German Films also welcomed guests this year from Singapore, Thailand, and Japan to the Previews.

Great interest was shown in the screenings of Berlin ’36 by Kaspar Heidellbach, The Door by Anno Saul, When We Leave by Feo Aladag, and My Words, My Lies – My Love by Alain Gsponer. The German-Lithuanian co-production Low Lights came directly from its world premiere in Karlovy Vary, and Wolfgang Groos’ Hangtime, which won the prize for the Best Young Actor in Munich just a week before, were also part of the Previews program. Interest was sparked by the promo-reels which presented the first excerpts from new productions like Fatih Akin’s Soul Kitchen and Jo Baiers Henry IV.

Besides the film screenings, the networking events are an essential part of the German Films Previews. The international guests have the unique 3-day opportunity for intensive conversation and exchange of ideas with world sales agents and representatives of the regional media scene, something that is often cut short during the hectic of festivals and markets. After the opening evening atop the Cologne Tower, the Filmstiftung NRW invited the participants to a festive dinner at Bensberg Castle. An open-air screening of Andreas Dresen’s Whisky with Vodka rounded off the event with a barbecue at the Cologne cycling arena.
Bis aufs Blut

Tommy and Sule are like brothers: a bullet-proof friendship. Their posse is their family, they live life like there’s no tomorrow and dream of their own tuning shop – until Tommy gets caught with some dope they were going to sell and is sent to the hell of juvenile prison.

Released six months on, Tommy discovers much has changed: almost all the US forces stationed in his hometown are gone, his girlfriend Sina is seeing someone else, and his mom is threatening to throw him out. The only support he finds is from Sule and his old friends. And Sule has the master plan: one last drug deal to finance their tuning shop!

“When I was young I learned friendships can take on an undreamed of dimension,” says writer-director Oliver Kienle. “Growing up, I learned these friendships very quickly no longer count when your own future’s at stake. One person has a chance, the other doesn’t. Suddenly, friends become enemies.”

Jacob Matschenz (A Year Ago in Winter, The Wave) is Tommy, Burak Yigit (66/67) is Sule and Aylin Tezel (from the award-winning TV series Turkish for Anfänger) plays Sina. The supporting roles are also excellently cast with Simone Thomalla as Tommy’s mother Sylvia and Peter Lohmeyer cameos as the headmaster.

Black Death

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Medieval times in all their gore and glory are at the focus of **Christopher Smith**’s fourth feature, **Black Death** about a village mysteriously spared by the plague in the 14th century, which wrapped production on location in Brandenburg in mid-June.

“The project had initially been developed by the British production company Ecosse Films,” says **Jens Meurer** of Egoli Tossell Film. “They had heard about what is happening in Germany on the film financing front and got in touch with Zephyr Films because that company had already worked here with us on films like The Last Station.”

“Two things appeared to fit well,” Meurer explains. “I was intrigued to do a completely new kind of film for me – an intelligent horror film and not just one showing gratuitous violence, and the Middle Ages is also a period I find particularly attractive as a trained historian who specialized in this chapter of history.”

In addition, Meurer was convinced that the film “would be eminently do-able in Germany, and especially in Sachsen-Anhalt. There are practically no places elsewhere in Europe where you can shoot this film better than in Middle Germany.”

“There was a particular quality of the locations here because they did not have to be too clean or touristy,” he continues. “A certain proximity of the locations to one another also helped. Moreover, Eastern Europe wouldn’t have worked for this film because they have an orthodox Christian tradition which looks very different to what we have here in Western Europe.”

Director Christopher Smith, who had previously worked in Germany on his feature Creep, jumped at the chance to direct **Black Death** since he had been “looking to make a period film that shows the eerie similarity between the ways of thinking that existed in medieval times and those of today.”

“I want my audience to believe what the film’s protagonists believed,” Smith suggests. “The world will be shown in all its cruelty and will evoke in a modern audience a world so alien from modern life that it could easily be a place that contains the witches and demons that the Knight Ulric [played by **Sean Bean**] warns of.”

“Our hero Osmund [played by **Eddie Redmayne**] is an innocent idealist on a journey that will lead him to hell and blacken his heart. He is also a man in conflict, a man in love with a young woman from the village, a man who begins to believe that God is punishing him for his crisis of faith,” Smith adds.

The producers describe **Black Death** as “a medieval mystery thriller set in a time of hell on earth. Soldiers on horses, monks, pagans, flagellants and witches do battle in this harsh world. It is a roller-coaster ride of good versus evil where every man and woman questions their faith and mortality at every turn.”

Initially, **Black Death** had been planned as a UK-German co-production, “but when we began looking at structuring the project, it quickly became apparent that a UK co-production might not even make sense,” Meurer recalls. “So, we decided to focus on it being a purely German film which is a little bizarre when you have a British director and mainly British actors in the cast.”

“The problem is that the British system has become so ‘co-production unfriendly’ that even the British producers were relieved that it isn’t a co-production!” Meurer adds.

Budgeted at almost 9 million Euros, the production received funding from Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, the German Federal Film Fund, and the new ImpulsMedien Sachsen-Anhalt program.

An international cast was led by Sean Bean (The Lord of the Rings) as the Knight Ulric, Carice van Houten (in her third production with Egoli Tossell Film after Lepel and Black Book) as the alluring Langiva, up-and-coming star Eddie Redmayne (now to appear in Ridley Scott’s mini-series The Pillars of the Earth) as the monk Osmund, and newcomer Kimberley Nixon (Cherrybomb) as his secret love Avernil, with other parts taken by John Lynch, Andy Nyman, Tim McInnerny and David Warner.

Practically all of the crew behind the camera was recruited locally from Germany. Smith brought his regular editor Stuart Gazzard onboard and the film’s production design is in the hands of Smith’s long-time collaborator John Frankish, working with an excellent German team. “A lot of the crew are people we worked with last year on [Michael Hofmann’s] The Last Station,” Meurer explains.

“We absolutely pushed for as many people as we could get from Sachsen-Anhalt, Thuringia and Leipzig,” he continues. “And one of the surprises for me is how many people now speak good English from this region. We had the second and third ADs from Halle, and language just was not an issue on this set.”

**Black Death** also marks a reunion with German director of photography **Sebastian Edschmid** who had previously worked on such Egoli Tossell Film productions as The Last Station, Almost Heaven and Twisted Sister and lensed Paul Schrader’s Adam Resurrected with Jeff Goldblum and Willem Dafoe in Romania and Israel in 2008.

The film has already been pre-sold to over 20 territories, including the UK (Revolver/Sony), Romania/Greece (Odeon), Portugal (Lusomundo), CIS/Baltic States (Sonyz), Czech Republic/Slovakia (Hollywood Classics), Poland (Polsat), Ex-Yugoslavia (First Productions), the Middle East (Front Row), Indonesia (Queen Films), Turkey (Avisar), Brazil (PA Pictures), and Mexico (En Pantalla).

In addition, **Black Death** was the first German production to be picked up by the new distribution company Wild Bunch Germany for theatrical release in Germany in 2010 via Central Film, the French company’s 50-50 joint venture with Senator Entertainment.

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**german films quarterly**

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**in production**

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Freche Maedchen 2

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Romantic Comedy Production Company Collina Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion/Munich With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producer Ulrich Limmer Executive Producer Martin Moszkowicz Director Ute Wieland Screenplay Maggie Peren Director of Photography Peter Przybylski Editor Dunja Campreger Music by Stefan Ziethen Production Design Frank Polosek Principal Cast Emilia Schuele, Selina Shirin Mueller, Henriette Nagel, Christina Peifer, Jonathan Beck, Ben Unterkofler, Vincent Bruder, Marius Weingarten, Jannis Niewoehner, Armin Rohde, Tom Gerhardt Casting Stefany Pohllmann Casting Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Munich, Berchtesgadener, Wuppertal, May – July 2009 German Distributor Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

Contact
Collina Filmproduktion GmbH · Anja Braune Franz-Joseph-Strasse 15 · 80801 Munich/Germany phone +49-89-5 50 61 80 · fax +49-89-55 06 18 18 email: braune@collinafilm.de · www.collinafilm.de

How to follow the 2007 smash hit that was Cheeky Girls must have stumped the brilliant minds at Collina Film for, oh, five seconds tops! But with such a great set of female characters and a box office performance to envy, a sequel was a given. Writer Maggie Peren was re-chained to her keyboard. Ute Wieland signed up for another session in the director’s chair, the cast blocked out their diaries, and the well-oiled production machine moved seamlessly into action. Ladies and Gentlemen, reserve your tickets for Cheeky Girls 2 (Freche Maedchen 2)!

The three girlfriends Mila, Kati and Hanna are enjoying life to the full. They’re happy with their great guys. Mila has her Markus, Kati her Tobi and Hanna has Branko. They spend their time rating the lads according to the points scale in the girls’ magazines for looks, character, coolness and clothes. The boys score top marks, of course, and the relationships are running smoother than silk. Cue looming stress!

Mila gets it first, with Markus having to stay back at the stables while she goes to Bavaria with the school choir. Worse, Vanessa the school bitch will be holidaying at the stables. Like a true female, Mila can’t get the idea out of her head that Markus and Vanessa will … So they fight and she has to leave before they can make up. If Kati, Hanna and Tobi are there to cheer her up, so too are the lovably nutty music teacher, Nickel, and the loathed math teacher, Rumpelstilzchen.

Up in the Bavarian mountains, no mobile phone or internet, Mila at least has fellow student Antony for comfort. But when he starts developing feelings for her, Mila is in a dilemma: does she still love Markus? Does he still love her? And what about Vanessa?

Kati and Mila take a time-out in Munich, where Kati meets a young man, Robert. He’s older and has a driving license. Or should she stay with the super nice but same-aged Tobi? Choices, Kati! Choices!

Back in wild Wuppertal, Mila wants to surprise Markus and visits the stables. Big mistake! She sees him and Vanessa having a roll in the hay! Mila and Kati go to see Hanna for some support, only to discover Branko’s turned into a real jerk!

Can it get more tangled? Oh yes! Tobi’s caught wind of what’s happening between Kati and Robert and splits up with her. Kati’s suitably wrecked! As is Hanna, who now has grave doubts about Branko. Mila wants to talk with Markus but he then has a fight with Antony over her! Mila decides boys are complete crap and splits from them both!

All three girls, now single, meet at the school ball where all the threads are drawn together in a grand finale. Will Mila and Markus reconcile? Will Kati get Tobi back? Will Hanna rediscover her love of singing? Can anybody get the math teacher Rumpelstilzchen out of the toilet? Are any of these people capable of a functioning relationship? Or even just a relationship?!

Gluecksritterinnen

Type of Project Documentary Cinema Genre Society Production Company Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie/ Berlin With backing from Filmfoerderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein Producer Max Milhahn Director Katja Fedulova Screenplay Ulrike Zinke Directors of Photography Michael Kotschi, Jenny Lou Ziegel Editor Sylke Rohrlich Format HD, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR Shooting Languages German, Russian, Italian Shooting in Kiel, Hamburg, St. Petersburg, Ancona, Minsk, Vilnius, May – August 2009

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In the immediate chaos following the collapse of the then Soviet Union, many women took the opportunity to seek a new life abroad. Faced with low incomes, an economy and infrastructure on their knees, to say nothing of the country’s social problems, these women, often highly educated as well as looking good, were determined to find the opportunities – financial, educational and emotional – denied to them at home.

With Gluecksritterinnen (“Ladies of Fortune”), her first feature-length film, Katja Fedulova relates the stories of five young Russians who fled to Germany, where they became best friends. One has moved to Italy, one returned home and three have remained here.

The story begins in 1993 in Kiel, where Olga, Zhelna, Alesja, Oxana and Ilona get into university, pay their way by working illegally, party wildly and go hunting for eligible bachelors.

Fifteen years off, the film finds the five again and depicts their current life. What became of their dreams? Their destinies tell of a difficult fight for survival, of shattered hopes and pragmatic compromises, of love found behind the curtains of a sham marriage, of abortions and artificial insemination, of loneliness, sexual self-exploitation, alcoholism and of bright careers in the then Russian economic miracle – all tied together by the common fight for independence and self-determination.

For her starting point Fedulova (who was born in St. Petersburg in 1975) took the drastic experience of her own departure from Russia: “The political upheaval with the fall of the Wall violently changed people’s lives in Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union everybody had to start from scratch. Our parents literally fought to survive. We, the youth, had no point of orientation. That’s why in the film we draw a line from the mothers all the way to the grandchildren, to show the break between the generations.”

Gluecksritterinnen is Fedulova’s graduation film from the German Film & Television Academy (dffb). Ulrike Zinke, responsible for the screenplay, has been a freelance writer since 2003 while producer Max Milhahn, also at the dffb, has been a freelance producer since 2008. Gluecksritterinnen was developed within the framework of the documentary group Sputnik, a spin-off of a dffb producer since 2008.

Max Milhahn, also at the dffb, has been a freelance producer since 2008. Gluecksritterinnen was developed within the framework of the documentary group Sputnik, a spin-off of a dffb producer since 2008.
woman, who is half Jewish. Although Habermann is not interested in politics or ideology, he and his family gradually find themselves caught up in Nazi persecution with fatal consequences …

“I think it is important that the young generation gets to know about this chapter in history,” Dirka explains. “It is like in former East Germany where the young people don’t know anything about the Wall or the past history because they are not confronted with it.”

Veteran filmmaker Herz was Dirka’s first choice for director from the outset. “Juraj is of German origin and grew up in a concentration camp so he knows this period well and how to keep a balance to the story,” the producer says. “Moreover, we had worked together on several films in the past, and it was useful that he speaks both Czech and German.”

At the same time, Dirka gathered a young German-Czech crew around Herz such as the line producer Philip Schulz-Deyle, director of photography Alexander Šurkala or production designer Petr Fofit.

The production has also attracted some of Germany’s most interesting young acting talents: Mark Waschke – who made such an impression on cinemagoers in Heinrich Breloer’s Buddenbrooks – as August Habermann, Lola-winning actress Hannah Herzsprung (Four Minutes and The Reader) as his wife Jana, and Wilson Gonzalez Ochsenknecht – one of the popular poster pin-ups among teenage girls after The Wild Soccer Bunch – as Habermann’s brother Hans.

“Wilson Gonzalez is a real discovery,” Dirka says. “There aren’t many 18-year-olds around in Germany to pick from and we needed someone who looked 18 as the Hitler Youth weren’t any older. He looks just the part in his first character role, and I can see him going places.”

Producer Kai-Roger Grueneke, CEO of EVA Finance agrees that Wilson Gonzalez is “the ideal casting for the part” and suggests that the young actor “will also manage to appeal to a younger target group of cinemagoers for the film and the associated historical subject matter.”

Other parts are taken by internationally successful Czech actor Karel Roden (Hellboy, 15 Minutes) as Habermann’s faithful friend Brezina, Ben Becker (Red Zora) as the German Wehrmacht officer Koslowski, and Franziska Weisz (Distance) as Brezina’s wife Martha.

“Juraj Herz impressively succeeded in transforming the emotion and suspense of the story into fantastic images. The brilliant cast more than exceeded all performance and international marketing expectations for the film. Habermann will certainly be a film that really moves its audience,” added Grueneke.

The 40-day shoot was done at various locations in the Czech Republic, with the post-production phase running for the rest of the year back in Germany.

Farbfilm will release Habermann theatrically in Germany, with Bonton planning to open the film in Czech cinemas in early 2010.

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It is October 1946 and Europe lies in ruins. The verdicts have been pronounced at the Nuremberg war crimes trial. But the vast majority of Germans still have only one concern: survival! Reconstruction in the towns and cities, some of them up to eighty percent destroyed, is proceeding only at a desultory pace. There is an acute shortage of living accommodation. At the same time, millions of refugees from the former eastern parts of Germany are looking for a new home. In the autumn of 1946 famine rears its head. The approaching European winter threatens to be the hardest one of the century.

The onset of winter sees death returning once again to Germany’s cities. The exact number of victims is still unknown to this very day. Historians estimate, as best they can, that in Germany alone several hundred thousand people perished from the effects of the cold and hunger.

Hungerwinter 1946/47 (”Winter of Starvation 1946/47”), the latest docu-drama from writer-director Gordian Maugg and his writing partner Alexander Haeusser, focuses on the struggle for survival as experienced by ordinary people during that terrible period. Many of the protagonists have still not overcome what they went
through and, to this very day, can speak of their tribulations only with great difficulty.

Gordian Maugg was born in Heidelberg in 1966. Among his previous credits are the feature film Zeppelin! as well as the historical TV-movie Dem ich an Deutschland in der Nacht – Das Leben des Heinrich Heine. His last production was Wir Schmidts – Ein Leben, a portrait of Loki and Helmut Schmidt for ARD television.

Alexander Haeusser was born in Reutlingen in 1960. His credits as a novelist include Zeppelin!, after which he worked together with Maugg on the screenplay for the film. His other collaborations with Maugg include Du, Ich und Er (a treatment for a documentary on Alzheimer’s), Schwarze Milch and Denk ich an Deutschland in der Nacht – Das Leben des Heinrich Heine.

LE Vision was formed by young independent filmmakers and reporters in Leipzig in 1993. The company’s range of products includes documentaries, corporate films and fiction as well as hybrid genres such as documentary drama and docu-soaps. “The word vision is part of our company name because we never rest on our laurels. We are constantly on the lookout for new challenges.” Two subsidiaries, Local Heroes and Magic Tree Pictures, offer film services and complement LE Vision’s profile.

With Hungerwinter 1946/47, this tried, tested and experienced team are set, once again, to bring a gripping mixture of fact and fiction to the screen, reminding viewers that what has now become a great difficulty.


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Action! Adventure! Thrills and spills! Eik Meiers, his fiancé, archaeologist Katharina Bertholdi and the lively art restorer Justus Zacharias return to the small screen to rescue Eik’s mentor, Professor Bachmann, from the evil clutches of the really bad, totally unscrupulous, stop-at-nothing, beyond fanatic Brotherhood of the Arma Dei!

Bachmann, it seems, has been researching the secret of the Holy Lance, the spear rammed into Jesus’ side while he was on the cross. Also known as The Spear of Fate, it gives its owner invincibility. What bunch of do-badders could say no to that?

A race develops to find the Professor and the weapon. To make things worse (that is, more entertaining for viewers), the spear is guarded by deadly traps and spooky riddles thought up by none other than the last universal genius, Goethe!

Eik, Katharina and Justus are led from Schiller’s skull to the fabled Valhalla and on to the Brandenburg Gate, where they fall into the catacombs and climb to the very top. With the Brotherhood hard on his heels, Eik has to put his trust in God’s hand to save humanity. But will he pass the final test? The chase across Germany, from the grandiose Alpine lake to the dazzling capital is on!

A sequel to the ratings goodness (21.6% share, 4.16 million viewers for RTL, their most successful film of 2008) that was Die Jagd nach dem Schatz der Nibelungen, Die Jagd nach der heiligen Lanze (“The Hunt for the Holy Lance”) is directed by none other than Student Oscar®-winner Florian Baxmeyer, of The Three ??? fame. The script is by Nibelungen-writer Derek Meister.

Budgeted at a super 5.2 million Euros, Die Jagd nach der heiligen Lanze promises to be bigger, faster, bolder and, quite simply, have more of everything that worked so well the first time round. Sales agents TELEPOOL are already notching up some very impressive pre-buys.

“The predecessor, Die Jagd nach dem Schatz der Nibelungen, was a big success and has been sold in over 50 territories. Therefore, the interest in the sequel from networks from all over the world is great, and we have already been able to secure a few pre-sales even before the production start,” says Irina Ignatiew, Executive Vice President International at TELEPOOL.

Dreamtool Entertainment is the production shingle of Stefan Raiser and Felix Zackor, both of whom studied at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. With an eye, and presumably also an ear, for what makes good entertainment, their credits also include the Bavarian Television Award- and German Television Award-winning Mein erster Freund, Mutter und ich (2004, for

Die Jagd nach der heiligen Lanze

Type of Project TV Movie Genre Action/Adventure Production Company Dreamtool Entertainment/Munich, in co-production with RTL Television/ Cologne With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern Producers Stefan Raiser, Felix Zackor Director Florian Baxmeyer Screenplay Derek Meister Director of Photography Peter Joachim Krause Music by Klaus Badelt Production Design Matthias Kammermeier Principal Cast Kai Wiesinger, Bettina Zimmerman, Fabian Busch, Juergen Prochnow Casting Nicole Fischer Casting. Die Besetzer (Iris Baumueller-Michel, Marc Schoeteldreier) Format 16 mm, color, 16:9, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Regensburg, Berlin, Dresden & surroundings, Koenigssee, Cologne. July – September 2009

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Die Jagd nach der heiligen Lanze

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The inspiration for Ayse Polat’s third feature film Luks Glueck, which wrapped on location in Turkey at the beginning of July, came from personal experiences within her own family.

“My father had played the lottery a lot like many immigrants from the first generation,” Polat recalls, pointing that “it is a dream for them to win the lottery and can then return home [to Turkey].” I asked myself what would have happened if we had really won?”

“Ayse took this basic idea and then expanded it into a fictional form,” says producer Christian Kux of the Hamburg-based production house Intervista Digital Media which had line produced her last feature, En Garde, the winner of the Silver Leopard in Locarno in 2004.

The film centers on 27-year-old Luk who wants to change direction in his life with his share of a lottery prize. On seeing his ex-girlfriend and love of his life Guel, Luk decides to become a music producer and turn her into a star singing traditional Turkish folk songs to an electronic pop backing. But his parents want to use the windfall to return to Turkey and open a hotel …

“It isn’t a pure comedy, but more of a tragicomedy as there are also some tragic moments,” Polat explains. “Here we have a young man in his mid-20s who has to ask himself what he wants and where he wants to go.”

“I see it as a crossover comedy which combines drama with arthouse elements,” Kux adds. “Luks Glueck shows that a Turkish family’s fortune in winning the lottery in Germany can have its dark side.”

As he notes, the financing for this project, which marks Polat’s third collaboration with ZDF’s Das kleine Fernsehspiel unit after Auslandstournee and En Garde, was quite a challenge, with funding coming from various sources: the regional funds of Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein and Nordmedia as well as the Berlin-based German Federal Film Fund and the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF).

In addition, it was a while before they found the right people to play the central roles of Luk and Guel. “It soon became clear to us that there aren’t that many familiar faces within the German-Turkish acting community and those we knew would be too old for our leads,” Kux explains. Thus, the search was concentrated on younger less well-known talents and came up trumps with the choice of René Vaziri and Aylin Tezel for Luk and Guel.

“René was a stroke of luck,” the producer says. “It is his first lead role and he is very talented. He really embodies the role.”

Aylin Tezel, on the other hand, had done some television beforehand, but is also a relatively new face. “They work very well together as a couple,” Kux adds.

At the same time, the film features two popular Turkish actors as Luk’s mother and father – Sumru Yavruccuk and Sinan Bengier. “They could be compared in Germany with someone like Monica Bleibtreu and Goetz George,” Kux suggests. “They are very well-known in Turkey and within the Turkish community in Germany from their appearances on television and in the theater. That will be important when the film comes into the cinemas in Germany and Turkey.”

Distributor MaXXimum, who has released Turkish films in the rest of Europe since 2001 and will launch Sinan Akkus’ Evet, ich will in Germany this autumn, plans to open Luks Glueck in German cinemas in the first half of 2010.

MB
Nanga Parbat

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Company Nanga Parbat Filmproduktion/Munich With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Cine Tirol, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Joseph Vilsmaier, Joerg Schallehn Director Joseph Vilsmaier Screenplay Reinhard Klooss, Sven Severin Director of Photography Joseph Vilsmaier Editors Alexander Berner, Uli Schoen Production Design Anton Gerg Principal Cast Florian Stetter, Andreas Tobias, Karl Markovics, Steffen Schroeder, Jule Ronstedt, Lena Stolze, Volker Bruch, Matthias Kranz, Alexander Held, Matthias Habich Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Pakistan, South Tyrol, East Tyrol, and Munich, August 2008 – June 2009 German Distributor Senator Film Verleih/Berlin

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After films as diverse as Stalingrad, Comedian Harmonists and Brother of Sleep, director Joseph Vilsmaier has taken on another challenge for his latest film set on “the roof of the world” in the Himalayan mountains of Pakistan.

The name of the 8,125-meter high Nanga Parbat has a particular resonance in Germany as a place on whose slopes so many mountaineers have met their death.

In addition, the “Naked Mountain”, as it is often called, will always be connected with the story of the two mountaineering brothers Reinhold and Guenther Messner from South Tyrol.

From an early age, the two boys had one passion – mountain-climbing – which frequently got them into trouble with the authorities and their father who was their teacher. Their greatest dream was to one day reach the summit of Nanga Parbat which had first been conquered by a German-Austrian expedition on 3 July 1953, shortly after Hillary and Tensing’s triumph on Mount Everest the previous month.

The realization of the brothers’ dream came one step closer when Reinhold was invited in 1969 to take part in an expedition to the mountain’s previously uncharted 4,500-meter high Rupal Wall. At the last moment, his brother Guenther was also able to come along after one of the other expedition members dropped out.

Bad weather and growing rivalries between the expedition members seemed to make it unlikely that the summit would be conquered this time until the two brothers decide to try one last time to scale the Rupal Wall. They successfully reached the summit by this route, but only Reinhold returned to the base camp. His brother was buried alive by an avalanche and his remains were not found until 35 years later in August 2005.

Reinhold Messner, who returned to the mountain time and again in the vain hope of finding his brother, has accompanied Vilsmaier in the preparation of this film and travelled with him to Pakistan last summer and this spring to shoot at the original high altitude locations.

“It is not a classic mountaineering story we are telling, but rather a very modern story,” Messner explains. “It is also about two brothers and their rivalry between one another. Moreover, it is about the mountain itself which naturally plays a lead role and is also about death and the responsibility of one brother for his sibling. The film shows how someone fights for their life and that the survival instinct is in all of us and much stronger than we might imagine.”

Vilsmaier recalls the difficulty of working at such a high altitude when filming the mountains from a helicopter and notes that it would not have been practical to have the actors come to Pakistan for the climbing scenes.

Therefore, the actors cast as the two brothers – Florian Stetter as Reinhold and Andreas Tobias as Guenther – made their ascent of Nanga Parbat on such “stand-ins” as the Ortler on the South Tyrol-Switzerland border and the Grossvenediger, Austria’s fourth highest peak.

The cast for the 7 million Euro production include Steffen Schroeder as the Austrian mountaineer Felix Kuen, who wants to reach the summit before Reinhold, Karl Markovics as the expedition leader Dr. Karl Maria Herrligkoffer, and Lena Stolze as the brothers’ mother.

The theatrical release by Senator Film Verleih in Germany is planned for 2010.
Following the premiere in their home town, each ensemble travelled 11 different locations in a converted railway carriage during a two-ensembles from six European countries would perform their plays at Theater Convention for an international collaboration where theater students at the film academy to submit proposals for films on the subject of the Orient Express after he won support from the European projects of the Orient Express Theatre Train. In one of the three open pitchings per year, Holtzhauer had called on students at the film academy to submit proposals for films on the subject of the Orient Express after he won support from the European Theater Convention for an international collaboration where theater ensembles from six European countries would perform their plays at 11 different locations in a converted railway carriage during a two-month journey from Turkey to Germany. Following the premiere in their home town, each ensemble travelled by train to one or even several other cities where it performed again and met with the next ensemble which, in turn, performed its premiere. In terms of content, the rolling theater train project was examining ‘European identity’, the expectations of and past experience with the European unification process, and issues like escape, expulsion, mobility and settling down.

After beginning in Ankara and Istanbul, the train with its Turkish crew stopped in Craiova and Bucharest (Romania), Novi Sad (Serbia), Zagreb (Croatia), Ljubljana and Nova Gorica (Slovenia), and, finally, Freiburg and Stuttgart, with a two-week long festival showing all of the plays, on its 3,000 kilometer journey.

“One of the biggest challenges on this project is having such an enormous volume of material [over 80 hours] gathered over 9 weeks, finding a focus and filtering out those moments which are interesting,” says producer Christian Mueller, who had previously worked with co-director Martin Andersson on the live concert visualization Faust – Auf der Suche and two collaborations with the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker and ZDFtheaterkanal (La Valse and Der Klangkoerper).

“Having so many protagonists, six theater plays in six countries, and then only 60 minutes for the final film – it will be really fascinating to see how that all works in the edit.”

Orient Express Theatre Train was the first collaboration between Swiss-born Andersson and Duevel who shared the tasks of director, DoP and sound man on this fly-on-the-wall observation. A taste of the film’s shoot is provided by their daily weblog which they also produced on the road as they progressed towards Stuttgart: orientexpressfestival.blogspot.com.

“For the first two weeks, we had the German-Turkish camerawoman Inci Uensal with us for the shoot in Ankara and Istanbul, which was very good as she could also help with the translating,” recalls Duevel, whose early childhood in Tanzania and Ruanda has led him to concentrate on the issue of human rights in his previous films such as Die Kinder des Gatarayiha and Unter Nachbarn – Vom Leben mit den Moer dern. At times, it was a bit like the Tower of Babel with so many different nationalities participating. “English and French were the languages we consisted in, but then everyone of course has their own languages,” Andersson says. “I think there will be quite a lot of translating to do later on. We did quite a few interviews, but there were also observations of conversations where it was better when the people spoke in their own languages – it’s more natural. As time went by, the filming went really well because the actors got to know us since we were all travelling together and there was a feeling of trust towards us. We could just go in with the camera when they were discussing something and they hardly noticed we were there.”

“It was a constant process of coming and going,” Andersson adds. “For example, the Turkish actors were with us as far as Novi Sad and then some flew to Zagreb, the Germans stayed until Romania and then only 60 minutes for the final film – it will be really fascinating to see how that all works in the edit.”

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“It was a constant process of coming and going,” Andersson adds. “For example, the Turkish actors were with us as far as Novi Sad and then some flew to Zagreb, the Germans stayed until Romania and were going to be on stage again in Germany. And the Romanian actors travelled by bus to join the train’s performances in Novi Sad.”

“So, it wasn’t like a wandering circus in the classic sense where the actors are there all the time for the whole journey,” Andersson notes.

The duo will now be involved in the film’s post-production until the end of this year, when it should be premiered by ZDFtheaterkanal. Talks about further exploitation of this documentary or even a new
film are underway and it could be picked up by ARTE for screening or aired in Turkey as part of Istanbul’s European City of Culture celebrations in 2010.

On the question of whether the completed film will appear in a dubbed or subtitled version, producer Mueller says that the plans are for subtitles “which makes sense with such a multi-cultural project when you have so many different languages and emotions as they give a particular flair.”

writer-director-producer Angela Schanelec, describes the story: “Orly tells the story of four couples who find themselves, cling to one another and then lose themselves again. A young woman feels drawn to a stranger because she recognizes her own longing in him; a mother and almost adult son understand that their time together is almost over; a young man fights in vain against the feeling that he can barely stand being with his girlfriend; and a woman dares to read her husband’s letter of farewell only in the anonymity of being in public. All the protagonists experience a mixture of relaxation and exhaustion, something falls away from them and enables them to see more clearly. For an incalculable moment they are ready to entrust themselves to one another.”

Angela Schanelec was born in 1962 and worked from 1982 to 1991 as an actress. In 1990 she entered the dfb film school to study Directing and has been a freelance writer and director since 1995. Her company, Nachmittag Film, was founded for her last film, Nachmittag (2007), which screened in the 37th International Forum of Young Film at the Berlinale, as well as several other festivals, including Buenos Aires, Barcelona, Brussels, Pusan and Rotterdam. Her 2004 Marseille premiered in the Un Certain Regard sidebar in Cannes, as did her Plaetze in Stadten (1998).

Gian-Piero Ringel studied at the dfb as well and has been CEO, together with Wim Wenders, of Neue Road Movies since 2008. His previous credits include Das Mass der Dinge (2005), which was nominated by the MPAA for the Student Oscar® for Best Foreign Film, Nachmittag and Palermo Shooting, directed by Wim Wenders and screened in competition in Cannes in 2008.

Orly

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema
Genre Drama
Production Companies Ringel Filmproduktion/Berlin, Nachmittag Film/Berlin, in co-production with La Vie Est Belle Films/Paris, 3Sat/Mainz
With backing from BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), CNC
Producers Gian-Piero Ringel, Angela Schanelec, Céline Maugis, Christophe Delsaux
Director Angela Schanelec
Screenplay Angela Schanelec
Director of Photography Reinhold Vorschneider
Editor Mathilde Bonnefoy
Principal Cast Bruno Todeschini, Natacha Reginier, Emile Berling, Mireille Perrier, Jirka Zett, Lina Falkner, Maren Eggert, Josse De Paauw
 Casting Angela Schanelec
Format 4K/RED, color, recording to inter-negative 35 mm, cs, Dolby SR
Shooting Languages German, French
Shooting in Paris, April 2009
German Distributor Peripher Filmverleih/Berlin

World Sales Films Boutique · Jean-Christophe Simon
Skalitzer Strasse 54a · 10997 Berlin/Germany
phone +49-30-69 53 78 50 · fax +49-30-69 53 78 51
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www.filmsboutique.com

Orly, takes place within two hours at the airport of the same name. “The people there have made decisions, producer Gian-Piero Ringel explains, “which they might have considered for a long time, which leads to something lying behind them and something different waiting ahead. They sit with other waiting people and are a little bit empty. That half hour or hour between check-in and boarding forces them to do nothing. It is not the time to ask questions because they are already on their way. They react only when called upon; that’s all. It’s this obvious passivity which interests us because there is more about life to be found here than in considered action. People reveal themselves in this passivity.”

Rumpe & Tuli

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema
Genre Family Entertainment
Production Company Pandora Film/Cologne, in co-production with PuppetEmpire/Cologne
With backing from Filmstiftung NRW
Producer Raimond Goebel
Directors Samy Challah, Till Nachtmann, Stefan Silies
Screenplay Samy Challah, Till Nachtmann, Stefan Silies
Director of Photography Marc Mahn
Editor Sarah Krumbach
Music by Jasin Challah
Production Design Cordula Jedamski, Cora Pratz
Principal Cast Rumpe &
After building up a track record as a producer of complex international co-productions set in exotic locations, Cologne-based Pandora Film has tried its hand at something completely different with the low budget film Rumpe & Tuli.

The internationally operating company’s involvement in the project came about after producer Raimond Goebel had seen some of Samy Challah’s web clips featuring the two eponymous heroes Rumpe and Tuli.

A graduate of Cologne’s Academy for Media Arts (KHM), Challah had been working in puppet animation for the past 15 years and seen his shorts shown at such festivals as Hof and the Max Ophuels Prize Festival in Saarbruecken, with the short Wenn sie nicht gestorben sind winning the jury prize at Cologne’s Unlimited festival in 2006.

It was during his time at the KHM that Challah met Stefan Silies who had teamed up with a fellow student Till Nachtmann in 1999 to focus on work with sock puppets for films and art installations.

“We decided to try and combine each other’s puppets in one film – Samy’s Rumpe and our favorite sock puppet Tuli,” Silies recalls, “and have them wandering through different kinds of environments peopled by minorities because they are also a minority themselves.”

Subsequently, the three animators formed their own production company PuppetEmpire with the feature film’s DoP Marc Mahn and composer Jasin Challah and worked together on a number of clips featuring Rumpe and Tuli, which can be seen on the company’s website http://puppetempire.com.

Due to the small budget, Goebel and the filmmaking trio decided to make the film as a 50-50 co-production with backing from the Filmstiftung NRW and their own funds.

The story written by Challah, Silies and Nachtmann, see Rumpe and Tuli being unceremoniously evicted from their humble abode “Casa Paradisa” in a Cologne suburb and doing everything possible to raise the money to buy their home back. In the process, they meet up with all kinds of colorful characters on the fringes of the “human world.”

“It’s classic family entertainment, but shouldn’t be seen as a children’s film,” Goebel explains. “We have here a dramatic story where the main characters just happen to be puppets.”

“And it’s a classic buddy story with two characters who reluctantly come together and then have to master a task although there are lots of hurdles put in their way,” he continues. “The story has a kind of domino effect with one thing happening after another and the two buddies arguing among themselves as the action leads up to the finale when they are able to save their beloved Casa Paradiso – but then there’s another twist to the story …”

The mix of live-action and puppet animation is based on the experiences the three filmmakers had gathered with the previous Rumpe and Tuli shorts, as Till Nachtmann points out: “We just went out with the two puppets and had them talk with real people – that is the core of the story.”

“In the short films you could see that we were able to reach a high emotional effect with the puppets,” Challah continues. “People laughed and cried in the cinema. Most people know puppets from their childhood, but usually in the form of something like the Muppets. Here, though, the discussions were about quite different subjects like alcoholism, incest and burnout, and we managed to get some really serious conversations as the people confided in the puppet as if it was a real person.”

At the same time, the animation of the two puppet characters is not set to be enhanced by any digital tricks during post-production, and, as Stefan Silies notes, “the voices of Rumpe and Tuli are those of Samy and Till as recorded during filming. We don’t want to record that in a studio afterwards. We want to be as authentic as possible and also retain the special nature of the conversations the puppets have with the real people.”

To achieve this magical connection, the two animators have to make sure that they are well hidden from the camera by using special knee-pads as they hold the puppets above their heads to be at eye-level with their human counterparts. Moreover, in one scene with the puppets on a raft, two divers were specially hired to operate them from underwater.

“This project has the smallest budget we have ever had,” Goebel says, “but that has been more than compensated for by the enthusiasm of everyone on the production. Everybody is giving their all for the project. And it’s also been an interesting experience working with three directors at one time!”

MB
Der Sandmann und der verlorene Traumsand

**Type of Project** Feature Film
**Cinema** Cinematography
**Genre** Animation, Family Entertainment

The feature film "verlorene Traumsand" (photo © 2009 Scopas Medien AG/S. Hartz) is currently in production. It is based on the iconic German character, the Sandman, who has been a beloved figure in German culture for decades.

**Production Company** Scopas Medien/Frankfurt am Main, in co-production with Amuse Films – Millimages/Paris, RBB/Potsdam-Berlin, MDR/Leipzig, NDR/Hamburg, KI.KA/Erfurt

**With backing from** German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, Filmfoerderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Invest Film, Wuerttemberg, Filmfoerderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

**Producer** Jan Bonath
**Co-Producer** Roch Lener
**Director** Jesper Moeller
**Screenplay** Katharina Reschke, Jan Strathmann
**Director of Photography** Angela Poschet
**Editor** Ringo Waldenburger
**Music by** Oliver Heuss
**Production Design** Anne Hofmann
**Cast** Bruno Renne, Valeria Eisenbart, Ilja Richter, Julia Richter
**Voices** Volker Lechtenbrink, Ilja Richter
**Casting** Jessika Eisenkolb
**Format** 3D
**Shooting Language** German

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For the past 50 years, German parents have been eternally grateful to a puppet figure gently coaxing generations of German children to make their way to bed shortly before the seven o’clock news each evening.

First appearing on East German television on 22 November 1959 in the program *Unser Sandmaenchen*, the Sandman soon had a "brother" in the West in a children’s program produced by Sender Freies Berlin. One of the more positive effects of German reunification was that the East German Sandman continued to scatter sleepy dust into children’s eyes each night and now appears on many of the regional “third” channels as well as the KI.KA children’s channel.

Almost ten years ago, Jan Bonath of the Frankfurt-based stop-motion specialist Scopas Medien began thinking about the idea of a feature film based around the Sandman character.

“The Sandman is so well known in Germany – everybody knows him – but we don’t have any idea where he comes from or anything more about him. It is an untold story,” Bonath recalls.

Gripped by a curiosity to build a story around this character, the producer developed plot ideas to pitch to broadcaster RBB. “Initially, they were rather skeptical because it was felt that a feature film with the Sandman might have an adverse effect on the existing brand,” Bonath says.

After all, in the feature film, we will see the Sandman with a mouth – this is strangely absent in the TV programs – and he speaks ‘on camera’ for the first time!

However, after some to-ing and fro-ing, the broadcasters finally agreed to grant Scopas Medien the rights to make a feature film based on the Sandman and his world, and RBB, MDR, NDR and KI.KA are all serving as co-producers.

The screenplay, which was written by Katharina Reschke (The O’Sullivan Twins) and Jan Strathmann (Loewenzahn), won the Hesse Screenplay Prize last year and is being realized by Danish animator Jesper Moeller whose other credits include Asterix and the Vikings and Mullerwappen – Das Grosse Abenteuer der Freunde. Meanwhile, Sinem Sakaoglu, who served as the production manager on the Toni Ungerer adaptation The Three Robbers, is making her directional debut as co-director.

As the film’s title suggests, Somnia, the land of dreams, is a real state: the Sandman’s dream-making sand has been stolen! Habumar, a nightmare in the shape of a horrible tornado, is behind the theft because he wants to turn people’s dreams into nightmares with the sand he has stolen and poisoned. The Sandman needs help and sends the sleep sheep Nepomuk on an important mission to Earth: Nepomuk is supposed to bring the fearless mariner Captain Scheerbart back to Somnia to help out, but instead finds his six-year-old grandson Miko. Nepomuk is at a loss what to do, but the Sandman can recognize a great dreamer when he sees one. He takes little Miko on as his helper because he believes that the shy boy has the makings of a hero. A breath-taking chase now begins in Somnia with all of its absurd, unbelievable and surreal inhabitants as they set out to save people’s dreams …

Bonath points out that the 8.5 million Euro project was pitched on no less than three occasions at the annual Cartoon Movie co-production market to look for potential co-producers or financiers: initially as “in concept”; then in 2008 "in development" when a teaser was screened to illustrate how the style and look differed from the original TV series; and then this year in Lyon as a project "in production".

“After showing the teaser we had a lot of strong interest from Eastern Europe, France and Scandinavia,” Bonath recalls. Subsequently, France’s Bac Films came onboard as the film’s world sales agent, a pre-sale was made to Scandinavia, and Amuse Film – part of the Millimages Group – became a co-producer, enabling Scopas Medien to apply for funding from the Franco-German “mini-traité” co-production agreement.

While the bulk of the production was undertaken in the Caligari Halle in the Filmpark Babelsberg, a stone’s throw from the legendary film studios, compositing work was done in Baden-Wuerttemberg. 3D
Satte Farben vor Schwarz

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Drama

**Production Company** Unafilm/Cologne, in co-production with Disconto Ventsch/Zurich, in association with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg, SF/Zurich

**Director** Sophie Heldman

**Screenplay** Sophie Heldman

**Music by** Markus Schmickler

**Principal Cast** Senta Berger, Bruno Ganz

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

**Shooting** in Duesseldorf, Cologne, April – June 2009

**German Distributor** Farbfilm Verleih/Berlin

Swiss-German filmmaker Sophie Heldman, who graduated from the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in 2004, had been working on the idea for her debut feature *Satte Farben vor Schwarz* (working title) since 2002.

“Then, the WDR commissioning editor Andrea Hanke and Georg Steinert from ARTE came to the annual meeting with the students at the dffb where I was pitching the story,” Heldman recalls. “They were both interested from the outset which really pleased me as I think they are the two commissioning editors in Germany who are most prepared to take risks.”

A couple of years later, contact was made to producer Titus Kreyenberg through a mutual friend and he had an opportunity to read the screenplay Heldman had written with Felix zu Knyphausen.

“Titus was in Berlin within 24 hours of getting the script to see me about the project and there was a feeling of trust from the very start,” Heldman continues.

Inspired by actual events, *Satte Farben vor Schwarz* centers on the couple Anita and Fred who have been happily married for 50 years and are still very much in love. Fred’s terminal illness – whose existence is only known to his wife – brings some surprising changes in their lives and those of their family.

The casting of Anita and Fred saw veteran actors Senta Berger and Bruno Ganz appearing for the first time together before the camera. “I have my dream cast,” Heldman says. “It was my great fortune that the power of the story impressed the actors.”

According to Berger, who is also in Ben Verbong’s *Ob Ihr wollt oder nicht!* “one can play the screenplay like a musical score,” while Ganz summed up his decision to accept the role of Fred with the comment: “I like the script and I like Sophie!”

“The greatest challenge for me was to have the patience until everything came together,” Heldman recalls. “I didn’t want to make any compromises, but Bruno Ganz was one of the first to recognize the story’s quality and held in there for me for a really long time. That gave me incredible strength to be able stand up to all of the problems in the financing and the doubts because I knew that he understands.”

Despite having names like Berger and Ganz – the cast also includes Barnaby Metschurat as their son Patrick and the newcomer Leonie Benesch who also appeared in Michael Haneke’s Golden Palm winner *The White Ribbon* – Kreyenberg admits that it was quite a struggle to get the financing for the film together.

However, the budget of just under 2 million Euros was put together with backing from the Filmstiftung NRW, BKM, the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Zuercher Filmstiftung and Eurimages, together with the broadcasters WDR, ARTE and SF.
The Swiss connection with Dschoint Ventschr as co-producer came about thanks to Heldman who had worked as an AD on films by Stine Werenfels at the company after getting to know her during a three-year stay in New York. It was also during her stateside sojourn that she met her DoP Christine A. Maier whose past credits include the Golden Bear winner Grbavica and Hans Weingartner’s Reclaim Your Brain.

“It has been a very fruitful collaboration with Karin Koch at Dschoint Ventschr,” Kreyenberg explains. “We had very useful discussions about the screenplay and I was pleased to have a partner at my side who has that bit more experience.”

Last year, he applied to the ACE producers program with the project and says that this gave it an added impetus: “This certainly got the project known internationally and the idea to apply for Eurimages came from the ACE sessions.”

Although the film was only shot in and around Duesseldorf and Cologne, Kreyenberg points out that “this is not specifically set in the Cologne or Duesseldorf area. It was very important from the outset to give the film a European face. One will see that the film comes from the Cologne area. We didn’t want to shoot in the banks of a lake because that would have made the story even more "Germans." We didn’t need the Cologne Cathedral or the Rhine. We didn’t want to shot in a picturesque landscape against a backdrop of mountains or on the banks of a lake because that would have made the story even more emotionally charged.”

Swiss-born director Baran bo Odar, Berlin-based production house Cine Plus Filmproduktion and Munich-based Luethje & Schneider Film were not strangers when they collaborated together on his debut feature Das Schweigen (working title) this summer.

“I had worked with Baran four years ago on an art installation project sponsored by McKinsey,” producer Joerg Schulze recalls. “The film went on to festivals and won several prizes and it was here that I saw how precise he is in his approach to directing.”

Luethje & Schneider Film, Cine Plus and Odar had worked together on his graduation film Under the Sun from Munich’s University of Television & Film, which was nominated in 2006 for the German Camera Award as well as the Max Ophuels Prize for Best Feature Film, and received the Studio Hamburg Best Director Award.

In addition, DoP Nikolaus Sommerer – who is also lensing Das Schweigen – received the Kodak Vision Award for Best Cinematography at the 2006 Slamdance Film Festival for his work on Under the Sun.

Following this film, both production companies began developing separate projects with Odar until Schulze approached Maren Luethje and Florian Schneider to come onboard his planned adaptation of Jan Costin Wagner’s novel Das Schweigen.

“We share a similar passion for the thriller as a genre and for the neo-noirs like Zodiac and Mystic River,” Schulze explains. “Our desire was to make something like this in Germany and reach the same level visually.”

He admits that initially it was difficult to put the financing together for the project as potential backers tend to think in terms of the television crime series Tatort when a thriller veers more in the direction of drama.

However, a clever tactic for Das Schweigen was to produce a short “mood film” to give the funders an idea of the style and direction the filmmakers were intending to take.

In the end, there are three regional funds involved – FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, and Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung – as well as the national German Federal Film Fund and the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) incentive scheme.

“At the same time, commissioning editors Christian Cloos and Doris Hepp from ZDF and ARTE were onboard from the outset as was...
Thorsten Ritter from Bavaria Film International who came to the project with a very good minimum guarantee," Schulze notes.

Das Schweigen opens with a teenage girl vanishing on a hot summer night in 2009. When her bicycle is found in the exact place where a girl was killed 23 years ago, the traces of blood suggest that a new crime has been committed. The dramatic present forces those involved in the original case to confront their past …

Filmmaker Baran bo Odar recalls that, on his first reading of Jan Costin Wagner’s novel, he was impressed by “the book’s dense, nightmarish atmosphere, the unusual story and its bold set-up.”

“Das Schweigen is a challenging drama which relentlessly closes in on the dark scenes of its characters,” he explains. “From various angles, the film shows the lives of six people whose destinies meet during their unfulfilled searches. The film uncovers the facets of a horrendous crime and shows the protagonists’ struggle with loss, powerlessness and guilt.”

“A part of the novel that spoke to me immediately is the suburbs full of family homes,” the director continues. “Everyone knows each other, the houses are very much alike. But no one knows the true faces of the people behind the doors. These suburbs are all over Germany and probably all over the world. They are not tied to a particular place but to a feeling, an atmosphere one can find there. In my view, the houses appearing bright and tidy, the lakes and the summer in the film all create a beautiful, colorful and shining image that contrasts strongly with the story’s dramatic development.”

“The film is a very strong ensemble film,” Schulze says, pointing out that it was the screenplay’s quality which attracted such a top-notch cast ranging from Sebastian Blomberg and Wotan Wilke Moehring through Katrin Sass and Burghart Klaussner to Roeland Wiesnekker and Denmark’s Ulrich Thomsen.

Schulze admits that it might seem a risky proposition for a debut feature with 110 minutes running time and a total of 40 shooting days, but explains that “Baran bo Odar likes working with storyboards and is so meticulous in his preparation. Any risks are really kept to a minimum.”

Themba

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Coming-of-Age Story, Drama Production Companies Zeitsprung Entertainment/Cologne, Rheingold Films/Cologne, in co-production with Do Productions/Cape Town Producers Michael Souvignier, Ica Souvignier, Josef Steinberger, Birgijl Olen Director Stefanie Sycholt Screenplay Stefanie Sycholt Director of Photography Egon Werdin Editor Hansjoerg Weissbrich Music by Annette Focks Production Design Egbert Kruger Principal Cast Junior Singo, Patrick Mofokeng, Emmanuel Soqinase, Simphiwe Dana, Anelisa Phewa, Jens Lehmann Casting Ana Feyder Format 16 mm, 35 mm, color. 1:1.85, Dolby MOD Shooting Language English Shooting in Eastern Cape, Cape Town, May – June 2009 German Distributor Alpha Medienkontor/Weimar

Contact
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Themba is the story of a boy from the Eastern Cape who triumphs against all adversity and finds a way to bring his talent to the soccer stadiums. It is a film of dreams, courage and hope, and woven into the narrative is the consciousness of AIDS and the fight against this stigma. This film is based on the book Crossing the Line by Lutz van Dijk, a German-Dutch author, who has been living in Cape Town since 2001.

Young Themba lives together with his mother and sister in a small village near Umtata. He is a talented and ambitious football player, who makes his way up to the South African National Team. Themba is not only a great story, but has a high relevance for today’s society in South Africa. Themba grows up in a wonderful, yet very rural area and is faced with poverty, AIDS and violence. But he never gives up and fights for his family. Together, they find hope in an uncertain, but still positive future.

Born in Pretoria/South Africa, the film’s director Stefanie Sycholt is best known for her 2001 debut feature film, Malunde. Among the many glowing tributes it received is this from the Los Angeles Times: “Sycholt’s feature debut is a wonderful film of universal appeal, overflowing with humor and adventure, offsetting pain and loss, allowing
us to see that in some ways those who enforced apartheid were almost as apt to become brutalized by the racist system as those it oppressed.” Extrapolating from this: Sychnol is not afraid to tackle weighty subjects and is able to do so in a way that integrates rather than alienates her audience.

Aiming for “authenticity and universalism” on Themba, Sychnol focuses closely on the original context, that is “locations, costumes, languages that are all real and not contrived.”

Some of the child actors are street casted, but there are exceptions like Junior Singo (Themba) who already started a career as a child actor in South Africa. And there is another big exception: Jens Lehmann, the German national goalkeeper, will be seen in his first role as Big John, a football trainer and talent scout who discovers Themba.

Relying on “a fresh, fluid camera to give the actors the best scope for their performance and also to capture the energy and movement of the world of soccer,” Sychnol is making large use of a steady hand-held camera to give Themba a fresh and modern style.
“He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone” – an Apostle of the New Apostolic Church lays a young married couple’s conflict to rest with this quotation from the Bible. Afterwards, nothing is ever said about the woman’s adultery. And so a young boy grows up in a deceptive idyll together with his family and his brothers and sisters in faith, firmly anchored in the ideologies of a petit-bourgeois, religious environment. He never really registers the fact that his appearance is unusual for a German. In his early twenties, he argues fiercely with his father, who reveals the supposed truth of his son’s origins in a rage.

The family emerges as a structure of hypocrisy, its members as silent guardians of shared knowledge – not only that of his identity. Roaming his childhood haunts in Castrop-Rauxel, a small industrial town, and on subsequent travels to Lebanon he encounters strange familiars, and finally a familiar stranger.

Jens Junker was born in 1976 in Castrop-Rauxel. Before enrolling at the Munich University of Television & Film, he worked as an editor, electrician, assistant director and producer in Cologne. In 2007, he co-founded King Khalil, a collective for arts and ads. His films include: Zirkus ohne Manège (documentary short, 1999), Der Muette-Fluch (documentary, 2000), Sterben macht durstig (short, 2001), Rosi (short portrait, 2002), Der Tierfreund (short, 2003), Juice (short, 2004), Neun (episode film, 2005), and Alias (documentary, 2009).
Anne Perry – Interiors

With over 50 books written and sales exceeding 25 million copies worldwide, Anne Perry is one of the premier crime fiction authors of our time.

In 1994, the film Heavenly Creatures revealed a secret about Anne Perry: the celebrated author committed a murder at the age of 15.

The documentary Anne Perry – Interiors accompanies the writer and tells a story about the burden of guilt—not just as part of the past, but as part of present day life.

Genre: Portrait
Category: Documentary TV
Year of Production: 2009
Director: Dana Linkiewicz
Director of Photography: Mischa Leinkauf
Editor: Philipp Busse
Music by: Olaf Taranczewski
Production Manager: Linn Kohlmetz
Production Company: Kunsthochschule fuer Medien Koeln (KHM)/Cologne, in co-production with Geissendoerfer Film- und Fernsehproduktion/Cologne
With: Anne Perry, Meg MacDonald, Jonathan Hulme, Elizabeth Sweeney, Simon MacDonald, Alexander Sweeney
Length: 70 min
Format: Mini DV, color, 16:9
Original Version: English
Subtitled Version: German
Sound Technology: Dolby Stereo, Dolby Digital 5.1, LTRT
Festival Screenings: Montreal 2009

Dana Linkiewicz was born in Potsdam in 1976. From 1998 to 2002 she studied Communication and Design at the University of Arts in Berlin, followed by work as a creative producer for commercials and music videos. She then completed postgraduate studies in Film and Television at the Cologne Academy of Media Arts from 2005 to 2009, graduating with Anne Perry – Interiors. Her other films include Varis Jura (short, 2004), At Last (documentary short, 2005), Girl Friends (short, 2006), and Real People (pilot broadcast, 2006). Her short film Pain Killer (Doppelmord, 2007) garnered her both a nomination for the short film award at the prestigious Max Ophuels Festival and an Honorary Mention at the International Nordic Film Days.
Ayla is young, beautiful and self-confident. She’s also independent, and intends to stay that way. But as a Turkish woman in Germany, she has always found herself at the razor-sharp intersection of liberal Western ways and conservative Muslim conventions. Though she’s a beloved kindergarten teacher, her night job in a bar, along with her rejection of an arranged marriage, has poisoned her relationship with her father. When Ayla meets the dashing photographer Ayhan, romantic sparks begin to fly, and Ayla feels that he may just be the right man for her. What she doesn’t suspect, however, is Ayhan’s involvement in a murderous plan to restore his family’s honor: his sister Hatice has left her unloved husband in Turkey and is trying to raise her little daughter alone in Germany. Pursued by thugs hired by her own family, Hatice finds refuge with Ayla. Ayhan swears to Ayla that he would never hurt his sister. But when the harassment escalates, Ayla finds within her an unimagined strength …

**Genre** Drama, Love Story

**Category** Feature Film

**Film Cinema** Year of Production 2009

**Director** Su Turhan

**Screenplay** Su Turhan, Beatrice Dossi

**Director of Photography** Florian Schilling

**Editor** Horst Reiter

**Music by** Ali N. Askin

**Production Design** Renate Schmaderer

**Producers** Andreas Bareiss, Sven Burgemeister, Gloria Burkert

**Production Company** BurkertBareiss Development for TV60 Film/Munich, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg, Goldkind Film/Munich

**Principal Cast** Pegah Ferydoni, Mehdi Moinzadeh, Timur Isik, Tuerkiz Talay, Saskia Vester, Sese Ide Terziyan

**Casting** Lore Bloesl

**Length** 88 min

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

**Original Version** German

**Subtitled Version** English

**Sound Technology** Dolby

**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), First Movie Program

**German Distributor** Zorro Film/Munich

Su Turhan was born in 1966 in Istanbul. At the age of two he immigrated with his family to Germany. Studying German Language and Literature he graduated from the University of Munich in 1993. He began his career as a self-taught filmmaker in 1998 by writing, directing and producing his first short *Der Schlüssel*. His next film, *Gone Underground* (2001, DoP Michael Ballhaus), was the first short feature worldwide that was fully shot and post-produced in HD. The film was invited to Sundance and numerous other international festivals. Su Turhan continued writing for several production companies, and worked again with Michael Ballhaus on his third short *Triell* (2004). He also directed commercials and documentaries for German and international television. The dramatic love story *Ayla* (2009) is his feature debut.
1936. The United States threatens to boycott the Berlin Olympics if there are no Jews in the German team. Still aiming to mislead the world about their true ambitions, the Nazis are forced to admit some Jewish athletes. Among them, the leading female high jumper of the time – Gretel Bergmann. Although Gretel, who has emigrated to England and become the current UK champion, has no desire to return, the Nazis force Gretel back by threatening her family in Germany. With seemingly no other German female high jumper around who could challenge Gretel, the unknown Marie Ketteler is suddenly introduced as a member of the team. Marginalized by the rest of the team, the two rivals forge a tenuous friendship, with Marie carrying a secret that puts their friendship and a hidden Nazi agenda to the test … Based on a true story.

**Genre** Drama **Category** Feature Film Cinema **Year of Production** 2009 **Director** Kaspar Heidelbach **Screenplay** Lothar Kurzawa, based on an idea by Eric Fiedler **Director of Photography** Achim Poulheim **Editor** Hedy Altschiller **Music** by Arno Steffen **Production Design** Goetz Weidner **Producers** Gerhard Schmidt, Tim Rostock **Co-Producers** Doris J. Heinze, Joern Klamous

**Production Company** Gemini Film/Cologne, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, Degeto Film/Frankfurt

**Principal Cast** Karoline Herfurth, Sebastian Urzendowsky, Axel Prahl, August Zirner, Thomas Thieme, Maria Happel, Marita Breuer, Robert Gallinowski **Casting** Anja Dührberg

**Length** 100 min **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 **Original Version** German **Subtitled Version** English **Sound Technology** Dolby Digital

**With backing from** Nordmedia, Filmstiftung NRW, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) **German Distributor** X Verleih/Berlin

**Genre** Drama **Category** Feature Film Cinema **Year of Production** 2009 **Director** Kaspar Heidelbach **Screenplay** Lothar Kurzawa, based on an idea by Eric Fiedler **Director of Photography** Achim Poulheim **Editor** Hedy Altschiller **Music** by Arno Steffen **Production Design** Goetz Weidner **Producers** Gerhard Schmidt, Tim Rostock **Co-Producers** Doris J. Heinze, Joern Klamous

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**Length** 100 min **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 **Original Version** German **Subtitled Version** English **Sound Technology** Dolby Digital

**With backing from** Nordmedia, Filmstiftung NRW, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) **German Distributor** X Verleih/Berlin

Kaspar Heidelbach was born in 1954 in Tettnang on Lake Constance. After studies in Art History and Theater & Film Sciences, he was a director’s assistant for numerous television series. In 1984 he had his directing debut with the series *Ein Fall fuer Zwei*. His other work includes: numerous episodes of the crime series *Eurocops*, *Tatort*, *Die Kommissarin*, and the TV two-parter *Das Wunder von Lengede* which won an Adolf Grimme Award, Golden Camera, and Bavarian Television Award in 2004, and *Berlin '36* (2009).
Chi l’ha visto follows the story of a young half Italian who grew up with his mother in Germany. Now, after 25 years, he goes on the search for his real father. However, lies that have built up around his father prevent him from recognizing his true belonging.

“A haunting, calmly photographed road movie with a clear sense of beauty of the landscapes of North Italy, circling around questions of personal as well as national identity. A refined reflection about how lost family members influence the life of those left behind and even control it. The more improbable the ‘findability’ of the missing person, the stronger they determine the ‘mental maps’ of those left behind.” Jan Kedves

Chi l’ha visto was born in 1972 in Berlin. After studying Photography, she has been working as a freelance photographer for various magazines. She also studied Film at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and has since made numerous documentaries, short films and music videos. Chi l’ha visto marks her feature film debut.

Genre Drama, Family, Melodrama, Road Movie Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Claudia Rorarius Screenplay Claudia Rorarius Director of Photography Claudia Rorarius Editors Claudia Rorarius, Andreas Menn, Bettina Boehler Producer Claudia Rorarius Production Company Soquiet Filmproduktion/Berlin - Cologne Principal Cast Gianni Meurer, Paul Kominek Length 88 min Format DV Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German, Italian Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Board (FFA)

Claudia Rorarius was born in 1972 in Berlin. After studying Photography, she has been working as a freelance photographer for various magazines. She also studied Film at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and has since made numerous documentaries, short films and music videos. Chi l’ha visto marks her feature film debut.

World Sales (please contact)
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www.soquietfilms.com · www.chilhavisto.de
What is going on in Germany? Is Germany really a pain in the neck? And if so, why? In this documentary road-movie shot between 2005 and 2008, director Hans-Erich Viet travels through Germany to find out just how the German soul ticks. The journey took place without any concrete planed destinations, but rather was determined through the events that took place and offers answers to all the moaning and groaning going on in Germany today.

Genre Road Movie, Contemporary Society
Category Documentary Cinema
Year of Production 2009
Director Hans-Erich Viet
Screenplay Hans-Erich Viet
Director of Photography Johann Feindt
Editor Anne Fabini
Producer Herbert Schwering
Production Company COIN FILM/Cologne, in co-production with Viet Filmproduktion/Berlin
Length 103 min
Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
Original Version German
Subtitled Version English
Sound Technology Dolby Digital
Festival Screenings DOK Fest Munich 2009, Emden Aunch Norderney International Film Festival 2009
Awards DGB Award Emden 2009

With backing from Filmsitzung NRW, BK, Nordmedia
German Distributor COIN FILM/Cologne

Hans-Erich Viet was born in East Friesland in 1953. He studied Philosophy, Politics and Sociology of Art in Berlin and Belfast, followed by studies at the German Film & Television Academy in Berlin (dffb). A selection of his films includes: Karniggel (1991) in co-direction with Detlev Buck, Frankie, Jonny and the others (Frankie, Jonny und die anderen, 1993), Die rote Hand von Ulster (documentary, 1996/1997), Hostage Flight to Paradise (Geiselfahrt ins Paradies, 1997), Schlange auf dem Altar (1998), Milk and Honey from Rotfront (Milch und Honig aus Rotfront, 2000), Traumfrau mit Verspaetung (TV, 2001), several episodes of the TV series Polizeiruf, and Made in Deutschland (Deutschland nervt, 2009).
The Discarded Father examines the social phenomenon of fathers who, following a divorce or the otherwise end of their relationships, face difficult or, in some cases, insurmountable barriers, when fighting for the right to see their own children.

Four fathers present their painful stories in touching interviews. In contrast, one mother gives her perspective on the situation.

In an amusing and entertaining manner, the mental state of German society unfolds before the viewer’s eyes.

**Genre** Society  
**Category** Documentary Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Douglas Wolfsperger  
**Screenplay** Douglas Wolfsperger  
**Directors of Photography** Tanja Trentmann, Inigo Westmeier  
**Editor** Bernd Euscher  
**Music by** Konstantin Gropper  
**Producers** Douglas Wolfsperger  
**Commissioning Editors** Gudrun Hanke El-Ghomri, Ulle Schroeder  
**Production Company** Douglas Wolfsperger Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, ARTE/Strasbourg

**Length** 86 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color/b&w, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Hof 2008, Biberach 2008, Braunschweig 2008  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), MEDIA  
**German Distributor** GMfilms & Wilder Sueden Filmverleih/Berlin

Douglas Wolfsperger was born in 1957 in Zurich/Switzerland as a German national and grew up on Lake Constance. After freelance work at SWF in Baden-Baden and WDR in Cologne, he works today as a writer and director. His films include:  

*Lebe Kreuz und Sterbe Quer* (1985),  
*Kies* (1986),  
*Probefahrt ins Paradies* (1992),  
*Heirate mir!* (1999), the award-winning documentary *Bellaria – As Long As We Live!* (*Bellaria – so lange wir leben!,* 2001),  
*Riders of the Sacred Blood* (*Die Blutritter*, 2003),  
*Did You Ever Fall in Love with Me?* (*War’n Sie schon mal in mich verliebt?,* 2005),  
*Long Journey Into the Light* (*Der lange Weg ans Licht*, 2007), and  
*The Discarded Father* (*Der entsorgte Vater*, 2008).
Dima lives in fear of being deported from Germany. A petty criminal, he finds refuge with Sarah, who is making a documentary about the lack of prospects for young foreigners. While the film is being made, Sarah lets him hide in her attic. Becoming aware of the attraction between them, Dima plays more than a role in Sarah’s documentary and they gradually leave the ground beneath their feet and learn, step by step, to fly.

**Genre** Drama, Love Story  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Piotr J. Lewandowski  
**Screenplay** Finn-Ole Heinrich, Jan Oberlaender  
**Director of Photography** Lars Petersen  
**Editors** Dan Olteanu, Dirk Schreier  
**Music by** Patrick Waizmann, Albrecht Neander  
**Production Design** Patricia Walczak  
**Producers** Carsten Strauch, Piotr J. Lewandowski  
**Production Company** Carsten Strauch Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with Die GENERALE Filmproduktion/Berlin, Pathion Pictures/Berlin, Magna Mana Production/Frankfurt

**Principal Cast** Jacob Matschenz, Sandra Hueller, Peter Moltzen, Oktay Oezdemir  
**Length** 26 min  
**Format** HDCAM, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Awards** Best Actor (Jacob Matschenz) Berlin 2009, Audience Award Hamburg 2009

**Piotr J. Lewandowski** was born in Warsaw. He studied at several universities in Poland, England & Germany. In 1999 he began studying at the Offenbach College of Design, and continued his studies from 2002-2007 at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Film Academy. He is currently working on his feature film debut, together with Finn-Ole Heinrich, which will be produced at the end of 2011 in Poland and Germany.

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**german films quarterly**  
3 · 2009

**new german films**  

What would you sacrifice for your family’s love? Your values? Your freedom? Your independence? German-born Umay flees her oppressive marriage in Istanbul, taking her young son Cem with her. She is hoping to find a better life with her family in Berlin, but her unexpected arrival creates intense conflict. Her family is trapped in their conventions, torn between their love for her and the values of their community. Ultimately they decide to return Cem to his father in Turkey. To keep her son, Umay is forced to move again. She finds the inner strength to build a new life for her and Cem, but her need for her family’s love drives her to a series of ill-fated attempts at reconciliation. What Umay doesn’t realize is just how deep the wounds have gone and how dangerous her struggle for self-determination has become …

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Feo Aladag Screenplay Feo Aladag Director of Photography Judith Kaufmann Editor Andrea Mertens Music by Max Richter Production Design Silke Buhr Producers Feo Aladag, Zueli Aladag Production Company Independent Artists Filmproduktion/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, RBB/Potsdam-Babelsberg, ARTE/Strasbourg

Principal Cast Sibel Kekilli, Derya Alabora, Settar Tanrioegen, Nizam Schiller, Tamer Yigit, Serhad Can, Almila Bagriacik, Florian Lukas, Alwara Hoefels, Nursel Koese, Ufuk Bayraktar, Blanca Apilánez Length 119 min Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German/Turkish Subtitled Versions German, English Sound Technology Dolby SRD With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Kuratorium junger deutscher Film German Distributor Delphi Filmverleih/Berlin

Feo Aladag was born in 1972 in Vienna. She began her career as an actress, completing her training in London and Vienna from 1990-1995. While studying Acting she completed a Master in Psychology and Journalism, continuing on to receive her PhD in 2000. She acted in numerous acclaimed film and television productions while attending various master-classes and directing seminars at the European Film Academy as well as the German Film and Television Academy. During this time she also maintained a successful career as a scriptwriter and commercial film director. In 2005, Feo Aladag founded the production company Independent Artists, responsible for her debut as the producer, director and writer of When We Leave (Die Fremde, 2009).

World Sales TELEPOOL GmbH · Irina Ignatiew Sonnenstrasse 21 · 80331 Munich/Germany phone +49-89-55 87 60 · fax +49-89-55 87 62 29 email: cinepool@telepool.de · www.telepool.de
Until a few years ago, neither scientists nor the public were aware that the Strait of Gibraltar was such a unique natural paradise: in no other place on earth you can find as many whale species living in such a confined area. But the strait is also one of the choke-points of global trade with a volume of shipping traffic unparalleled in the world. Where modern routes of transport and ancient migration routes meet, we witness a showdown of the ocean giants. Again and again, whales are run over, get caught in ships’ propellers, are poisoned by waste water or strand, disoriented by the underwater noise pollution.

Ten years ago, Swiss-born Katharina Heyer discovered that there are whales in this junction between Europe and Africa – and that these whales show unique behaviors due to their close coexistence. In order to protect their habitat, the former fashion designer changed her life and moved into the region. The Last Giants – Oceans in Danger documents her fight for a hospital – a hospital for whales.

Genre Animals, Environment/Ecology, Nature Category Documentary Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Daniele Grieco Screenplay Daniele Grieco Directors of Photography Gerd Haegele, Kathleen Herbst, Francisco Gil Vera, Herwarth Voigtmann, Michael Weyhers Editor Achim Schunck/QATSL.TV Music by Stefan Mohr/Mohrmusic Producer Daniele Grieco Production Company Stella Maris Film Produktion/Cologne Length 90 min Format HD, color, 16:9 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Stereo/5.1 Surround With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA) German Distributor Progress Film-Verleih/Berlin

Daniele Grieco was born in 1967 and initially studied Marine Biology in Naples and later worked for the German broadcaster WDR as a radio reporter. He graduated from a film school in New York and worked as an author and assistant director in New York and Cologne. Active as a producer, director and scriptwriter, The Last Giants – Oceans in Danger (2009) is his first feature-length film.
Two single parents meet in an Internet chat room and soon decide to move in together. They don’t have a whole lot in common, but the very fact that they are so different gives the relationship its liberated, adult quality. Until their two teenage children fall in love with each other and the force of unfettered, uncompromising first love rocks the boat of the parent’s cozy little arrangement …

Franz Mueller was born in 1965 in Mosbach. After studying Art and Cybernetics in Duesseldorf, he enrolled at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne for post-graduate studies in Television & Film. His films include: Madonna ist Loewe (short, 1998), the episode Vater und Sohn from the omnibus film Freitagnacht (2001), his graduation film Science Fiction (2003), and Wallace Line (Die Liebe der Kinder, 2009).
Until now, David Kern was a waiter and a decidedly un-literary nobody. His only true passion is Marie, who loves literature and seems to be out of reach for him. When David finds the unpublished manuscript of a novel in a second-hand night table, it seems to be his only chance to get Marie’s attention. Marie’s reaction is more than he ever hoped for. She’s ecstatic about the book and secretly finds a publisher for it. Soon the novel is hailed as a masterpiece, and David becomes a dazzled but overwhelmed literary superstar, with Marie’s love for him growing with every review. After a public reading on his PR tour, his second worst nightmare becomes reality when Alfred Duster, a name he only knows as the author of the manuscript he found, smilingly asks for a signed copy of the novel. Duster wants money and begins to take over David’s life. Unable to bear the pressure any longer, David confesses to Marie. She leaves him dazed and confused, and David knows that he needs to show Marie his love and despair in a way she will understand.

Genre Comedy, Love Story Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Alain Gsponer Screenplay Alexander Buresch, based on the novel Lila, Lila by Martin Suter Director of Photography Matthias Fleischer Editor Barbara Gies Production Design Udo Kramer Producers Andreas Fallscheer, Henning Ferber, Marcus Welke, Sebastian Zuehr Co-Producer Thomas Sterchi Production Companies Film 1/Berlin, Falcom Media Group/Berlin, in co-production with Millbrook Pictures/Zug Principal Cast Daniel Bruehl, Hannah Herzsprung, Henry Huebchen Casting Simone Baer Length 103 min Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) German Distributor Falcom Media Group/Berlin

Alain Gsponer was born in 1976 in Zurich/Switzerland. Between 1996-1997 he studied Audiovisual Design at the School for Design in Bern and then from 1997-2002 Directing at the Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg. His films include: Heidi (short, 1998), X fuer U (short, 2000), Hinter dem Berg (short, 2001), his graduation film Kiki & Tiger (2002), Rose (2005), Life Actually (2006), and My Words, My Lies – My Love (Lila, Lila, 2009). His first feature film Rose was awarded as Best Feature Film at the Shadowline Filmfestival in Salerno; Life Actually earned four prestigious Adolf Grimme Awards including Best Director.
Jan wants to marry the German-Italian Sara. Nothing that spectacular, right? Just a simple wedding at the justice of the peace. But Jan didn't figure his future father-in-law into the picture. Antonio, who came to Germany in 1965 as a guest worker and is married to the German Ursula, demands that the wedding, a real wedding, take place in his hometown in southern Italy. And he won't take no for an answer. So Jan, Sara and her parents travel to Campobello to make all the preparations with Antonio's whole family. Confronted with the wild Italian spirit, the strange food, soft beds and all the red tape, Jan starts to wonder if Sara and her family are really the right ones for him …

Genre Comedy Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Neele Leana Vollmar Screenplay Daniel Speck, Jan Weiler, based on the novel of the same name by Jan Weiler (Ullstein Verlag) Editor Bernd Schlegel Production Design Doerthe Komnick, Johannes Sterngel Producers Jakob Claussen, Uli Putz, Cristiano Bortone Co-Producers Lothar Schubert, Martin Moszkowicz Production Company Claussen+Woebke+Putz Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Schubert International Filmproduktion/Ulm, ZDF/Mainz, Constantin Film Produktion/Munich

Principal Cast Lino Banfi, Christian Ulmen, Mina Tander, Maren Kroymann, Gundi Ellert, Peter Prager, Sergio Rubini Casting Daniela Tolkani, Lilia Trapani Length 98 min Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German & Italian Sound Technology Dolby Digital/ Dolby Stereo With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filminstitut NRW, Eurimages, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Apulia Film Commission German Distributor Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

The expropriation of the German Jews benefitted virtually every other German citizen.

It was not the Gestapo who invaded Jewish residences in order to confiscate all assets – from bank accounts to the last shirt – it was the German tax officials.

A bizarre competition evolved between bureaucrats as to how one should organize the robbery of the Jews before they were expelled or sent to the gas chambers.

Larger assets went to the tax offices, and the smaller assets and goods were sold to friends and neighbors in public auctions of “non-Aryan” property.

Many of the documents proving this expropriation were lost or destroyed; the ones that remained were hidden away.

A search for traces …

**Genre** History  **Category** Documentary TV  **Year of Production** 2008  **Director** Michael Verhoeven  **Screenplay** Michael Verhoeven, Luise Lindermair  **Director of Photography** Britta Becker, et al  **Editor** Gabriele Kroeber  **Music by** Sami Hammi  **Producer** Michael Verhoeven  **Production Company** Senata Film/Munich, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich, SWR/Baden-Baden  **Length** 90 min  **Format** HDV, color, 16:9  **Original Version** German  **Subtitle Version** English  **Sound Technology** Stereo TV Mix  **Festival Screenings** Jerusalem 2009  With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmstiftung NRW

The animals at the Mullewapp farm lead a normal country life – until they receive an unexpected visitor: Johnny Mauser, who says he’s a famous actor and really mixes things up at Mullewapp. Everyone wants to hear Johnny’s funny stories and they all think he’s a real hero. Only Franz the rooster is miffed by Johnny’s presence. Johnny’s got everyone wrapped around his little finger, even Franz’s favorite hen Marilyn!

In the middle of all the good cheer, suddenly they get word that Cloud the lamb has disappeared, apparently kidnapped. The whole farm is in an uproar. But hey, isn’t a real hero there too? Together with Waldemar and Franz, Johnny is ordered to save Cloud. Now they have to all three bond together. They take off on Waldemar’s bike and a great adventure begins …

**Genre**  Children & Youth, Family  
**Category**  Animation, Feature  
**Year of Production**  2009  
**Directors**  Tony Loeser, Jesper Moeller  
**Screenplay**  Bettine von Borries, Achim von Borries  
**Editors**  Oscar Loeser  
**Music by**  Andreas Hoge  
**Production Design**  Jens Moeller  
**Producers**  Tony Loeser, Malika Brahmi, Stefania Raimondi  
**Co-Producers**  Michael Koelmel, Siegmond Grewenig, Senta Menger  
**Production Company**  MotionWorks/Halle (Saale), in co-production with Kinowelt/Leipzig, Enanimation/Turin, 2D3D Animations/Angouleme  
**Voices**  Benno Fuermann, Christoph Maria Herbst, Joachim Król, Katarina Witt, and others  
**Length**  77 min  
**Format**  35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version**  German  
**Dubbed Version**  English  
**Sound Technology**  Dolby Digital, Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings**  Munich 2009  
**With backing from**  Eurimages, Deutsch-Französisches Foerderkommission, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg  
**German Distributor**  Kinowelt/Leipzig  

**Tony Loeser** was born in 1953 in Manchester/England. After working as a camera assistant he trained as a photographer and studied Cinematography at the University of Film & Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam-Babelsberg. Also active as an animator, technical coordinator, and producer, his films include: *Sechs Weihnachten* (1994), *Beruf: Neonazi* (1994), *Abschied von Agnes* (1994), *Globi und der Schattenraeuber* (2003), and the television series *Ein Fall fuer Freunde, Piratenge-schichten*, and *Me, Myself and the Others*, among others.

**Jesper Moeller** is a Danish animator, storyboard and clean-up artist and director of numerous internationally successful animated films, including *All Dogs Go to Heaven* (1989), *Rock-a-Doodle* (1991), *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* (1992), *Asterix et les Vikings* (2006, which he directed together with Stefan Fjeldmark), and *Mikisoq* (2007) as well as the television series of the same name.
So far, it’s been a good life for Laura. In her late 20s, she’s always been the sunniest of four sisters, and the only one to lead a happy marriage. But now she has cancer. She’s given up chemo. And she knows she can either spend her last weeks with her husband Peter and make him sick with care and worry – or spend them with her family and drive them crazy. While her father accepts her decision, her mother quickly rounds up Laura’s sisters Susa and Coco to convince her to continue her treatment. But it’s Toni, the black sheep of the family, whom Laura wants most badly next to her. And Toni comes, as rebellious as ever, ready to take her entire family head-on.

Laura watches as her visibly uncomfortable sisters – together again for the first time in six years – grapple with their emotions. Susa, the eldest, plays the successful career woman who’s got everything under control and is single-handedly planning to save Laura with a new experimental treatment. Coco is the classical wife and mother, who’s trying to emulate her own “perfect” mother but is cracking under the pressure. And Toni continues to provoke, frittering away her life in one-night stands and poisoning her heart with recriminations toward her sisters and painful, unsolved issues with her mother. A houseful of emotions that flare up in sudden flashes of scorn or erupt into boisterous laughter, that open up many long-locked doors and let fresh air into lives that have lost their bearings.

**Genre** Tragicomedy  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2008  
**Director** Ben Verbong  
**Screenplay** Karin Howard, Katja Kittendorf  
**Director of Photography** Theo Bierkens  
**Editor** Menno Boerema  
**Music by** Konstantin Wecker  
**Production Design** Benedikt Herforth  
**Producers** Anita Elsani, Ulf Israel  
**Co-Producers** Werner Wirsing, Bastie Griese, Denis Wigman, Frank Pardaan  
**Production Companies** Elsani Film/Cologne, 3L Filmproduktion/Dortmund, in co-production with 3L Filmverleih/Dortmund, MMC Independent/Cologne, CTM Films/Hilversum, Borderline Pictures/Amsterdam  
**Principal Cast** Katharina Marie Schubert, Julia Maria Koehler, Senta Berger, Christiane Paul, Anna Boeger, Jan Decleir, Jan-Gregor Kremp, Mark Waschke  
**Casting** Anja Dihrberg  
**Length** 105 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.78  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitle Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA), Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Netherland Film Fund  
**German Distributor** 3L Filmverleih/Dortmund  

**Ben Verbong** was born in 1949 in Holland. His films include:  
- *Der Skorpion* (1984),  
- *Lily Was Here* (1989),  
- *House Call* (1996),  
- *Schock – Eine Frau in Angst* (1998),  
- *Kinder der Gewalt* (1999),  
- *Lieber, booser Weihnachtsmann* (1999),  
- *The Slurb (Das Sams)*, 2001,  
- *Hanna – Wo bist Du?* (2001),  
- *My Magical Friend Sams (Sams in Gefahr)*, 2003,  
- *Mr. Woof (Herr Bello)*, 2007, and *Like It or Not! (Ob ihr wollt oder nicht!)*, 2008.
Set in the far-off future, this is the story of the difficult relationship between a very emotional cat and her husband, a tedious mouse.

**Genre** Drama, Love Story  
**Category** Animation, Short  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** David OReilly  
**Screenplay** David OReilly  
**Editor** David OReilly  
**Music by** Bram Meindersma, David Kamp  
**Producer** David OReilly  
**Production Company** David OReilly Animation/Berlin  
**Length** 10 min  
**Format** 3D computer animation, color, 16:9  
**Original Version** Synthetic Dialogue  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Stereo  
**Awards** Special Distinction Annecy 2009, Best German Film Oberhausen 2009, Golden Bear Berlin 2009  
**German Distributor** David OReilly Animation/Berlin

**David OReilly** was born in Kilkenny/Ireland in 1985. He is currently based in Berlin (www.davidoreilly.com).
On the edge of the world, at an altitude of 4,000 meters on the banks of Lake Titicaca, lies the small Bolivian village of Copacabana. Here 14-year-old Alfonsina lives with her mother Rosa and her grandmother Elena. Together with her best friend Tere, Alfonsina has vowed to leave this boring place in order to see the world. But until the girls are ready to do so, they collect picture postcards from countries all over the globe. A student from Munich and a businessman from La Paz turn up in Copacabana. Little do any of them know, but for Elena, Rosa, and Alfonsina this marks the beginning of their final days together.

Birds unable to fly, a god of good luck who smokes cigarettes, statuettes of saints standing on their heads, dumpings left uneaten, a magnificent landscape in which people get lost and then discover themselves, a hotel about to be built: all elements of a moving story about yearnings, disappointments, betrayals – but also about dignity, human warmth and a great love which ultimately transcends time and space.

Genre Family, Love Story Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Thomas Kronthaler Screenplay Stefanie Kremser, based on her novel Postcard from Copacabana Director of Photography Christof Oefelein Editor Melanie Werwwe Music by Martin Unterberger Production Design Marta Mendez, Carsten Lippstock Producers Alena Rimbach, Herbert Rimbach Co-Producer Paolo Agazzi Production Company AVISTA Film Herbert Rimbach/Munich, in co-production with BR/Munich, Pegaso Producciones/La Paz


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Things go out of control. Order is no more. Rules no longer matter.

Frederik Feinermann is an up-and-coming young bank employee who lives an ordinary life. When a bank customer, whom Frederik has denied a loan due to the bank crisis, shoots himself in front of Frederik, he snaps. Together with ex-con Vince Holland he begins to live out a new, dark side of himself. He robs his rich bank customers’ homes and gives the money to the needy. The initial rush of crossing social boundaries soon develops into an addiction to ever greater thrills.

Gravity tells the story of a seemingly settled bank employee who breaks the shackles of his everyday life and becomes a wanderer between worlds.

Gravity was born in Berlin in 1975. Before enrolling at the German Film and Television Academy (dffb) in 1999, he studied Sociology and Media Sciences and worked as a freelance camera assistant and cameraman. His films include: Fuck and Run (short, 2000), Elvis vs Bruce Lee (short, 2000), John Lee and Me (short, 2002), Blackout (short, 2005), Raw and Uncut (concert film, 2006), Killing the Distance (documentary, 2007), and Gravity (Schwerkraft, 2009).
Young restaurant owner Zinos is down on his luck. His girlfriend Nadine has moved to Shanghai for a new job, he suffers a slipped disc, and his regular guests have stayed away since he hired the new cook.

But when word of his new restaurant concept gets around, more people from the hip crowd start streaming into the “Soul Kitchen”. However, that doesn’t stop Zinos from yielding to his broken heart and flying off to China to find Nadine. He leaves the restaurant in the hands of his brother Illias.

Both decisions, however, turn out to be bad ones …

**Genre** a kind of Heimatfilm
**Category** Feature Film
**Cinema**
**Year of Production** 2009
**Director** Fatih Akin
**Screenplay** Fatih Akin
**Director of Photography** Rainer Klausmann
**Editor** Andrew Bird
**Music by** Klaus Maeck
**Design** Tamo Kunz
**Producers** Fatih Akin, Klaus Maeck
**Production Company** Corazón International/Hamburg, in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, Pyramide Productions/Paris, in cooperation with Dorje Film/Rome
**Principal Cast** Adam Bousdoukos, Moritz Bleibtreu, Birol Uenel, Anna Bederke, Lucas Gregorowicz, Demir Goekgoel, Wotan Wilke Moehring, Pheline Roggan, Dorka Gryllus, Marc Hosemann, Cem Akin, Udo Kier
**Casting** Monique Akin
**Length** 99 min
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
**Original Version** German
**Subtitled Version** English
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital Dolby Surround EX
**Festival Screenings** Venice 2009 (In Competition)
**With backing from** German Federal Film Board (FFA), Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Nordmedia, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), BKM
**German Distributor** Pandora Film Verleih/Cologne

Fatih Akin was born in 1973 in Hamburg and began studying Visual Communications at Hamburg’s College of Fine Arts in 1994. In 1995, he wrote and directed his first short feature, Sensin – You’re The One! (Sensin – Du bist es!), which received the Audience Award at the Hamburg International Short Film Festival, followed by Weed (Getuerkt, 1996). His first full-length feature film, Short Sharp Shock (Kurz und schmerzlos, 1998), won the Bronze Leopard at Locarno and the Bavarian Film Award (Best Young Director) in 1998. His other films include: In July (Im Juli, 2000), Wir haben vergessen zurueckzukehren (2001), Solino (2002), the Berlinale Golden Bear-winner and winner of the German and European Film Awards Head-On (Gegen die Wand, 2004), Crossing the Bridge – The Sound of Istanbul (2005), The Edge of Heaven (Auf der anderen Seite, 2007), and Soul Kitchen (2009).
It’s while Alex’s mother is doing the ironing that she tells him she’s moving away from Bremen to live in Kent with her new partner Seth. And it’s an announcement which marks the start of a long, painful summer for Alex. He has no choice but to go to Kent with his mother and Seth, away from his friends, his home, and his A level studies. He just knows he is going to hate it all, the isolation and the quiet of the countryside, the cold, primitive cottage, and most of all, Seth. His one thought is to get away, back to civilization in Bremen. But then he meets Louie, who looks after abandoned and ill-treated animals, and Faye, Seth’s daughter, and suddenly the summer is full of new experiences and challenges which will change Alex’s life forever.

**Genre** Coming-of-Age Story, Family Entertainment  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Marie Reich  
**Screenplay** Friederike Koepf, Uschi Reich, Robin Getrost, based on the novel of the same title by Julia Clarke  
**Director of Photography** Egon Verdin  
**Editor** Barbara von Weitershausen  
**Music by** Youki Yamamoto, Jakob Anthoff  
**Production Design** Heike Lauer-Schnurr  
**Producers** Martin Moszkowicz, Tania Reichert-Faciidades, Benjamina Mirnik, Peter Zenk, Martin Blankemeyer, Tobias A. Seiffert  
**Production Companies** Bavaria Filmverlei- & Produktion/Munich, Bremedia Produktion/Bremen, in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion/Munich, Solaris Film/Munich, Muenchner Filmwerkstatt/Munich, Universum Film/Munich  
**Principal Cast** François Goeske, Karoline Eichhorn, Sarah Beck, Zoe Moore, Alexander Beyer, Christian Nickel, Maja Schoene, Jonathan Beck  
**Casting** Jacqueline Rietz  
**Length** 111 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitle Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Emden 2009  

Marie Reich was born in Munich in 1979 and studied at the Munich University of Television and Film. Her films include: Paul (short, 2000), Das K-Projekt 12/14 – eine moderne Oper entsteht (documentary, 2002), Music Only If It’s Loud (Musik nur wenn sie laut ist, 2005), and Summertime Blues (2009).
The mystery thriller’s action centers on the formerly successful painter David 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, five 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.

**Genre** Thriller  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** Year of Production 2009  
**Director** Anno Saul  
**Screenplay** Jan Berger, based on the novel by Akif Pirinçci  
**Director of Photography** Bella Halben  
**Editor** Andreas Radtke  
**Music by** Fabian Roemer  
**Production Design** Boerries Hahn-Hoffmann  
**Producers** Ralph Schwingel, Stefan Schubert  
**Co-Producer** Christoph Mueller  
**Production Companies** Wueste Film/Hamburg, Wueste Film Ost/Berlin, in co-production with Senator Film Produktion/Berlin  
**Principal Cast** Mads Mikkelsen, Jessica Schwarz, Thomas Thieme, Valeria Eisenbart, Tim Seyfi  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital Surround EX  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)  
**German Distributor** Senator Film Verleih/Berlin

Baghdad. The war is officially over, the situation still disastrous. The supply of food and medicine to Fallujah has collapsed. Americans and rebels manage to agree to a 24-hour ceasefire.

Kim, a Dutch worker for an international relief organization, teams up with the young German journalist Oliver, who hopes for a scoop, to organize an aid transport. Kim is hell-bent to get blood units and medication into Fallujah, but the transport has to return within the 24 hours or face the consequences.

Oliver’s experienced cameraman Ralf is pessimistic about the plan while Husam, the local driver, has his own hidden agenda. Joining them is Alain Laroche, one of the last doctors in the zone.

The five take to the road through a devastated country. Overcoming severe obstacles, they make it to Fallujah, where the situation is dire. Desperate, they decide to take as many wounded back to Baghdad as they can. But will they make it before the 24 hours are up?

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Lancelot von Naso Screenplay Lancelot von Naso, Kai-Uwe Hasenheint, Collin McMahon Director of Photography Felix Cramer Editors Vincent Assmann, Kilian von Keyserlingk Music by Oliver Thiede Production Design Annette Lofy, Oliver Hoese Producers Florian Deyle, Martin Richter Co-Producers Dario Suter, Klaus Dohle Production Company DRIFE PRODUCTIONS/Munich, in co-production with DCM Mitte Productions/Berlin, Erfttal Film/ Cologne Principal Cast Thekla Reuten, Matthias Habich, Hannes Jaenicke, Max von Pufendorf, Husam Chadat Casting Uwe Buenker Length 95 min Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital Festival Screenings Montreal 2009 With backing from FilmFernsehfonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA) German Distributor Falcom Media Group/Berlin

The actor Otto Kullberg is a man women love and men like. Sometimes he drinks a little too much. When his excessive drinking leads him to miss a day on the set of his new film and it seems like he’s about to blow the whole thing, a younger actor is hired to shoot all the scenes a second time as a backup solution: Leo the producer is not willing to lose any money.

Otto, a man of fast wit and driven by his need to be at the center of attention, finds himself forced to assert his role on the set, in a 1920’s costume to decide between the love for two women, and to redefine his role in his own life. Many films ago, there was a love story between Otto and his partner Bettina, who is now the wife of the director. Does the distinction between film and reality fade away? In the duel between the actors on set, no one wants to be the loser. Everyone loves the truth and everybody lies.

Not to mention, you really shouldn’t mix whisky and vodka.

Genre Melodrama  Category Feature Film Cinema  Year of Production 2009  Director Andreas Dresen  Screenplay Wolfgang Kohilhaase  Director of Photography Andreas Hofer  Editor Joerg Hauschild  Production Design Susanne Hopf  Producer Christoph Mueller  Co-Producer Peter Rommel Production Company Senator Film Produktion/Berlin, in co-production with Rommel Film/Berlin  Principal Cast Henry Huebchen, Corinna Harfouch, Markus Hering, Valery Tchepelanowa, Sylvester Groth, Peter Kurth, Karina Plachetka, Thomas Putensen, Matthias Walter, Kai Boerner, Fritz Marquardt  Length 108 min  Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  Original Version German  Subtitled Version English  Sound Technology Dolby Digital  Festival Screenings Karlovy Vary 2009 (In Competition)  Awards Best Direction Karlovy Vary 2009  With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Mitteldeutsche Medienfoerderung, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)  German Distributor Senator Film Verleih/Berlin

Andreas Dresen was born in 1963 and started shooting amateur films in 1979. From 1984 to 1985 he worked as a sound technician at the theater in Schwerin, and then apprenticed at the DEFA studios, working as an assistant director with Guenter Reich. He then studied Direction at the “Konrad Wolf” University of Film & Television in Potsdam. Since 1992, he has been working as a writer and director for television, cinema, and theater. A selection of his award-winning films includes: Silent Country (Stilles Land, 1992), Night Shapes (Nachgestalten, 1998), The Policewoman (Die Polizistin, 2000), Grill Point (Halbe Treppe, 2001), Vote for Henryk! (Herr Wichmann von der CDU, 2003), Willenbrock (2004), Summer in Berlin (Sommer vorm Balkon, 2005), Cloud 9 (Wolke 9, 2008), and Whisky with Vodka (Whisky mit Wodka, 2009).
When Waris Dirie’s *Desert Flower* appeared in 1998, the world was shocked. The former supermodel tells her breathtaking life story, describing her incredible journey from a nomadic life in the deserts of Somalia to the world’s most famous catwalks. This was a dream and a nightmare at the same time. In New York, at the peak of her career, she tells in an interview of the practice of circumcision that she had to suffer when she was five. Waris Dirie decides to end her life as a model and dedicate her life to fighting this archaic ritual.

**Genre** Biopic, Drama  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Sherry Hormann  
**Screenplay** Sherry Hormann  
**Director of Photography** Ken Kelsch  
**Editor** Clara Fabry  
**Music by** Martin Todsharow  
**Production Design** Jamie Leonard  
**Producer** Peter Herrmann  
**Co-Producers** Danny Krausz, Benjamin Herrmann, Barbara Seiller, Til Schweiger, Hans-Wolfgang Jurgan, Hubert von Spreti, Bettina Reitz, Roch Lener, Martin Bruce-Clayton, David P. Kelly, Meera Syal, Sally Hawkins, Timothy Spall, Craig Parkinson, Anthony Mackie, Juliet Stevenson, Meera Syal, Soraya Omar-Scego  
**Casting** John & Ros Hubbard  
**Length** 120 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** English/Somali  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1  
**Festival Screenings** Venice 2009 (Venice Days)  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), FilmFernsehfonds Bayern, Eurimages, Oesterreichisches Filminstiut, ORF (Film/Fernsehabkommen), Filmfonds Wien  
**German Distributor** Majestic Filmverleih/Berlin  
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*Sherry Hormann* was born in Kingston/New York in 1960 and moved to Germany in 1966. She studied at the University of Television & Film (HFF/M) in Munich from 1979-1983 and worked in continuity and as an assistant director for television and film until 1986. Since then, she has been active as a scriptwriter, production designer and director. Her directorial debut *Silent Shadows* (1991) won German Film Awards for Best Film, Best Female Actress and Best Soundtrack in 1992 as well as the Bavarian Film Award for Best Newcomer Director and the Max Ophuels Award. Her other films include: *Frauen sind was Wunderbares* (1993), *Doubting Thomas* (Irren ist maennlich, 1995), *The Cellist* (1996), *Widows* (Widows – erst die Ehe, dann das Vergnügen, 1997), *Private Lies* (2000), *My Daughter's Tears* (2002), *Balls* (Maenner wie wir, 2004), and *Desert Flower* (Wuestenblume, 2009).
A promise, an old, destroyed horse head violin and a song believed lost lead the singer Urna back to Outer Mongolia. Her grandmother was forced to destroy her once beloved violin in the tumult of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The ancient song of the Mongols, *The Two Horses of Genghis Khan*, was engraved on the violin’s neck. Only the violin’s neck and head survived the cultural storm. Now it is time to fulfill the promise that Urna made to her grandmother.

Upon arrival in Ulan Bator, Urna brings the still intact parts of the violin – head and neck – to Hicheengui, a renowned maker of horse head violins, who will build a new body for the old instrument in the coming weeks. Then, Urna leaves for the interior to look there for the song’s missing verses. But will she find what she is searching for …

**Genre** Drama, Music, Road Movie  
**Category** Semi Fictional Documentary  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Byambasuren Davaa  
**Screenplay** Byambasuren Davaa  
**Director of Photography** Martijn van Broekhuizen  
**Editor** Jana Musik  
**Music by** Urna Chahar Tugchi, Ganpurev Dagvan  
**Producers** Beatrix Wesle, Byambasuren Davaa  
**Production Companies** Grasland Film/Munich, Atrix Films/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Urna Chahar Tugchi  
**Length** 90 min  
**Format** 16 mm Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** Mongolian  
**Subtitled Versions** English, German  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Locarno 2009 (Piazza Grande)  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, BKM, German Federal Film Board (FFA)  
**German Distributor** Polyband Film/Munich

Byambasuren Davaa was born in 1971 in Ulaanbaatar/Mongolia. From 1989 to 1994 she worked as a speaker and assistant director for Mongolia’s Public TV. From 1995 to 1998 she attended the Film Academy in Ulaanbaatar, followed by studies at Munich’s University of Television & Film (HFF/M) in the documentary department. Her films include: *One World, Two Economies* (1993), *Das orange Pferd* (1999), *Wunsch* (2001), *Unterwegs, Portrait of a Girl* (2003), *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (Die Geschichte vom weinenden Kamel, 2003) which was nominated for an Academy Award in 2005 for Best Documentary Feature, *The Cave of the Yellow Dog* (Die Hoehle des gelben Hundes, 2005), and *The Two Horses of Genghis Khan* (Die zwei Pferde des Dschingis Khan, 2009).
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German Films Service + Marketing is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company. In 2004, the company was reorganized and now operates under the name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

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

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

German Films itself has 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 (until 30 August)
Christin Czarnecki, trainee
Christine Harrasser, managing director’s assistant/project coordinator
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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 foreign representatives in nine countries.

German Films’ budget of presently €4.8 million comes from film export levies, the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and the FFA. The seven main regional film funds (FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, and Nordmedia) make a financial contribution – currently amounting to €324,000 – towards the work of German Films.

German Films is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, a network of European film organizations (including Unifrance, Swiss Films, Austrian Film Commission, Holland Film, among others) with similar responsibilities to those of German Films. The organization, with its headquarters in Hamburg, aims to develop and realize joint projects for the presentation of European films on an international level.

German Films’ range of activities includes:

- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Locarno, San Sebastian, Montreal, Karlovy Vary, Moscow, Nyon, Shanghai, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Sydney, Gothenburg, 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 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 Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film
- Collaboration with Deutsche Welle’s DW-TV KINO program which features the latest German film releases and international productions in Germany
- Organization of the “German Films Previews” geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- Organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting

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