THE EVOLUTION OF THE MEDIUM
focus on Television in Germany

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FALLEN FOR FILM
A portrait of Helma Sanders-Brahms

producers' portrait

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FOR THE LOVE OF FILM
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The media scene has been subject to rapid changes for some years now. Technical innovations are altering television at shorter and shorter intervals. This change applies to the established participants of the German television scene from public and private broadcasting, but also to new program providers that employ largely innovative means of transmission like the Internet to broadcast their material. At present, television in Germany is well-positioned, but it must react to the challenges of the future in order to maintain this success.

PUBLIC TELEVISION – AN OVERVIEW

Germany’s dual broadcasting system enables and protects the co-existence of public and private broadcasting. In the past, the Federal Constitutional Court defined the relation between the two broadcasting providers in numerous policy decisions. Private broadcasting was permitted in the 1st and 2nd rulings on broadcasting (1981 and 1986), insofar as the public broadcasters continued to guarantee the so-called basic provision of broadcasting services for the German population. These rulings not only admitted private providers to the German broadcasting market (and thus the dual broadcasting system), but are regarded at the same time – in continuance of the prevailing broadcasting law of the Federal Constitutional Court – as the foundation for the public broadcasting stations’ existence.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the range of German television programs was still very limited. At best, every citizen could receive the joint channel transmitted by the broadcasters affiliated in the working group of public broadcasting stations (ARD) and its regional programs ("the third channels"), as well as the channels of the Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (second German TV channel, ZDF). This was
supplemented by the two East German channels of GDR television, which were replaced in the course of reunification by the public programs provided by the new East German broadcasting stations Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) and Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg [(ORB) – now Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (RBB) after fusion with Sender Freies Berlin in 2003].

After the set-up and development of the cable network, the introduction of satellite-based television and the digitalization that has advanced in recent years, public broadcasting has been able to extend its program range. Besides the comprehensive programming of ARD and ZDF, and the full programming offered by the third channels of the state broadcasting stations, the public broadcasting stations operate additional special sector channels: ARTE (international cooperation), 3sat (international cooperation), Phoenix, ki.kA (the children’s channel), EinsExtra (news, current affairs), EinsPlus (service and advice channel), EinsFestival (documentation, culture and fictional content), BR-Alpha (the digital channel of Bayerischer Rundfunk), ZDFinfokanal, ZDFtheaterkanal, ZDFdokukanal and television for foreign countries on the Deutsche Welle.

In all, therefore, German public broadcasting has 22 available channels. From 1992 to 2004 alone, the amount of public television on offer has almost tripled (+194%).

At the international broadcasting exhibition (IFA) 2007 in Berlin, ZDF initiated the ZDF Mediathek (media library), and ARD presented its media library as a showcase exhibit. The media library enables its users to download programs, which are made available on the Internet after the linear broadcasting date. The media library archive keeps this program content available for use for up to seven days. Public broadcasting’s digitalization strategy is leading to resentment however among its private competitors, who see their own business models threatened in this way.

FINANCING PUBLIC TELEVISION

Public television is financed by radio and television licensing fees, with the exception of the Deutsche Welle, which receives its funding from the federal budget. The licensing fee is dependent on appliances, i.e. it is charged for the holding of a radio or television set and currently amounts to €17.03/month for television sets. New receiver types such as computers are currently subject to a basic fee of €5.52/month. Liability to fees is not dependent on the actual reception of programs. Each private individual acting on a non-commercial basis pays only one fee for all the appliances in his/her possession. Payment of the television fees also covers the necessary fees for radios or the new receiver types. There are special regulations concerning the number of appliances that must be registered by the self-employed and companies. In 2006, the revenue from broadcasting fees amounted to €7.286 billion. The proportion of television fees in the overall revenue amounted to €4.567 billion. This is supplemented by advertising income from the time-limited advertising possibilities in the ARD’s main program and the main program of ZDF to a sum of €302.08 million (excluding sponsoring). Although the new EU directive for audiovisual media services (formerly television directive) will permit product placement, ARD and ZDF continue to reject it, as a voluntary commitment. Product placement has recently been the subject of controversial discussion in German politics, but those in favor of rejection were unable to assert themselves in the negotiations.

Due to the increasing convergence of the media, i.e. the use of diverse means of transmission and end appliances to receive audiovisual content, a discussion has begun in Germany on whether the linking of licensing fees to appliances is up-to-date. Among other things, there is consideration of a universal media fee tied to persons or households to replace the present appliance-linked licensing fee.

Since 2003, the licensing fees have been the object of government subsidy regulations appraisal by the EU Commission. The Association of Private Radio and Telemedia (VPRT) had filed a complaint in Brussels maintaining that broadcasting fees were also being used for commercial activities above and beyond the actually permitted accomplishment to programs – among other things, on the Internet. A compromise was agreed at the end of 2006, and resulted in the discontinuation of the government subsidy proceedings. Besides a commitment from ARD and ZDF to assure more transparency and to differentiate clearly between commercial and non-commercial activities, the most important outcome of this compromise is that by 2009, the assignment of the public channels must be specified in the state broadcasting contract. In order to take into account the complaints of the private broadcasters in advance of this specification of the public assignment, in September 2007, ARD and ZDF committed themselves to establishing a so-called Public Value Test. The purpose of this test in the near future is to assess whether a specific broadcasting service is part of the public assignment and can therefore be financed by licensing fee money.

FIXING BROADCAST FEES – INDEPENDENT OF THE STATE

In the process of fixing broadcasting fees, the public broadcasters initially detail their requirements to the special commission to assess the financial requirements of the broadcasting stations (KEF). This examines whether the financial requirements are justified and fixes the fee for the application period. The federal states confirm the rate by adjusting the state broadcasting contract accordingly. Recently, there has been controversial discussion on whether the federal states may be entitled to fix a lower fee than the one laid down by the KEF. In September 2007, the Federal Constitutional Court ruled on this issue and decided that the broadcasting fees must be fixed fundamentally independent of media political goals. The media political development of the broadcasting assignment is kept separate from the fixing of licensing fees in order to exclude the risk of “direct influence on the perception of the programming assignment” and thus assure the freedom of broadcasting. In special cases, however, it should be possible for the federal states to deviate from the KEF’s fixed fee, e.g. if this represents an inappropriate imposition on fee payers. In the disputed case, the rejection of an increase of €0.28 by the federal states was declared unconstitutional, since – among other things – the federal states were concerned to realize savings potential on the part of the public broadcasters, whereas the Federal Constitutional Court was not able to recognize the existence of such potential after assessing the KEF report. In addition, the Federal Constitutional Court noted that money from broadcasting fees could also be used for the expansion and continued differentiation of the available channels and their means of transmission. This applies to the digitalization strategy of ARD and ZDF.
PRIVATE TELEVISION – A GROWING MARKET

Since the start of its operations in 1984, the private television sector in Germany has been generally financed by advertising income. The net advertising turnover of private television including sponsoring income amounted to €3.812 billion in 2006. The conglomerates offering private television continue to regard the German market as having great potential for growth. Despite a consolidation phase on the German television market, which has been shaped to date by the two big broadcasting groups Pro7 Sat.1 Media AG and the RTL Group, both groups registered considerable growth in turnover and output.

By creating a rise in capacities via cable, satellite and terrestrial means of transmission, as well as switching from analogue to digital transmission technologies, the private broadcasting providers were also able to extend their programming range. At the end of 2006, the state media institutes responsible for private broadcasting recorded a total of 342 private television channels on offer in Germany; excluding the foreign television channels that can also be received here. Of these, 118 channels were private television or teleshopping services that could be received all over the country. 17 channels are regarded as comprehensive programming channels, 33 as special sector channels, 58 are pay-TV services, and 234 consist of regional and local television. The comprehensive programming channels that can be received freely nation-wide include Sat1, Pro7, RTL, RTL II, Kabel 1, Vox, GIGA Digital and bw family.tv (only via Kabel BW). In 2006, 50 of the 342 channels could be received all across Germany.

The channels that offer prize competitions, platforms for dating and partner-seeking, and advice formats have developed positively. These channels include 9Live or Astro TV, but also DSF and Kabel 1. Their television services enable viewers to participate in the programs or call up additional information e.g. by telephone (using value-added services liable to costs).

For a long time, Premiere – initiated in 1991 – offered the only successful, advertising-free pay-TV available in Germany. The greatest guarantee of Premiere’s success in recent years, alongside a wide range of films, was its broadcasting of the football Bundesliga (national soccer league games). After Premiere lost the football rights to Unity Media, it was compelled to lower its prices considerably. However, Unity Media’s pay-TV service, marketed under the name “arena”, was unable to fulfill expectations subsequently. As a consequence, Unity Media transferred the football rights back to Premiere via sublicense in 2007. In 2006, the three biggest pay-TV providers in Germany were Premiere with approximately 3.4 million customers, arena with around one million customers and Kabel Deutschland (KDG) with some 600,000 customers.

Other key movers on the pay-TV market are the big broadcasting chains Pro7 Sat.1 Media AG and the RTL Group. Pro7 Sat.1 launched the channels Sat.1 Comedy and kabel eins classics in June 2006. RTL has offered channels subject to charges, like RTL Crime or RTL Living and Passion, since December 2006.

The pay-TV market is becoming attractive for more and more providers, to the extent that competition is growing harder as a consequence of new networks and means of transmission, and the emergence of increasingly modern distribution platforms. In the meantime, telecommunications companies have also started offering their own pay-TV platforms. In the middle of 2006, the Telecom-Italia subsidiary HanseNet started the IP-TV platform Alice homeTV. German Telekom followed in autumn 2006 with its offer of T-Home. Arcor followed in summer 2007 with a test platform. Alice offers 60 free-TV and 40 pay-TV channels, T-Home has 70 free-TV channels and several options for pay-TV (including Premiere) on offer. Arcor offers 50 free-TV and 70 pay-TV channels. In addition, all providers offer a large number of films “on-demand”. No concrete user statistics are available at this time, but it is currently estimated that there are around 25,000 to 35,000 households which subscribe to an IP-TV service.

In general, the breakthrough of the IP-TV platforms is not expected until 2010, since initially German media users are not prepared to pay for content because of the range of free television available. It remains a matter for concern that none of the pay-TV services were able to register a profit in 2006.

NEW MEANS OF TRANSMISSION – EXPANSION OF THE TELEVISION SCENE

Besides the classic television offers and the platforms offered by the telecommunications companies, the television scene is also being altered by an ever increasing wealth of available services. To transmit their programs, these mainly employ the new means of transmission or profit from advancing digitalization and the growing inroads made by broadband.

Program capacities are being increased by switching from analogue to digital transmission channels. As a result, the number of program providers is also rising constantly. In recent years, this led to a specialization of television programming, which will continue in the future. Shopping channels, travel broadcasters or lifestyle channels supplement the program range. The complete switch from analogue to exclusively digital television is also planned for 2010.

Besides the offers made by specialist sector channels and the aforementioned IP-TV platforms of the telecommunications companies, there are a number of small IP-TV providers. For example, the network of grid-tv.com, according to its own statistics, registers more than five million users of its IP-TV services. These are offers specializing in peripheral forms of sport, e-sports, dental programs or the like, which can be accessed on the Internet. In addition, home-productions by Internet users on Internet video portals like “Youtube” represent a new kind of audiovisual offer world-wide; their consequences for the broadcasting business can only be registered at this stage, and their full impact cannot be foreseen yet.

In May 2006, the first commercial mobile phone television service was initiated on the platform of Mobiles Fernsehen Deutschland. Based on the DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting) standard, this offer of mobile phone TV enables subscribers to receive five television channels (ARD, ZDF, N24, MTV, Pro7 Sat.1 Mobile) and a visual radio channel (bigFM2see). At present, the tender for frequency rights for mobile phone TV services based on the DVB-H (Digital Video Broadcasting – Handheld) standard continues. This standard is preferred by Viviane Reding, the EU Commissioner for Media and the Information Society, who is striving for a fixed European standard.
It is possible to observe a convergence of mass and individual communication. Television content can be found alongside home-produced content on Internet video platforms. Viewer participation facilitates reciprocal communication; via blogs and forums, viewers exchange opinions and information concerning program content.

The industry is backing new possibilities that provide interactive broadcasting services. Increasingly, for example, the aim is for viewers to be able to receive – parallel to an available film – additional information on the background or people and/or objects shown in the film. Interaction plays an important role in the plans of the program distributors, representing the basis for new business models. Due to the changing advertising market and the competition for advertising funds from the new media, the development of new interactive business models is especially interesting for private broadcasters.

Europe has reacted to the changing television scene: the directive for audiovisual media services, which will be passed this year, not only includes television in its sphere of regulations – as the previous television guideline did – but all audiovisual media services.

PROPORTIONAL HOLDINGS, MEDIA SCENE & MEDIA COMPETITION LAW

Since the very beginning, the German private television market has been dominated by two broadcasting groups:

Pro7 Sat.1 currently offers, among other things, four free-TV stations financed by advertising (Sat.1, Pro7, kabel 1 and N24). 9Live also makes Pro7 Sat.1 the market leader in the field of call-TV. In addition, it includes four pay-TV stations, maxdome (video-on-demand platform) and shares in the Internet portals MyVideo and Lokalisten.

Following the insolvency of the Kirch group, Pro7 Sat.1 Media AG was taken over by German Media Partners L.P. (GMP) under the directorship of Haim Saban in 2003. When its shares were sold in 2006, the share price had tripled. The initially planned takeover of Pro7 Sat.1 Media AG by the Axel-Springer AG failed, due to a veto by the Federal Cartel Office and the Commission for the Evaluation of Concentration in the Media (KEK). The KEK accounted for its refusal to agree by arguing that together with its print publications, Springer would possess the prevailing power of opinion after the takeover of Pro7 Sat.1. This influence on opinion would amount to a 42% share which would be problematic. “In certain circumstances, the consequence may be a loss of jobs and editorial cutbacks.”

Meanwhile, KKR and Permira are planning to reduce by 200 jobs within the concern, including ca. 60 employees at Sat.1. The news program Sat.1 am Mittag, which has excellent quotas, and Sat.1 am Abend have now been removed from programming altogether. Other formats are also being hit by the cutbacks. These plans to restructure Sat.1 have met with incomprehension, but Sat.1’s broadcasting license is in no danger.

The RTL Group is among the biggest broadcasting concerns in Europe and is owned by Bertelsmann AG. The channels it offers include the advertising-financed free-TV stations RTL, RTL II, Vox, n-tv, and Super RTL. They are supplemented by programs such as TraumpartnerTV, the sales channel RTL Shop, pay-TV offers and regional broadcasting channels.

Besides this, there have been attempts to place additional entertainment programs on the German market. Das Vierte, a specialist entertainment channel of NBC Universal Deutschland Holding GmbH, has been broadcasting since 2005 and offers older films, TV series and an erotic night time program on the cable networks and via satellite.

PROGRAM CONTENT & MARKET SHARES

In 2006, the advertising market in Germany expanded by 4.7% to €4.1 billion (private and public television). For the first time, therefore, television advertising revenue has again surpassed the level of 2002, but has not yet reached that of the record year 2000, in which €4.7 million were generated. In 2006, Pro7 Sat.1 was able to increase its turnover with €2.1 billion (+5.8%) and RTL in Deutschland with €1.85 billion (+5.4%).

With around 25% market share, the RTL Group was able to assert its leading market position among the private broadcasters in Germany in 2006. Vox was able to make considerable gains and has established itself as a channel showing series. According to market data from July 2007, RTL – with a 12.4% market share – remains the private broadcaster with the most viewers. Only the third channels of ARD (13.4%) and ZDF (12.6%) won over more viewers. The main program of ARD reached 12.2%, Sat.1 reached 9.6%, ProSieben 6.4% and Vox 5.7%.

Growing competition – also from other media fields like the Internet – forces the broadcasters to carry out stricter cost controls. The development of new broadcasting formats suffers as a result. Their place is taken by an increasing number of synchronized programs, usually from US American productions. Particularly crime and medical...
series like CSI, CSI Miami (RTL), Navy CIS and Criminal Minds (Sat1) and Dr. House (RTL) have generated successful viewing quotas. It was possible to discern growth in the case of some national productions, particularly among cooking shows (Das perfekte Dinner (Vox)), casting formats (Deutschland sucht den Superstar, Let’s Dance Again (RTL)) or coaching formats. It can be observed that private broadcasters in particular remove programs from their channels or shift their time slots if the viewing quotas do not live up to their expectations. Here, the pressure of costs means that broadcasters forget just how many successful programs in the past needed some time before they met with the desired response from viewers.

Of late, increasing complaints have been made about the decline in program quality. This applies equally to public and private broadcasting. The allegation is made that viewing quotas are granted more importance in programming than the quality of the programs shown. In particular, the main programs of public broadcasting have to deal with complaints that they are emulating the private broadcasters by copying successful formats such as soaps and other material from the field of light entertainment. For years, fault has been found with the fact that cultural and educational programs, which are part of public broadcasting’s core assignment, are not shown during prime time. It is noted that culture and education, rather than being shown in the main programs of ARD and ZDF, are broadcast more and more frequently by their cooperating channels ARTE, 3Sat or Phoenix. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent this programming concept can be altered by the upcoming specification of the public assignment.

Recently, the financing of television and cinema films by means of film subsidies and broadcasting stations has led to discussion of the genres cinema film and television production. The so-called “amphibian film” — produced for marketing both in the cinema and on television — offers the possibility of double marketing and also the distribution of risk among several entities. More and more large-scale projects in particular — with an investment sum of more than ten million Euros — are being conceived as cinema films and multi-part television films. Besides wider marketing, this form of production also facilitates access to the film subsidies intended for cinema support. But director Volker Schlöndorff, for example, has criticized this form of production, finding fault with the fact that two different narrative forms are mixed as if “adulterating wine”. Journalist Hanns-Georg Rodek (Die Welt) identifies “leering at TV compatibility” as the reason for “the long-standing international lean spell of German cinema.” In their pure form, both formats require different lighting, images or narrative tempo.

CHANGING USAGE PATTERNS AMONG CONSUMERS

The usage patterns of media consumers have changed considerably in recent years. Radio and television used to be the number 1 media, but other applications have caught up in the meantime. Mp3 players, on-demand offers, computer games and other services and possibilities offered by the Internet represent only some of the new applications now providing competition for the classical entertainment media. In particular, one group very relevant to advertising — teenagers and young adults — use new media as an alternative to traditional services. In addition, an increasing number of possibilities are now available with which to assemble content into personalized programs. In all probability, therefore, the future consumer will function as his own program director, realizing an increasingly individual and exclusive range of media.

EXPLOITATION RIGHTS & INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS

For many years now, the producers of television programs have been working to consolidate their position within television structures. Up until now, the broadcasting stations have been the predominant force on the German television market. Within the prevailing political conditions, independent producers see themselves at a disadvantage by comparison to the broadcasters. In order to improve on the situation, demands are being made to strengthen the secondary exploitation market and give the producers suitable opportunities to participate in it, e.g. in the form of exploitation fees or repeat royalties. The call is for a limited transfer of rights (with respect to time and place) to the commissioning broadcaster, which would enable the producers to re-exploit their work after a predetermined period has passed. In order to improve the situation further, Professor Johannes Kreile (of the Association of German Television Producers) suggests a legally standardized broadcasting quota for productions from the second phase of exploitation, which would have to be acquired by broadcasters at the prevailing market rates. As yet, the legislators have not reacted to these demands.

It remains controversial whether, and to what extent, the 10% quota of independent European productions laid down by the EU television directive and confirmed in the new directive for audiovisual media services — only applicable to television content and not to other audiovisual media services, however — actually leads to an improvement in the producers’ position. As Professor Oliver Castendyk (of the Erich Pommer Institute) points out, very few broadcasters in Europe have difficulty in fulfilling this quota, so that article 5 of the directive is largely ineffective.

TELEVISION – TODAY & TOMORROW

For most people, television has become a matter of course. In the changed media world, however, television is being challenged to assert the established diversity of its programming. A great measure of protection for public broadcasting can be derived from the broadcasting verdicts of the Federal Constitutional Court, from the 9th protocol of the Treaty of Amsterdam, but also from the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which concludes that television is not only a commercial, but also a cultural commodity. Despite its position in the dual broadcasting system, private broadcasting is far more subject to market influences and pressure to adapt than the public broadcasting stations, which are financed by licensing fees. The private stations will need to introduce new interactive business models in order to maintain their positive position in future.

Despite digitalization, broadcasting frequencies are in short supply. Broadcasting is privileged in Germany; there is no need to buy high-quality frequencies, even though fees have to be paid for their use. If all frequencies were exploited according to market economy conditions, both public and private broadcasters would have to “bid” for frequencies at auction, for other market participants are also inte-
rested in them. These include telecommunications companies, who can use terrestrial frequencies for rapid Internet and better mobile telephone systems. If the free tendering of frequencies were to occur, it could mean serious disadvantages for broadcasters, as the financial power of those offering television programs is incomparably less than that of the telecommunication companies or other large-scale concerns.

Those offering programs in Germany are not immune to new competition. Due to the millions of non-commercial offers made by private individuals and new business models in the field of IP-TV, the audiovisual media market now has a wealth of committed protagonists such as infrastructure operators, telecommunications companies and Internet firms like Google. Recently, Google took over the Internet video portal Youtube. The cable network operator Unity Media is behind the program of arena. In future, producers will plan to market their content directly – i.e. without the detour via the program presenter. Companies from outside the industry are entering the programming market and bringing with them the dangers of vertical integration into the media scene. Here, money from a branch of industry outside the field of television could be employed to acquire programs or rights. This could raise the prevailing price levels, making it impossible for the established program presenters to bid for rights.

TV-platforms are also developing a market influence. In the future, the platform operator could decide which available programs are to be adopted into the platform range. At present, the platform operators still need the backing of the program providers, for the customer is accustomed to a specific range of programs. The platform operator, therefore, must reflect the existing range of programs on his platform in order to be successful. However, it is impossible to say whether this will continue to be the case in future. Ultimately, the viewer does not follow the program provider or the broadcaster, but the content – in other words, the series or the film available. If his favorite series is shown on a different channel, the viewer is prepared to change to this new channel for the sake of the series. If platforms begin to acquire content directly, the situation for program presenters will become worse. In this context, politicians have discerned the need to take action. For the first time, the draft of the 10th state contract concerning changes in broadcasting envisions stipulations for the regulation of platforms.

Furthermore, the Internet will revolutionize classical television. IP-TV and on-demand offers will provide considerable competition to classical television services, at least in the area of series and films. In future, the big chance for the TV program providers lies in live reporting and live broadcasting. Broadcasting services have been successful with these formats since its emergence, and live content will continue to assure the success of linear television.

Nonetheless, television will soon no longer be what it once was. But if television providers not only recognize and take on the emerging technical challenges, but also adjust to special interest demands and to greater interaction and mobility among viewers, television will remain the most important component of the media world in the future.

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A bibliography and a detailed list of broadcaster contacts are available in the online version of GFQ.
Marcus H. Rosenmueller was born in 1973 in Tegernsee. In 2003, he completed his studies at the Academy of Television & Film in Munich, where he still lives. During his studies, he garnered attention with his films Nur Schreiner machen Frauen glücklich (1999), Kuemmel und Korn (2000) and Hotel Deepa (2002). Rosenmueller filmed several episodes of the documentary series Irgendwo in Bayern for the local public broadcaster BR, including an episode which he co-directed with Joseph Vilsmaier. In 2003, the short film C’est la vie (2003) appeared, which was shown at the Ophuels Festival in Saarbruecken. In 2005, he presented his feature debut, Grave Decisions (Wer früher stirbt ist länger tot), which premiered at the Munich International Film Festival in 2006 and won the German Film Promotion Award for Best Direction, and from then on, his triumphal procession in the German film industry had begun. In 2007, the sports comedy Heavyweights (Schwere Jungs) came out, followed by the coming-of-age story Best Times (Beste Zeit), which Rosenmueller created as a trilogy. Currently, he is filming the history material Rauber Kneissl with the producers of The Lives of Others, Wiedemann & Berg.

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Marcus H. Rosenmueller’s career started ‘at the top’. Five years ago, the student at the Munich Academy of Television & Film led a group of foreign students to the ridge of the Wendelstein Mountain. From a height of 2000 meters, the filmmakers-to-be viewed the broadcasting station of the Bayerischer Rundfunk – which gave Rosenmueller and a friend an idea: what if a new band seized the station and broadcast its music from there?

That was the initial spark of a creative process that has brought German cinema the greatest unexpected success in the recent past and, at the same time, revived a genre that was believed to be dead. The comedy Grave Decisions has been seen so far by more than 1.7 million cinemagoers in Germany and has won four German Film Awards (to name a few), including those for Best Direction and Best Screenplay. It’s a film saturated in local color from the alps and its cultural consciousness, in which a small boy comes to terms with his mortality in a whimsical way. The film has been playing for over a year in German cinemas, and Rosenmueller has already followed up with further works – the comedy Heavyweights and the portrait of a generation, Best Times, the continuation of which, called Beste Gegend [literally: “Best Region”], has already been filmed. Since these films also celebrate life in rural Bavaria and only make use of dialect dialogues, as in Grave Decisions, the media tagged the 34-year-old as the highest exponent of the “New German Heimatfilm”. Rosenmueller has since gotten used to it, even if he did not consciously realize what his own main themes were. It is only now, confronted by countless reviews and interviews, that he realizes: “I incorporate a lot of things that I see as being parts of my homeland.”

However, as deeply as Rosenmueller’s stories are rooted in Bavaria, as a filmmaker, he strips away the constraints of regionalism. One indication of this is the showing of Grave Decisions at so many international festivals. At the 3rd European Film Festival in the Spanish town of Vitoria Gasteiz, the comedy won the Audience Award this
year. In January, Rosenmueller was astounded to see his name on the marquee of New York’s Tribeca cinema, where the film was presented to American buyers and journalists: “I was really surprised how well the film worked with the audiences. They laughed at the right times and were very quiet during the touching parts.” So far, the TV rights to Grave Decisions have been sold to China and Australia, among others, while other large territories are still being negotiated.

The universality of Rosenmueller’s film narratives is not an accident. As influences, besides Roman Polanski and Helmut Kaeutner, who became one of the most important German directors of the 50s and 60s with intelligent melodramas like Under the Bridges, he names François Truffaut: “I just watched his Antoine Doinel-tetralogy again and I am still stunned at how modern this story and the style of its production is.” In turn, while filming Best Times, he showed his actors excerpts from Kenneth Lonergans’ subtle character study You Can Count on Me: “I wanted to make it clear to them that a good film doesn’t have to have an earth-shattering story, but an earth-shattering feeling.”

For this reason, Rosenmueller is not interested in a plot with superficial allure. That was also the reason that only parts of the original idea for Grave Decisions remained. Rosenmueller first wrote the story of a struggling rock band with his co-author Christian Lerch; he already had the green light from the television stations doing the financing. But something in the director made him reluctant: “That was a story that only had to do with me superficially. There was no deeper level.” And so the two writers gave the story a general makeover. The coming-of-age story Beste Gegend is, according to Rosenmueller, packed with biblical themes: “the heroine lives in paradise but something is driving her to change the situation.” In his next film, which he will film starting at the end of September, he will tell of the legendary robber and folk hero Mathias Kneissl, but also about the possibility and impossibility of happiness in a social reality.

Rosenmueller has also trained his sense of comedy very well. In his youth, he couldn’t get his fill of comedies, whether by the Marx Brothers, Lubitsch, or German humorists like Heinz Erhardt. He knew the dialogues of the Steve Martin slapstick The Jerk practically by heart. For years, he wrote comedic addresses – so-called ‘carnival speeches’ – for the local carnival association. He especially likes the “anarchistic element” of it – “I’d like to do something wild.” That comment appears again and again whenever he describes his films.

At the same time, he is more than ready to leave the borders of Bavaria and of the “New German Heimatfilm” behind. Projects in standard German are “completely imaginable” for him; he also has a weakness for horror films like Invasion of the Body Snatchers or Rosemary’s Baby. However – the idea of taking the leap to Hollywood, such as other directors of his generation are currently doing, does not interest him. “First I have projects here in the near future. And for me, everything has to coordinate creatively. I don’t want to let myself be talked into anything by a studio or a producer. I’m the wrong guy for that.” You could also say: Rosenmueller is simply too wild.

Marcus H. Rosenmueller spoke with film-journalist Ruediger Sturm
Helma Sanders-Brahms was born in 1940 in Emden and attended acting school in Hanover, followed by studies in Theater Sciences, German, English, and Education in Cologne. She was an intern on productions by Corbucci and Pasolini and made her first film, Angelika Urban, Verkaeuferin, verlobt, in 1970. A selection of her other films includes: Unter dem Pflaster ist der Strand (1974), Shirin’s Wedding (Shirins Hochzeit, 1975), Heinrich (1976), Germany, Pale Mother (Deutschland bleiche Mutter, 1980), Die Beruehrte (1981), Fluegel und Fesseln (1984), Laputa (1986), Apple Trees (Apfelbaeume, 1991), the documentary To Live Now – Jews in Berlin (Jetzt Leben – Juden in Berlin, 1995), My Heart Is Mine Alone (Mein Herz Niemandem, 1997), Die Farbe der Seele (2003), and her latest project Clara, a German-French-Hungarian co-production with Integral Film. Her films have received numerous national and international awards such as the German Film Award for Heinrich and Unter dem Pflaster ist der Strand and the Grand Prix of Montreal for Laputa in 1986. She was named a “Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres” by French culture minister Jack Lang in 1991 and in 1997 became a member of the Berlin Academy of Arts.

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A portrait of Helma Sanders-Brahms

Outside, dawn, the Mediterranean in Ostia: The young lady walks down from the dunes to the beach. She wants to interview the great Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini, who will be filming a scene of his film Medea here. Dawn breaks and contours gradually become visible: the sea, the beach, the tracks on which the camera will move. At the edge of the sea, four young men are sitting on brown horses. The men are naked, there are shells in their hair. The brown hue of their skin blends in with the brown of the horses. A short, skinny man walks towards them. It is Pasolini. She tells him the reason she has come. He looks at her with large, luminous eyes and says: “You are going to make films!” Then he goes back to the set, because the moment has now come for which he has been waiting for half the night: the sun is rising above the horizon. And then the camera begins to move, the naked men ride into the sea – it sprays and blinks in the sun …

“Unfortunately, he cut that scene out later,” says Helma Sanders-Brahms. “But that he said: ‘You are going to make films’ – that really threw me for a loop back then.”

We are sitting in her kitchen in Berlin, with red wine, ham, and cheese – and the things she says are screenplay-worthy scenes from the life of a filmmaker.
She was 29 and a television anchor at WDR when she met Pasolini in 1969. He offered her a place on the set and she stayed because she noticed that she had fallen for film. Ten years later, she introduced the film that made her famous: *Germany, Pale Mother* – her own story and that of her mother in post-war Germany of the 50s and 60s. The film got a slating in Germany. Agitated, the director took a trip to France, where her film was shown at a women’s festival in a large cinema with 1500 seats – and was a huge success. It ran for a year and a half in France, for months in Japan. And soon, the German distributors noticed that it was a mistake to take the film from their program. *Germany, Pale Mother* then also became a success in Germany.

In the mid-80s, things quieted down around Helma Sanders-Brahms. Like many others in her generation, she was cut by young, ambitious producers who dismissed the “author film” of the 70s as antiquated and outdated and thought that German cinema had to be reinvented. Since that time, however, she began to recognize signs that the wind was changing and that “fantasy was again getting more free rein.” But she had to fight for 11 years for her newest project, *Clara*, before the film finally was realized as a German-French-Hungarian co-production.

It tells the story of the piano virtuoso Clara Schumann (played by Martina Gedeck), who finds herself in a love triangle with Robert Schumann (Pascal Greggory) and the young composer Johannes Brahms (Malik Sidi). When her husband Robert dies, she would be free to be with Johannes, who loves her as she does him, but she decides to stay alone. She suspects that she can only be an artist if she remains independent. The project was filmed in Hungary and in North Rhine-Westphalia. Now the rough edit has been done, and at the beginning of next year, the film should come to the cinemas. The dramatic love triangle – also a treat for the ears for music lovers and a feast for the eyes for fans of decorative and costume cinema – was filmed with the same man with whom the director worked on *Germany, Pale Mother*: cameraman Juergen Juerges.

The film is also an autobiographical project. Not only because the director herself is distantly related to Johannes Brahms and the cameraman to Clara Schumann, but because it describes a woman who has fallen for music as hard as the filmmaker Helma Sanders-Brahms has for film.

“Cinema,” she says, “is the most beautiful thing that people have thought up, the most complex, the best of all. A really great film – everything is in it. All the arts that man has developed in the history of culture come together here. And that is what I would like to fill out. It is a gift, you either have it or you don’t. I can’t do a lot of things that normal people can. But when I am on a set, I feel an enormous amount of security. Then I know: I can do this. And I already had that feeling when Pasolini said: ‘You’re going to make films.’ Afterwards, I drove back to Cologne and gave my fiancé the ring back and said: ‘I’m going to make films.’” Back then, she already suspected what she knows today (and what becomes painfully clear to Clara in her film): “Art is so possessive, when you get involved with it, it absorbs you. You have to give it everything – everything.”

*Helma Sanders-Brahms spoke with Hartmut Palmer*
Sisters Alexandra and Meike Kordes have been passionate about cinema right from their childhood years. At the age of 12, Alexandra had written her first screenplay with two friends and posted it off to ZDF. Then, two years later, she made her first film on Super 8 with her younger sister Meike – aged 10 at the time – playing the boys’ parts. Over the next four years, they made five films, including two of feature-length, and had well and truly caught the filmmaking bug.

“It was always clear to us that we would carry on in this direction and set up on our own,” Alexandra recalls, while Meike agrees that “it was always a goal for us that we would establish a production company.”

On the way to their goal, both sisters studied at the Academy of Film & Television “Konrad Wolf” in Babelsberg: Alexandra enrolling in the course for Cinematography and Meike starting two years later in the course for Film & TV Production.

After graduation, Alexandra worked as a DoP with such directors as Rosa von Praunheim and Werner Schroeter on more than 20 documentaries and feature films. Meanwhile, Meike had already gained valuable experience during her time at film school as a line producer and producer on several shorts, documentaries and feature films. Upon graduation, she continued working as a line producer on such films as Hannes Stoehr’s Berlin is in Germany, Chris Kraus’ Shattered Glass and Dito Tsintsadze’s Gun-Shy.

Taking the plunge

In 2003, the sisters took the plunge and founded their own production company Kordes & Kordes Film GmbH – Meike assuming responsibility for sales, financing and organization and Alexandra looking after project development. Before their success with Chris Kraus’ Four Minutes (Vier Minuten), the sisters produced Katinka Feistl’s Do You See Me? (Siehst du mich?), which was nominated for the 2005 First Steps Awards in the Best Fiction Film category, and Kerstin Ahlrichs’ TV film Crossing the Fields as well as documentaries such as Carsten Fiebeler’s portrait of the ballet dancer Vladimir Malakov The Search for Weightlessness, and Arielle Artsztein and Esther Slevogt’s Jewish Ballroom about the Berlin Jewish community. The production of Four Minutes had its world premiere at the 2006 Shanghai International Film Festival where it won the Golden Cup for Best Feature Film and followed this by picking up prizes at festivals in Reykjavik, San Francisco, Braunschweig and Sofia, among others. In January, the film received four Bavarian Film Awards for Best Screenplay, Best Female Lead (Monica Bleibtreu), and Best New Talent (Hannah Herzsprung) as well as the VGF Young Producers Award. The drama was nominated in eight categories for the 2007 German Film Awards and went away with the prizes for Best Film and Best Actress (Monica Bleibtreu). Production began at the beginning of October on the BR commissioned production Morgen raeum’ ich auf by Martina Elbert. Kordes & Kordes, which also branch offices in North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg, is currently working with the American producer Dean Silvers on the development of a film adaptation of Isabel Allende’s bestseller Eva Luna. The drama Life After Life, another co-production with Silvers, is also being financed at the moment. Moreover, other projects in development are a feature film by Andres Veiel and Chris Kraus’ next feature film Poll as well as an adaptation by Petra Lueschow of Ute Scheub’s eponymous bestselling novel The Fake Life. Three TV movies and several debut projects are also in the pipeline.

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meeting with screenwriters,” Meike explains. “But there are meetings where we are both present,” Alexandra continues. “In effect, we are two heads of a single body and are constantly consulting one another.”

“This interest in the creative side has developed from what I have done in the past: in a collective with my two school friends, I operated the camera, directed and wrote the screenplay on a couple of amateur films,” she says. “And then, when I was studying to be a DoP, I was always talking with other students about ideas. I was always enthralled with the image, the dramaturgy and how a story is constructed.”

At Kordes & Kordes Film, the two sisters jointly decide which projects to put into production. In doing so, they are keen to focus not only on films for the big screen, but also on quality projects for television. Indeed, their output in their first four years gives an impression of the range of projects that Kordes & Kordes Film is interested in considering: from Katinka Feist’s Do You See Me?, which was nominated for the 2005 First Steps Awards in the Best Fiction Film category through Carsten Fiebeler’s documentary portrait of the ballet dancer Vladimir Malakov, The Search for Weightlessness, to Arielle Artszein and Esther Slevoogt’s Jewish Ballroom about the Berlin Jewish community, and Chris Kraus’ theatrical feature Four Minutes.

This October, the duo are producing a TV movie for Bayerischer Rundfunk, entitled Morgen rauem’ ich auf by Martina Elbert, a director Alexandra knows from her days as a DoP. “It was really great working with the commissioning editors Bettina Ricklefs and Bettina Reitz on the development of the screenplay,” Meike observes. “It was a lot of fun preparing this film about so-called ‘messies’, which is set in Augsburg.”

Meanwhile, the sisters’ collaboration with Chris Kraus also continues with preparations for his next feature film, tentatively entitled Poll, which is due to go into production in summer 2008. “We are currently working on the financing and have taken on a producer, Jakob Geiger, who will be working specifically on this project and scouting locations in four countries for the film,” Meike explains. “We are looking for a particular kind of architecture for the film’s location where 90% of the action takes place.”

Having been chosen by German Films to represent Germany in the European Film Promotion’s “Producers on the Move” platform for aspiring young European producers in Cannes this year gave a welcome boost to the project and raised their international profile yet further (Meike and Alexandra arrived in Cannes just days after Four Minutes had been awarded the Best Film prize at the German Film Awards).

BEING A PRODUCER ON THE MOVE

Thanks to the participation in “Producers on the Move”, they made contact with fellow producer Riina Sildos from Estonia who has been able to give them some useful tips and contact names for the possibility of shooting Poll in the Baltic state. Moreover, the success of Four Minutes at the Italian box office meant that they were also approached in Cannes by some Italian companies interested in co-producing Kraus’ next feature.

But co-producing for the sisters is not just a one-way street as their experience in Cannes this year showed when they were offered a project from Italy by Grazia Volpi, the producer of the Taviani brothers’ films.

Furthermore, the company has been involved for some time now with the American producer Dean Silvers on the co-development of two feature film projects: an adaptation of Isabel Allende’s bestseller Eva Luna and the drama Life After Life. The collaboration with Silvers came about through mutual connections with the late Berlin producer Klaus Volkenborn: Meike had completed business training at Volkenborn’s Journal Film before going to film school, and Dean Silvers had been planning to make Eva Luna with Journal Film. After Volkenborn’s death, the US producer was recommended to get in touch with the two young women producers, and Meike made a personal contact with Silvers when Four Minutes was shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York last year.

THE SUCCESS OF FOUR MINUTES

Looking back at the success of Four Minutes over the past year since its world premiere in Shanghai, Alexandra agrees that “we have both learned a lot in this time, although it wasn’t a planned strategy to have the premiere abroad. We had wanted to show the film in Germany first, but that didn’t work out, and it was quite hard waiting three quarters of a year [from Shanghai] until the German theatrical release in February. We were really nervous about the German premiere in Hof, but it was a wonderful experience, a great evening.”

In January, the film received four Bavarian Film Awards for Best Screenplay, Best Female Lead (Monica Bleibtreu), and Best New Talent (Hannah Herzsprung) as well as the VGF Young Producers Award. This was followed by nominations in eight categories for the 2007 German Film Awards in May: at the end of the evening, the film had picked up the all-important Golden Lola for Best Film and the Golden Lola in the Best Actress category for Monica Bleibtreu.

Alexandra and Meike point out that the film has done extremely well in both Italy and Spain and will be released by Luc Besson’s Europacorp in France at the beginning of next year with a higher number of prints than was the case for the opening in Germany.

Meanwhile, the US release is being handled by Senator Entertainment’s new stateside theatrical operation and will be released at the end of this year/beginning of 2008. “It was very important for us to find a partner who would aim for a really big release because the film has the potential,” Meike explains. “Senator CEO Marco Weber said to us that the film can work well in the US because of the Jenny figure and the fact that it is such a visual film.”

GREATER VARIETY

Following the success of such films as The Lives of Others, the comedy Grave Decisions and their own Four Minutes, the Kordes sisters are convinced that there is an increasing variety in German cinema. “Originally, people’s attention was on comedies, but the range of genres in German films has become much broader,” Meike notes. “I hope that this trend is recognized by the film policymakers and they support this development,” Alexandra continues. “We have come away from the situation where the Germans don’t want to see their own films and I think that is incredibly positive. What’s more, I get the feeling that politicians have discovered that the film industry is an economic sector which is worth investing in.”
If Hinnerk Schoenemann had followed his first love, he would now have developed a business of breeding Koi carp and tortoises. Following the profession of an actor, though, had never crossed his mind when he was making career choices at school, even though he had been involved in some amateur dramatics at school and in a small theater when he was living in Pankow.

True, there were some family connections to the film industry through an uncle who was a cameraman and an aunt and uncle who were documentary filmmakers, “but there were no actors in the family and the idea just didn’t appear on the radar,” he says.

However, it was only when a friend who was studying at the Ernst Busch acting school in Berlin persuaded him to think about acting as a career that he took the plunge and applied to the drama schools in the capital.

He was accepted at the University of Arts (Hochschule der Kuenste/HdK), but knew from the outset that his destiny was to work in cinema and television as an actor. He was accepted at the University of Arts (Hochschule der Kuenste/HdK), but knew from the outset that his destiny was to work in cinema and television as an actor. He was accepted at the University of Arts (Hochschule der Kuenste/HdK), but knew from the outset that his destiny was to work in cinema and television as an actor. He was accepted at the University of Arts (Hochschule der Kuenste/HdK), but knew from the outset that his destiny was to work in cinema and television as an actor.
in the cinema even though the studies were focused solely on acting for the theater.

FIRST TASTE OF FILM

While he did not appear on stage during his time at the HdK, Hinnerk did manage to get his first taste of acting in front of a camera when he was cast for two small roles in international productions shooting in Berlin. By coincidence, both productions were about German history in the Second World War: Constantin Costa Gavras’ adaptation of Rolf Hochhuth’s play Der Stellvertreter as Amen, and Frank Pierson’s BBC/HBO TV movie Conspiracy recreating the Wannsee Conference where the Nazi top brass met to discuss the ‘Final Solution’.

When asked what is so fascinating about being an actor, he replies that “it allows you to try things out in every respect. You can hide behind a role and try things out which you might perhaps never dare to do in real life. I find that really interesting that you could perhaps use these experiences for your other life afterwards.”

He also reveals that Jim Carrey was often an inspiration to him during his studies at drama school: “When I got to a point where I wasn’t getting anywhere, I often asked myself: ‘How would Jim do this now?’ He impressed and encouraged me so much – even though he isn’t aware of the fact! I just have to watch him and see so many things. For me, he is the Charlie Chaplin of today.”

After graduating from the HdK in 2000, Hinnerk became a member of the acting ensemble at Hamburg’s Thalia Theater the following year, but, before beginning his engagement there, he took on his first proper screen acting appearance in Getting My Brother Laid by Sven Taddicken, a graduation film from Ludwigsburg’s Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg.

“I can remember finishing the shoot and then traveling from Stuttgart through the night so that I would be in Hamburg in the morning to begin work at the theater,” Hinnerk recalls.

During his three years in Hamburg, he was constantly hankering for opportunities to work again in front of the camera. “There was a constant conflict because I wanted to work on films, but had to stay in the theater to earn my keep and pay the rent. It was a vicious circle and I was only able to do a few things [outside of the theater] in this time,” he says.

RETURNING TO THE CINEMA

When his engagement came to an end in 2003, Hinnerk happily moved over to film and television work and has never regretted not working on the stage again. “It was the right decision for me,” he argues. “Drama school was just training for the theater, but I always knew that I wanted to work for the cinema. There was a real competitive atmosphere at the time where people said that cinema is stupid and the theater is the best. They really are two different professions.”

Over the past four years Hinnerk has moved seemingly effortlessly between roles for cinema and television, working for directors as different as Leander Haussmann, Markus Imboden, Vanessa Jopp, Christian Petzold, Angelina Maccarone, Dani Levy, Sylke Enders and Volker Einrauch.

He doesn’t make any distinction between cinema and television. “If the screenplay is good and the role appeals to me, then I’ll take on the part,” he explains. “I pay more attention now to my choice of roles and can take things a little easier. I think I have an absolutely privileged position.”

“I am quite open to all genres but, at the moment, I am often cast for roles as policemen which is alright with me as the parts are so different from one another,” Hinnerk continues. “I always try to interpret the roles so that the character is slightly crackers or broken in a way. Then there can be a bit of a conflict in the character.”

LOOKING BACK

Taking stock of his screen performances so far, he sees “two pearls” which have left a lasting mark on him: the role of Mirco in Hermine Huntgeburch’s Der Boxer und die Friseuse, for which he received a Special Prize from the Academy of Performing Arts in Baden-Baden in 2005, and the part of the pragmatic detective Klaus Burck in Markus Imboden’s highly-regarded TV crime film Moerderische Erpressung.

And then, of course, there’s the lead in Sven Taddicken’s film which launched his screen acting career. “I have an agreement with Sven that I will appear in each one of his films – even if it means that I just have a walk-on part!” Hinnerk says. “In fact, I have been in every film except his first short which he made at film school.”

For this autumn, he is booked up with the shooting of the second season of the ProSieben series Dr. Psycho which sees Hinnerk reprising the character of Edmund “Eddie” Stachowiak opposite Christian Ulmen in the title role, but the 33-year-old would welcome the chance to spread his wings and work on international productions from other parts of Europe.

Moreover, he also harbors a dream of maybe one day moving behind the camera and occupying the director’s chair for his own film. “That would really fascinate me to have the opportunity of choosing the people to play and developing my own story to tell,” he says.

In the meantime, Hinnerk is enjoying his chosen profession to the full. And his first love is not quite forgotten either: he may not have Koi carp anymore, but he still keeps tortoises in a terrarium in his flat!

Hinnerk Schoenemann spoke with Martin Blaney
GERMANY SUBMITS “THE EDGE OF HEAVEN” FOR THE OSCAR

The independent expert jury, appointed by German Films to select the German entry to compete for the 80th Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film, has – under the chairmanship of Dagmar Hirtz – chosen The Edge of Heaven by Fatih Akin.

The jury on its decision: “Before a background of political and cultural differences in a globalized world, an exceptional love story and family story is told between Germans and Turks. The film convinces with its dramaturgical composition, visual arrangement and its emotional portrayal.”

The production by corazón international/Hamburg (producers: Fatih Akin, Andreas Thiel, Klaus Maeck), in co-production with NDR/Hamburg, Anka Film/Istanbul and Dorje Film/Rome had its world premiere in the international competition of the 2007 Cannes International Film Festival, where it won the prize for Best Screenplay and the Award of the Ecumenical Jury.

Fatih Akin on the jury decision: “I am extremely happy. What luck, that Tom Tykwer filmed Perfume in English.”

The Edge of Heaven was also screened in the official competition in Bangkok and at Cinemanila (winning the award for Best Film) and celebrated its successful North American premiere just recently at the Toronto International Film Festival.

World sales agent The Match Factory has already sold the film to over 50 territories, including France, Italy, Spain, UK, Japan, Korea, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and Canada. The film was released in German cinemas on 27 September 2007 by Pandora Filmverleih.
GERMAN ANIMATED SHORTS IN JAPAN

Upon the initiative of the Saxon Ministry of Science and the Fine Arts a cooperation between the Filmfest Dresden – International Short Film Festival, the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film – DOK Leipzig, the German Institute for Animated Film (DIAF) and the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm) will present several programs of animated short films in Japan in October. The Saxony-based institutions were given this opportunity because it is Saxony’s turn to present itself on the occasion of the German Unification Day on October 3rd. Every year, the German Embassy in Tokyo invites a different German federal state to present itself with a number of events in Japan, where cultural programs accompany the political and economic meetings and receptions.

Due to Saxony’s long tradition of animated film, it was decided that each of the partners should compile a program of animated short films giving an insight into the recent and past animation scene. DOK Leipzig is presenting 10 to 12 short animations reflecting the latest developments and variety in animation styles, techniques and genres. The program of the Filmfest Dresden offers an exclusive selection of its European animation highlights of the previous three years, including the festival’s main award winners. Being the administrator of the artistic and culturally historic, significant film legacy of the DEFA Studios for Animated Film, the German Institute for Animated Film (DIAF) is showing four animated adaptations of famous fairy tales by the Grimm Brothers, which are accompanied by an exhibition introducing the institute and the program. The DIAF will also hold a workshop for children giving them the possibility to draw pictures of one of the fairy tales which will be presented in the evening. Additionally, the AG Kurzfilm compiled a program of some of the most successful recent short German animations, such as Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Hazen & Mr. Horlocker by Stefan Mueller and Framing (Bildfenster/Fensterbilder) by Bert Gottschalk, who will be on hand to present the program together with Robin Mallick, the director of the Filmfest Dresden.

In cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Japan, all four programs are being presented under the title “Saxony and Animated Film – A Passion”.

“HANDS ON HD” IN HANOVER

This year’s Hands on HD event, organized by Nordmedia and Band Pro Munich, attracted more than 350 participants and, with 45 German and European experts from the field and €13 million worth of technical equipment, was truly a unique industry event. The 7-day program (from 30 July – 5 August 2007) offered the participants theory and practice in the areas of cinematography, sound engineering, and post-production, giving directors and producers extensive insight on the topic High Definition.

Even Hollywood cinematographer Michael Ballhaus came to Hanover to lead the cinematography Masterclass. Through the support of 40 well-known companies, 34 HD cameras, 12 editing boards and extensive audio technology was available for use and practice. A highlight of the event was the first HD-helicopter.

COOPERATION TREATY BETWEEN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG AND HESSEN

At the beginning of September, the federal state representatives of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Hessen signed an agreement concerning future film funding cooperation. Until then it was necessary to spend a certain percentage of the subsidy amount in the respective states, the so-called “regional effect”. Henceforth in line with the appointed cooperation, 25% of the subsidy amount may be spent in the partner state which shall give more leeway to the producers of both states for the realization of their projects.

Now filmmakers are able to take advantage of the professional network – such as service providers, locations or actors – in both federal states. The MFG Filmförderung Baden-Wuerttemberg is the competency center for the film scene in the German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg and has been supporting exceptional and cultural film production in the area since 1995 – from script development and production to distribution and film theater support.
**DOK LEIPZIG CELEBRATES 50 YEARS**

The 50th DOK Leipzig festival this year will not only present a comprehensive retrospective, but will also introduce news trends for the future: *Generation DOK*, the international competition for new documentary talent – with prize money amounting to €10,000 – will have its debut and is on the lookout for new film talent from around the world. The festival, which is supported by *Mitteleuropäische Medienförderung*, has been working intensively since 2005 under the label DOK Industry to establish a platform for sales, financing, support and networking between international filmmakers. In its anniversary year 2007, this unique documentary film event will offer innovative concepts and programs for directors, producers, distributors, commissioning editors and journalists from all over the world.

**“SPECIAL ESCORT” IN LOS ANGELES & NEW YORK**

Director and scriptwriter Maggie Peren escorted her directorial debut *Special Escort (Stellungswechsel)* to the summer German Premieres in New York and Los Angeles in July. She was accompanied by Justyna Muesch (TELEPOOL) who is handling the film’s international sales. Peren presented her powerful comedy at the Tribeca Cinemas in New York and at the Director’s Guild in Los Angeles to US buyers and distributors – exclusively a few months before the official theater release in Germany in autumn.

At the beginning of December, the German Premieres will be launched in Washington D.C. with a double feature documentary event.

**WENDERS & CO IN NRW**

Wim Wenders, Oskar Roehler, Heinrich Breloer, Max Faerberboeck and Helma Sanders-Brahms all have something in common: not only are they all well-known German directors, but they all shot their latest films this summer in North Rhine-Westphalia. Wim Wender’s has been filming for the first time in his hometown of Duesseldorf, where he worked on his film *The Palermo Shooting* about a fashion photographer. Helma Sanders-Brahms also shot in Duesseldorf at original locations for her film about the pianist and composer Clara Schumann starring Martina Gedeck in the title role. Heinrich Breloer’s adaptation of Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks* was also set in the 19th century and the interior scenes are being shot until November at the MMC Studios in Cologne with Armin Mueller-Stahl, Iris Berben, Jessica Schwarz and August Diehl in the leading roles. Also the interior set decorations for Max Faerberboeck’s literary adaptation of *Anonyma*, in which Nina Hoss portrays a woman who suffers under the turbulence of the occupation of Berlin by the Red Army in 1945, were constructed at the MMC Studios. And Oskar Roehler’s love story *Lulu und Jimi* is set in the 1950s: Katrin Sass, Udo Kier, Hans-Michael Rehberg and others are headlining this melodrama being shot in Cologne, the Eifel region and surrounding areas.

**GREAT CINEMA IN THE BLACK FOREST**

Five current projects, all supported by regional film funder MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, were recently shot in Germany’s Black Forest region, proving that the southwestern part of Germany has lots to offer in the way of attractive locations and optimal production conditions. Gert Steinheimer is filming *Black Forest* about an old television set which develops a life of its own and turns a stay at the Schwarzwaldhaus into a nightmare. With *Nacht vor Augen*, Brigitte Bertele is looking into the deep-seated emotional disturbances of a soldier returning home from Afghanistan. In *Weitertanzen* by Friederike Jehn, Maren wants to overcome her fears of the uncertainty and finiteness of love and marries her boyfriend Arno. *Vom Atmen unter Wasser* by Winfried Oelsner deals with the threat posed to a marriage after a child is brutally killed.

And Connie Walther’s *Schattenwelt* delves into the world of the RAF and the prison release of a former RAF terrorist some 20 years later. Although his involvement in the murder of a bank president could be “proven” then, uncertainty and doubt still remain today.
Shooting for the Filmfoerung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein-funded feature film Buddenbrooks – Ein Geschäft von einiger Groesse continues until mid-November. Director Heinrich Breloer previously portrayed Thomas Mann’s family history in 2001 with his docudrama Die Manns – Ein Jahrhundertroman. His feature debut is the film adaptation of one of the most meaningful novels in the German language: Buddenbrooks. Verfall einer Familie, for which Thomas Mann was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929. “I want the viewer to witness our hero starting off strong, happy and successful and then becoming increasingly decrepit until the Buddenbrooks ultimately fall apart,” says Heinrich Breloer, who wrote the script with co-author Horst Koenigstein. Shooting locations include Luebeck’s historic old town, its cemetery and the harbor. “The whole town was shooting this film,” says Breloer, thankful for the support he experienced in Luebeck. The €15 million project is being produced by Bavaria Film and Colonia Media in co-production with FilmInterest, WDR, NDR, SWR, BR, Degeto and ARTE. Breloer’s film stars Armin Mueller-Stahl, Iris Berben, Jessica Schwarz, August Diehl and Mark Waschke. Gernot Roll is DoP and Barbara Baum is responsible for the costumes. The film will be released in German cinemas on 25 December 2008 by Warner Bros.

ARTHOUSE CINEMAS ON THE UPSWING

Larger venues, more cinemagoers – arthouse cinemas are becoming more and more popular: that is the conclusion of the recently published FFA Arthouse Cinema Study, which was presented at the 7th Filmkunstmesse in Leipzig. According to the study, 2006 witnessed a 9.2% increase in total screens, amounting to 660 across Germany, with 78% of all arthouse cinemas having more than one screen. Upward trends were also noticeable among arthouse fans: the arthouse segment saw a 17.7% increase in admissions, a figure well above the national average increase of 7.4%. Young adults in their twenties formed the strongest group with 23.5%, closely followed by children and teenagers with 23.2%, making 10 – 19-year-olds the second largest arthouse audience. The extensive program of children’s films on offer gave families all the more reason to make a visit to local arthouse cinemas. The overall 2006 film lineup itself was one of great diversity and was well-received by audiences, who voted The Lives of Others, Grave Decisions, and A Summer’s Fairytale their favorites. This year’s study also took into consideration so-called “biographical lifestyles” such as level of education and level of income. Another improvement in this year’s study was the preliminary survey of arthouse cinemas intended to establish a more specific basis for the panel participants of the Society of Consumer Research. The study is available for download from the FFA’s website: www.ffa.de.

BAVARIA IN SCOTLAND

Especially in a cultural sense, Scots and Bavarians share a love for tradition and an open mind for modernity. Both regions take pride in their art scenes and regularly bring forward outstanding music, literature, visual arts – and films. This August produced a new cinematic link: on the occasion of one of the most traditional film events worldwide, the Edinburgh International Film Festival, FFF Bayern and State Minister Eberhard Sinner, head of the Bavarian State Chancellory, hosted a “Bavarian Film Day” presenting FFF-supported films in the festival program and informing the industry about regional film locations and funding possibilities.

Among the German films “Made in Bavaria” were Gereon Wetzel’s documentary Castells, Felicitas Korn’s graduation film from the HFF Munich, Amour Fou, Christian Wagner’s drama Warchild and, as a special event, the restored 15-hour version of Berlin Alexanderplatz Remastered by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Further films produced by Bavarian companies included Michaela Kezele’s award-winning short film Milan and the documentary Traders’ Dreams by Stefan Tolz and Marcus Vetter.
The German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) is continuing its international tour. After Vienna and Cannes, next stop is Rome. On 23 October, within the framework of this year’s Rome Film Fest, the German Federal Film Fund will be presented at a panel in the Casa del Cinema during which filmmakers can inform themselves about the new source of funding which went into effect this year on January 1st. Two German and two Italian producers will conduct a podium discussion and report on their concrete experiences with the DFFF.

Also already underway in Italy is the shooting of the DFFF-supported German-Italian co-production The Palermo Shooting. In September, Wim Wenders began shooting parts of the film in Duesseldorf, then moved on to Sicily. Campino, lead singer of the German punk band Die Toten Hosen, is taking on the role of a successful photographer, who leaves his current life behind to take off on an unusual, and at times dangerous, trip from Duesseldorf, across the southern tip of Europe, to Palermo. Other high-profile actors such as Milla Jovovich, Dennis Hopper and Patti Smith have also been cast. The thriller, which is being produced by Wenders Images and set, for the large part, in Italy, received DFFF support to the tune of €444,690.

Next stops on the DFFF’s info tour will be London (25 October) and Copenhagen (28 November). Since its inauguration, the DFFF has supported 81 film projects – including 30 international co-productions – with a total of exactly €52,963,665.16 in funding monies.

SUCCESSFUL MEDIENWOCHE 2007

This year’s Medienwoche successfully closed on 7 September with the conferment of the M100 Media Award to musician and activist Bob Geldof. With more than 15,000 trade visitors at the congresses, conventions, awards and events, Medienwoche was the meeting place for national and international sector representatives.

“The international perspectives, the media debates on up-to-date topics, the new creators, innovative technologies and content of tomorrow – Medienwoche is the event format for the age of convergence and the capital is the fitting venue,” summed up Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg’s manager Petra Mueller. Dr. Hans Hege, director of the Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting Media Authority (mabb), adds: “The convergence that is now taking place and the prospects of digitalization were topics at all congress podium discussions. Regarding speakers and participants, the event has become more international, encompassing a wide range of sectors.”

SUCCESSFUL SUMMER FOR GERMAN SHORT FILMS

Summer 2007 proved to be a good one for German short films and their makers. Festivals around the globe showered Teuton talents with prizes. Sylke Rene’s Filiz fliegt took home Giffoni’s Silver Gryphon and Marc Brummund was awarded the Premio della Rivista “Il Piccolo Missionario” for Land gewinnen. Michaela Kezele’s acclaimed film Milan scooped up three prizes in Mexico at the Espresion en Corto festival and another in Palm Springs. Bende Sira – ich bin dran by Ismet Erguen won the Silver Leopard at Locarno and Fritz Boehm’s Mondmann went away with the Kidseye Grand Prize from the Rhode Island International Film Festival. The film 458NM by Jan Bitzer, Ilija Brunck and Tom Weber was named Best Short Animation in Monterrey/Mexico. Jan Zabeil was on hand to pick up the Jury Award for L.H.O. in Montreal.
and Hochhaus by Nikias Chryssos received the Grand Prix in Odense/Denmark. German shorts were the big winners at the Circuito Off festival in Venice: Michael Dreher’s Fair Trade won the Gran Award, Michaela Kezele’s Milan received a Special Mention, Gabriel Gauchet and Andrzej Król’s Die Kneipe a Mention for Formal and Aesthetic Research, Luca Zamai’s Niemand liebt Dich so wie ich a Mention for Social Problematics, and Florian Grolig’s Weiss a Note for Sound. In Sapporo Fair Trade picked up another Grand Prix and the award for Best Screenplay and Michael Schaefer’s Maries Laecheln won the Audience Award and was recognized as Best Film Without Dialogue. In Ottawa, Bert Gottschalk’s film Bildfenster/Fensterbilder was awarded the prize for Best Experimental/Abstract Animation in the Independent Short Animation competition.

5TH GERMAN-FRENCH RENDEZ-VOUS

From 22 – 24 November 2007 the 5th German-French Rendez-vous will take place in Versailles under the presidency of Margaret Menegoz and vice-presidents Kirsten Niehuus and Peter Sehr.

Some 400 participants are expected to discuss film industry topics and co-production issues between the two countries, including the latest news on film financing and developments in digital projection as well as the influence of VOD on television exploitation. A co-production pitching session will be held and German and French talent will be introduced to the professional audience. Christine Albanel, French Minister of Culture, and Bernd Neumann, German Minister of Culture, will also participate in the event. More information and updates on this year’s program can be found at www.das-rendez-vous.org.

GERMANY & CHINA: MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER

From 15 – 21 September, eight new German films were presented in the Hongren Cinema in Nanjing/China. The event was part of the initiative Germany and China: Moving Ahead Together, initiated by the German State Department and organized by the Goethe-Institut in cooperation with German Films. Opening film of the event was French for Beginners by Christian Ditter; leading actress Paula Schramm and producer Christoph Menardi presented the film to an extremely enthusiastic audience. The presentation of The Gamblers was also met with a large and interested audience: director Sebastian Bieniek was on hand to talk with students of the Nanjing University’s film department. Both the audiences and the local press were excited about the German films and their representatives. The next stop on the program’s tour will be Canton. More information can be found at www.germany-and-china.com.
Alle Anderen

**Type of Project** Feature Film
**Genre** Drama
**Production Company** Komplizen Film/Munich, in co-production with SWR/Baden-Baden, WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg

With backing from Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film

**Producers** Janine Jackowski, Dirk Engelhardt, Maren Ade

**Director** Maren Ade

**Screenplay** Maren Ade

**Director of Photography** Bernhard Keller

**Commissioning Editors** Ulrich Herrmann (SWR), Georg Steinert (WDR), Andrea Hanke (ARTE)

**Editor** Heike Parplies

**Production Design** Silke Vischer, Volko Kamensky

**Principal Cast** Birgit Minichmayr, Lars Eidinger, Nicole Marischka, Hans-Jochen Wagner

**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital 5.1

**Shooting Language** German

**Shooting in** Sardinia/Italy, August – October 2007

**German Distributor** Prokino Filmverleih/Munich

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Alle Anderen tells the tragicomic story of Gitti and Chris, an odd couple, who are struggling their way through a holiday together.

We get to know two people, as only they can be when they are alone: secret rituals, stupidities, unfulfilled wishes, secrets, power struggles.

Triggered by an apparently unimportant event – an encounter with another couple – the relationship becomes rocky. The other people are not only more successful, but also know how to conceal a traditional husband-wife division of roles behind a modern façade.

For Chris, the other couple becomes an object of desire. He begins to orientate himself on them and tries to show his headstrong girlfriend her limits, which rattles Gitti’s trust in him to the very core.

The alignment with his ideal image, which she in turn tries out, develops from a provocative game into a silent battle against oneself. While Chris blossoms in the role of the stronger and revealing himself to Gitti in new ways, Gitti begins to lose herself in her new role.

With Alle Anderen, writer-director and Munich film school-graduate Maren Ade follows up on her 2003 feature, The Forest for the Trees (Der Wald vor lauter Bäumen), which was nominated in the Best Film category at the 2005 German Film Awards. The film also took the Special Jury Award at Sundance in 2005, won Best Feature at the Newport International Film Festival the same year, and was produced by Janine Jackowski, who is also a producer on Alle Anderen.

Birgit Minichmayr’s extensive thespian credits include Hanami (2007), Perfume (2006) and Downfall (2004). Lars Eidinger, equally at home on stage, screen and TV, was last seen in the ARD drama series, Der Dicke (2007).

Komplizen Film also produced director Sonja Heiss’ Hotel Very Welcome which received Special Mention from the jury of the Prix Dialogue en Perspective at the Berlinale 2007 and won the Prix Cinédécouvertes at the Brussels European Film Festival. It also screened in the Karlovy Vary Variety’s Critics’ Choice sidebar.

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Berlin Calling

**Type of Project** Feature Film
**Genre** Tragicomedy
**Production Companies** Sabotage Films/Berlin, Stoehrfilm/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg

With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmstiftung NRW, BKM, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF)

**Producers** Karsten Aurich, Hannes Stoehr

**Commissioning Editors** Anke Krause (WDR), Andreas Schreitmueller (ARTE)

**Director** Hannes Stoehr

**Screenplay** Hannes Stoehr

**Director of Photography** Andreas Doub

**Editor** Anne Fabini

**Music by** Paul Kalkbrenner

**Production Design** Sebastian Wurm

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

**Casting** Karen Wendland

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

**Shooting Language** German

**Shooting in** Berlin and Amsterdam, September – October 2007

**German Distributor** Movienet Film/Munich
The world of techno music is the setting for Hannes Stoehr's third feature Berlin Calling which was shot on location in Berlin and Amsterdam.

“I had thought about making a film on this subject for some time,” says Stoehr who previously directed Berlin is in Germany and One Day in Europe. “I had always liked those films about musicians like The Doors, or Walk the Line, or The Rose with Bette Midler. They are always about American or English musicians, but I’d asked myself why you couldn’t do a portrait of a German musician. After all, Germans are very strong, particularly in the field of electronic music.”

“The film is also about my fascination for this kind of music,” Stoehr explains. “I like to hear all types of music – jazz, rock and so on – but there are often situations like when I am driving, dancing or just thinking that I listen to electronic music.”

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

The part of DJ Ickarus was cast with the real-life techno DJ Paul Kalkbrenner, one of the leading artists on the Berlin-based bpitchcontrol label. “For me, Paul is one of the second generation of DJs,” Stoehr says. “He composes tracks himself, and I also think that he is a symbol for the Youtube generation.”

“We have used the fact that Paul is an internationally recognized artist and that should come over in the film,” adds producer Karsten Aurich who, along with Stoehr and the film’s DoP Andreas Doub, is a graduate of Berlin’s German Film & Television Academy (dfbf). “The hero’s traveling and constantly being on the road will be underscored here. The film will have a European dimension – that’s why we have scenes of the DJ on tour in Amsterdam – but otherwise the heart and center of the film is very much in Berlin.”

Aurich points out that the collaboration with Kalkbrenner on this film goes far beyond him playing the part of Ickarus: “Paul will compose new music and we will use repertoire pieces from the label for the film’s soundtrack. I think that it will be a real new aural experience for the cinema audience. We have given a lot of thought to how techno sounds in the cinema and how one should mix it properly in the Dolby mix so that it sounds differently from what one might expect in an American film with surround sound.”

“We will also be showing how the electronic music is produced,” he continues. “There will be an almost documentary approach to the way the hero composes his music as we show how a techno sound is slowly built up using noises from the surrounding environment.”

At the same time, both Aurich and Stoehr stress that the film is not aimed only at techno fans between 19 and 25, but will have a wider audience appeal thanks to the casting of Corinna Harfouch as the psychiatrist Dr. Paul who has Ickarus as one of her patients.

In addition, the cosmopolitan character of contemporary Berlin is reflected in the casting of Rita Lengyel, Araba Walton and Megan Gay around the central character of DJ Ickarus.
Valerian Film. “The story had well-developed characters and a lot of interaction.”

Valerian Film had already made one film with the Munich Academy of Television & Film (HFF) graduate – the ProSieben thriller *Dein Mann wird mir gehoeren* – and was keen to work with Hross again. “We knew that Gerhard likes horror films and always wanted to do something in this direction,” Bomnueter says. “It is very pleasant working with him because he is a producer-friendly director who has a very clear vision of the way he wants to follow in his visual concept for the film.”

According to Bomnueter, the film, which is about an international group of medical students participating in a seminar on fear with deadly results, has clearly been influenced in its creation of a threatening and mysterious atmosphere by such Japanese ghost films as *The Ring* or *The Grudge* and in its camerawork by TV series like 24 or the Jason Bourne films franchise.

**Beyond Remedy** starts a young German cast including Marie Zielcke (one of the leads in Simon Gross’ award-winning film *Fata Morgana*), Daniel Krauss (*Keinohrhosen*), Edward Piccin (*Asterix & the Vikings*) and Annalena Duken (*Pfarrer Braun*) appearing opposite the veteran UK actor David Gant (*Braveheart*) as the stern and enigmatic Dr. Ginrich.

“We had cast Marie very early on because she is very open for this kind of genre film and came across David Gant through an acquaintance who had worked with him as a production assistant on [Darryn Welch’s thriller] *Wish You Were Here*,” Bomnueter adds.

“Then we decided to have a bigger name in a guest role and worked with the LA casting director Ricki Maslar to get Rick Yune to play the role of Dr. Ginrich’s assistant Dr. Lee,” Bomnueter explains.

Speaking about his experiences on **Beyond Remedy**, the US-Korean Rick Yune (*007: Die Another Day, The Fast & The Furious*) observed: “Most of the films I have worked on before have been big budget studio films, so to work on a smaller independent project with people that are passionate about it was really attractive for me, especially in a foreign country with different cultures. The story of fear has always been interesting to me because that’s what you have to overcome first as an actor. Before I was an actor I was a trader for hedge funds and doing that was all about managing your fear as well.”

In addition to taking on international distribution rights through **Boll World Sales**, producer-director Uwe Boll served as a co-financier on the low-budget production which was also co-produced by Gruenberg Film. Post-production will be overseen by Erik Stappenbeck’s Moonfilm and the film’s special effects were being prepared by Ramin Shafai with support by one of Hross’ friends, splatter maestro Olaf Ittenbach (*Legion of the Dead*).

**DWK 5 – Die Wilden Kerle**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema **Genre** Children’s Film **Production Company** SamFilm/Munich **With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF), Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Bayerischer Bankenfonds (BBF) **Producers** Ewa Karlstroem, Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton **Director** Joachim Masannek **Screenplay** Joachim Masannek **Director of Photography** Benjamin Dernbecher **Editor** Alexander Dittern **Music by** Andrej Melita, Peter Horn, songs by Bananafishbones **Production Design** Heike Lange, Maximilian Lange **Principal Cast** Jini Blue Ochsenknecht, Wilson Ochsenknecht, Raban Bieling, Sarah Kim Gries, Janina Fautz **Casting** Stefan Pohlmann **Casting** **Studio Shooting** Bavaria Film Studios/Munich **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital **Shooting Language** German **Shooting in** Saarland, Munich, July – September 2007 **German Distributor** Buena Vista International (Germany)/Munich

Speaking about his experiences on **Beyond Remedy**, the US-Korean Rick Yune (*007: Die Another Day, The Fast & The Furious*) observed: “Most of the films I have worked on before have been big budget studio films, so to work on a smaller independent project with people that are passionate about it was really attractive for me, especially in a foreign country with different cultures. The story of fear has always been interesting to me because that’s what you have to overcome first as an actor. Before I was an actor I was a trader for hedge funds and doing that was all about managing your fear as well.”

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Good things come in 5! But with *The Wild Soccer Bunch 4 (Die Wilden Kerle 4)* having now pulled in 2.4 million viewers and still not finished its run, making it the most successful of the series to date, what do you expect? In fact, *The Wild Soccer Bunch* films are one of the most popular European children’s film franchises in history!

Unlike many feature films aimed at children, the series stands out for not talking down to its viewers. The characters and stories are solid and always front and center. Yes, you can buy the books and whatnot, but you never, ever, get the impression that you’re watching an extended commercial or, worse still, a non-interactive video game! This is because, in a world where merchandising is part and parcel of the film business, *The Wild Soccer Bunch* films are, first and foremost, films.

This time round, football meets the fantastic as Leon’s team discovers the secret world of the Shadow Realm!

It begins with first love as Leon and Vanessa fall head over heels for each other, swearing eternal loyalty. But eternity comes with some disadvantages. Just one day later, Leon has vanished. Was his promise good for less than one night? Or were secret powers at work? The
Wild Soccer Bunch sets out to find him and discover what lies beyond the horizon, the Shadow Realm. There, the friends are awake only during the night – they are vampires!

The tried and tested cast is back: Jimi Blue Ochsenknecht as Leon, Sarah Kim Gries as Vanessa, Marlon Wessel as Maxi, Leon Wessel-Masannek as Markus, Kevin Iannotta as Joschka and Raban Bieling as Raban. Also reappearing are those two most lovable annoyances, Nerv (Nick Romeo Reimann) and Klette (Janina Fautz). The leader of the vampires, the mysterious Darkside, is played by Marvin Unger, evilly and ably assisted by Blossom (Paula Schramm).

Sticking to the adage of never changing a winning team, SamFilm has once again turned to writer-director Joachim Masannek. It was he who wrote the 13-volume series of books, with over two million copies sold to date, on which the films are based, as well as writing and directing the previous four Wild Soccer Bunch films. The production team of Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton and Ewa Karlstroem also remains the same. All in all, it’s a winning formation!

Friedliche Zeiten

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Tragicomedy

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

**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderung Bayern, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF)

**Producer** Caroline Daube

**Director** Neele Leana Vollmar

**Screenplay** Ruth Toma

**Director of Photography** Pascal Schmit

**Editor** Florian Drechsler

**Music by** Thomas Mehlhorn

**Production Design** Stefanie Schilenz

**Principal Cast** Katharina Schubert, Oliver Stokowski, Nina Monka, Leonie Brill, Tamino Wecker, Axel Prähl, Doris Kunstmann

**Casting** Suse Marquardt

**Special Effects** Steffen Hacker

**Format** S16 mm, color, 1:1.85, blow-up to 35 mm, Dolby SR

**Shooting in** Munich and surroundings, August – October 2007

**German Distributor** Kinowelt Filmverleih/Leipzig

**World Sales**

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Director Neele Leana Vollmar and producer Caroline Daube took a trip on a time machine back to the 1960s this summer for Friedliche Zeiten (literal translation: “Peaceful Times”) for the first feature project of their joint production company Royal Pony Film.

Vollmar and Daube got to know each other during their studies at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in Ludwigsburg: Daube graduated with her production of Vollmar’s short My Parents (Meine Eltern), while Vollmar completed her studies a year later with the film Vacation from Life (Urlaub vom Leben) which was the opening film at the Hof Film Days in 2005.

“After having already made two films about families, we wanted to make another one, but this time with more comic elements,” recalls Daube. “We looked a long time for a writer to work with and then came upon Ruth Toma.”

During one of their meetings to get to know one another, Daube had a copy of Birgit Vanderbeke’s 1996 novel Friedliche Zeiten with her. Toma also recognized the story’s potential for the cinema, and the young producer set about acquiring the film rights to the “nostalgic-ostalgic tragi-comedy.”

The film’s action centers on the Striesow family who have recently arrived in West Germany from the east. With their mother (Katharina Schubert) pining for their home back in the GDR and even having suicidal thoughts when she suspects her husband (Oliver Stokowski) of two-timing, it is left to her three children (Nina Monka, Leonie Brill and Tamino Wecker) to take things into their own hands to put the family chaos back into order.

According to world sales agent The Match Factory’s Michael Weber, the decision to pick up the film for international distribution was made on the strength of Ruth Toma’s subsequent screenplay:

“This was the same way we proceeded with [Sven Taddicken’s] Emma’s Bliss and [Hans Weingartner’s] Reclaim Your Brain, by coming onboard on script basis. The story is very universal and it was fun to read. It reminded me emotionally of Mostly Martha, and I found it interesting to see a story set in Germany of the 1960s because there hasn’t been much made about this period in the past ten years or so.”

“What we are aiming with this film is for it to be touching and funny at the same time,” Daube adds, noting that it was quite a challenge to embark on a film set in the 1960s rather than present day. However, locations were found outside of Munich which had remained largely untouched by the passage of time.

Friedliche Zeiten also sees the duo Daube and Vollmar keeping up the connection with their alma mater in Ludwigsburg: fellow student Pascal Schmit, who had served as DoP on My Parents (and won the Kodak Eastman Camera Prize in Hof in 2004) and Vacation from Life, is behind the camera on this new production, while Ludwigsburg-graduate Stefanie Schilenz – also on the team of My Parents – was responsible for recreating the atmosphere and look of the 60s as the film’s production designer.
Das Geheimnis des Gluecks

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama, Love Story
Production Company COIN FILM/Cologne, in co-production
with WDR/Cologne With backing from Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Filmstiftung NRW (Sixpack) Producer Herbert Schwering
Commissioning Editor Andrea Hanke Director Lola Randl
Screenplay Lola Randl Director of Photography Philipp Pfeiffer
Editor Natali Barrey Music by Maciej Sledziecki
Production Design Thorsten Sabel Principal Cast Sylvana Krappatsch, André Jung, Samuel Finzi, Jule Boewe
Casting Susanne Ritter Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital
Shooting Language German Shooting in Cologne, Bonn and
surroundings, July – September 2007

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“It is a film about the loneliness of a person who is in the middle of life among lots of people, but where you see how lonely you can be if you aren’t able to talk about it,” Schwering explains, pointing out that the casting of the Agnes role took a particularly long time. “We needed a very strong actress for this role.” In his opinion, Sylvana Krappatsch as Agnes is “a real discovery” because “she is so to the point”. Until now, Krappatsch was best known for her work at Munich’s Kammerspiele theater, having appeared only a few times in roles for television or the cinema.

With a budget of €800,000 as a project of the “Sixpack” initiative between public broadcaster WDR and regional funder Filmstiftung NRW, Das Geheimnis des Gluecks has a very young team behind the camera, reuniting Randl with Philipp Pfeiffer, cinematographer on her previous films Nochmittagsprogramm (2004) and Verena Verona (2005). “Philipp has his own lighting concept and a specific visual style,” Schwering notes. “It is very cinematic, so the film is sure to have its own look.”

Hexe Lilli

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Family Entertainment
Production Companies blue eyes Fiction/Munich, TRIXTER/Munich, in co-production with Buena Vista International Film Production/Munich, Dor Film/Vienna, Babelsberg Film/Potsdam, Steinweg Emotion Pictures/Barcelona, Classic/Rome
With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MEDIA, Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF), Bayerischer Bankenfonds (BBF), Oester-

Moreover, another link to Vollmar and Daube’s previous films has been made by the casting in a guest role of Gustav-Peter Woehler who played the lead in both My Parents and Vacation from Life.

The film centers on the successful scientist Agnes (Sylvana Krappatsch) who is in her early forties, married to husband Walter (Samuel Finzi) and the mother of an 11-year-old daughter. She is quite different from her younger fly-by-night sister Karola (Jule Boewe) who just lives each day as it comes. When her sister asks her to look after an apartment, a second, parallel life begins for Agnes there. On her regular visits, she learns more and more about the apartment’s owners. One day, she is taking a nap in the bedroom when the original owner Bruno (André Jung) returns and, without exchanging words, they make love. They begin to play the role of fictional lovers they never were: for Bruno, Agnes is his late wife Theresa; and for Agnes, she can pretend to be someone else away from her other life. But Agnes’ marriage to Walter is increasingly coming apart at the seams because of this game …
Based on the best-selling books by the children’s author KNISTER about the 10-year-old Lilly and her adventures with an animated dragon Hector, the family film stars newcomer Alina Freund as Lilly opposite Anja Kling as Lilly’s mother, Ingo Naujoks as the evil sorcerer Hieronymus, veteran Spanish actress Pilar Bardem as a good witch Surulunda and singer-actress Yvonne Catterfeld in a guest role. The voice of Hector will be provided by the popular German comedian Michael Mittermeier.

Once again, Ruzowitzky shows his versatility at being able to turn his hand to different kinds of genres, moving seemingly effortlessly from such dramas as The Inheritors and The Counterfeiters through to the horror thrillers Anatomie and Anatomie 2 and now to family entertainment with Hexe Lilli ("Lilly the Witch").

"I had looked in the bedrooms of my children and found some of these books," Ruzowitzky says. "They are exactly the kind of problems I know from home and that’s why it made sense for me to get involved in the project. I got on well with the original author KNISTER and I think he has the feeling that we are being true to the Lilly in the books. When you have a book that is so successful, this will be sure to have its reasons. So it makes sense to not want to make something completely different, but to try to put as many elements of this success into the film. The story is new, it doesn’t exist as a book, but otherwise the characters are the soul of the books and we have tried to be as authentic as possible.”

"Lilly is a very, very wild child who likes adventures and, with the help of the witch’s book, regularly gets up to mischief which then has to be put straight, but without any spells," explains producer Corinna Mehner of Munich-based blue eyes Fiction. "The children like identifying with her – they will sit in the cinema and think it might happen that they also end up with the witch’s book.”

As for the origin of Hector the dragon who does not appear in KNISTER’s original books, the author recalls that when TRIXTER was working on the animation series based on the Lilly the Witch books, “they needed a companion for Lilly on her adventures.”

As Ruzowitzky points out, he wrote Hector’s part with the comedian Michael Mittermeier in mind, and Mehner adds that “the wonderful thing is that everything Michael says he also comments with gestures and there’s a lot of humor in this. Our dragon will take on these gestures because Michael is not only the voice – we have also recorded his acting and the animation will now be oriented to this.”

Indeed, Michael Coldewey and his team at the TRIXTER studio in Munich have their work cut out with the 3D animation and the other effects for the film. “The greatest challenge is simply that the quality of the animation should make the audience forget that the dragon is animated, they must believe that he is actually a living being like the other actors,” Coldewey says.

The German-Austrian-Spanish co-production will be distributed theatrically in Germany, Austria and Spain by Buena Vista International (Germany) in autumn 2008, and a second and third Lilly the Witch film are already on the drawing board at blue eyes Fiction.
First of all, she had always wanted to shoot in the Babelsberg Studios and then had the opportunity to do this with Vanessa Jopp’s Christmas comedy *Meine schoene Bescherung* [as reported in the last issue of GFQ].

And a second dream came true literally back-to-back to Jopp’s film when Stehr began production in May on Martin Walz’s latest feature film, the musical romantic comedy *Maerzmelodie* as soon as *Meine schoene Bescherung* had wrapped.

“Martin was keen to work with us and offered me a ‘couple’ of screenplays, but they weren’t really something I could get excited about,” Stehr recalls. “Then we started chatting and I said that something I always wanted to do was a film with music where the actors also sing and music is a dramaturgical element. Martin reacted by saying that he was currently working on just this kind of project!”

In the screenplay by Walz and Lars Hoepnner, Alexandra Neldel, who became known to TV viewers as the German version of Ugly Betty in the Verliebt in Berlin soap, plays the primary school teacher Anna who is a nervous wreck from having to deal with rampaging pupils, while Jan Henrik Stahlberg, co-director of the black comedy *Short Cut to Hollywood* earlier this year, is cast as the actor Thilo who earns a living of sorts by selling wine in a call center.

Their friends Valerie (Inga Busch) and Moritz (Gode Benedix) try to play cupid by bringing the two unfortunates together, but even this doesn’t go as expected: Anna has a minor nervous breakdown and Thilo falls head over heels in love! But, first of all, they have to solve their own problems and admit to themselves that they must change something in their lives. Gradually, Anna and Thilo find a way to themselves and each other through the power of emotions and music.

“Jan Henrik and Alexandra are a wonderful couple and we also have some great secondary characters with people like Jockel Tschiersch, RP Kahl and Meret Becker,” Stehr explains. “We have explicitly avoided trying to make the film one that is set in Berlin. It is a film which could take place in any medium-sized town.”

Ahead of the shoot, the preparations focused on the choreography of the scenes where the songs’ lyrics illustrate and underscore the characters’ thoughts. While the actors sang along during the actual shoot, the final version of the film will have the original songs – from the likes of Zarah Leander, Gitte Henning, Marius Mueller-Westernhagen, and Ton Steine Scherben – appearing on the soundtrack.

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Mel (22) is a young woman with boyish looks and build, whose short hair and baggy clothes hide her femininity. She has a humdrum job, preparing airline food for a nearby airport, and has big plans to escape with her brother Knut (25) and see the world.

But Mel’s dreams crash to Earth when Knut tells her his girlfriend, Vicky, is pregnant. His well-intended pressure that she should find herself a boyfriend is shrugged off by Mel telling him she already has one. Except... she hasn’t.

Fortunately, Mel has a Portuguese colleague, Nuno, who is happy to take her money and play the part for her at Knut’s engagement party. Unfortunately, he plays the part all too well and Mel’s family is smitten with him, inviting him to come by more often. To which Nuno cannot say no.

Mel, now aimless and defeated, goes for a night-time drive through the countryside, a packet of Nuno’s Portuguese cigarettes on the back seat. When two young hitch hikers, Jenny and Bianca (14), mistake her for a Portuguese man, Mel grabs the opportunity and re-invents herself. Now, as Miguel, Mel spends an exciting night at the disco with the two girls, and falls head over heels in love with Jenny.
With Nuno as the object of her research and the source of her new identity, Mel/Miguel is the romantic individual Jenny has been looking for, someone so different to the boys in her clique, and a gentle love affair develops. But Bianca is suspicious and jealous, as is her brother Bernd, who thought he was Jenny’s guy.

Before Mel can tell Jenny the truth, Bernd and Bianca have already poisoned Jenny’s mother’s mind. Great confusion ensues as the mother turns up at Mel’s family and accuses a Portuguese man of seducing her underage daughter. Nuno becomes the scapegoat while Mel finally manages to reveal her true identity to Jenny. The news spreads quickly and Jenny is no longer able to prevent her clique setting out to seek revenge ...

*Mein Freund aus Faro* marks a double debut for **Nana Neul**, here first-time directing her own first feature script. With **Leah Striker** as director of photography (she was first assistant camera on *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, *Babel*, and *A Good Year*), Neul’s coming-of-age drama cleverly twists genders to provide a new and interesting take on this whole what’s-love-all-about-anyway business. Guaranteed gripping viewing and yet another feather in **Wueste Film West**’s already feather-filled cap!

**Der Mondbaer**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema **Genre** Animation, Children’s Film, Family **Production Companies** ndF: neue deutsche Filmgesellschaft/Unterfoehring, Caligari Film/Munich, in co-production with Beta Film/Oberhaching, Universum Film/Munich, ZDF/Mainz With backing from Filmförderung Bayern, **Producers** Gabriele M. Walther, Frank Piscator **Director** Michael Maurus **Screenplay** Mark Slater, Gabriele M. Walther, John Patterson **Music by** Danny Chang **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR **Shooting Language** German **Production Period** August 2006 – March 2008 **German Distributor** Universum Film/Munich

Has the moon fallen from the sky or has it “gasp” been stolen???! The hunt for whoever is behind its disappearance is exciting and full of adventure. **Der Mondbaer** (“The Moonbeam Bear”) and his forest friends, rabbit, ladybird and others, refuse to give up and fight to the very end for the moon and its light.

Four simple sentences is all it takes to describe **Der Mondbaer**, an enchanting animated feature film developed, says **Caligari Film** producer and co-writer **Gabriele Walther**, “from the incredibly popular short stories of the same name. They have a very special look, unusual artwork and are very strong in their own right.”

“As with our other project, *Prinzessin Lillifee,*” says Gabriele Walther, “we based the look of the film on that of the books. This time it’s a flat 3D animation process, which keeps us very close to the original.”

“Whereas US animation can originate a project from scratch,” Walther continues, “we take a book which already has strong characters. The financial dictates of the business here in Europe mean we need to take already well-known characters. You need known brands to succeed, as well as having a product that is compatible internationally. It’s very hard to place an unknown character.”

Fortunately, **Der Mondbaer**, thanks to already being a hugely popular series of books as well as public broadcaster ZDF property, is already widely known and loved by the film’s target audience.

As with *Prinzessin Lillifee*, **Der Mondbaer** sees Walther continuing her long-time relationship with co-production partner **ndF: neue deutsche Filmgesellschaft**. It’s a relationship that the latter’s **Frank Piscator** describes as “very symbiotic. But then when you’re both enthusiastic, it works. Our last projects have all been very successful: it works and it’s fun!”

With Walther’s animation and other production credits a given, as are Piscator’s, **Der Mondbaer**’s direction and storyboard are the responsibility of **Michael Maurus**, who has worked for, among others, Disney, Warner Bros., ProSieben and Hahn Film.
**MutterLiebe**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Drama  
**Production Company** NiKo Film/Berlin, in co-production with Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie (dffb)/Berlin, ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz, in collaboration with ARTE/Strasbourg  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Nordmedia, Deutscher Filmfoerderfonds (DFFF)  
**Producer** Nicole Gerhards  
**Director** Emily Atef  
**Screenplay** Emily Atef, Esther Bernstorff  
**Director of Photography** Henner Besuch  
**Commissioning Editors** Annedore von Donop (ZDF), Birgit Kaemper (ARTE)  
**Editor** Beatrice Babin  
**Production Design** Annette Lofy  
**Principal Cast** Susanne Wolff, Johann von Buelow, Maren Kroymann, Judith Engel, Herbert Fritsch  
**Casting** Anja Dihrberg  
**Format** Super 16 mm, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Surround  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Berlin, Bremen, August – October 2007  
**Distributor** Ventura Film/Thuengersheim

Rebecca (32) is a lively woman who tackles problems head-on and has both feet firmly on the ground. She owns a flower shop, her husband Julian (34) is a site manager in an architect's office. They are expecting their first child and are very much looking forward to it. Rebecca gives birth to a healthy boy, whom they name Lukas.

We jump to the future …

Rebecca has changed. Greatly. She’s troubled. Shortly afterwards, she leaves home, takes the train to the end of the line and walks off into the forest. She lies down under a bush, completely unmoving, and waits for death to claim her.

In flashbacks, author and director Emily Atef (Molly’s Way) and author Esther Bernstorff (also Molly’s Way, winner of the Foerderpreis Deutscher Film for Best Script in 2005) tell how Rebecca fell into heavy postpartum depression after the birth. Unable to form a relationship with her child, she failed to meet the demands of motherhood. Julian failed to grasp the seriousness of the problem. Rebecca is discovered in the forest and, in a special clinic, is gradually helped. She discovers she is not alone with her problems. She cautiously bonds with her son and slowly draws close to Julian again – in the face of fierce opposition from his father, Bernhard, and sister, Elise. Together, the couple fights for a second chance for their love and a new beginning for their little family.

Director Emily Atef is half French and half Iranian. Born in Berlin, she later moved to Los Angeles, then graduated from high school in France, before working in theater in London and taking up studies at Berlin’s German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in 2001.

Writer Esther Bernstorff also studied at the dffb, from 2002-2004, following studies in Film and Communication at the Guildhall University in London.

NiKo Film’s founder and MutterLiebe producer, Nicole Gerhards, is likewise a product of the dffb where she studied Creative Producing from 1999-2004. Her graduation production, Charlotte, was shown in the Perspectives German Cinema sidebar at the 2004 Berlinale and in the Directors’ Fortnight in 2004 in Cannes. MutterLiebe is NiKo Film’s second feature film production after Lumber Kings (Die Koenige der Nutzholzgewinnung), which was theatrically released in 2006.

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**Prinzessin Lillifee**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Animation, Children’s Film, Family  
**Production Companies** ndf: neue deutsche Filmgesellschaft/Unterfoehring, Caligari Film/Munich, in co-production with Beta Film/Oberhaching, Universum Film/Munich, Ismael Feichtl/Munich, WDR/Cologne  
**With backing from** Filmfoerderungsanstalt (FFA), Deutscher Filmfoerderfonds (DFFF), Filmstiftung NRW  
**Producers** Gabriele M. Walther, Frank Piscator  
**Director** Alan Simpson  
**Screenplay** Mark Slater, Gabriele M. Walther  
**Songs by** Gerd Baumann, Sebastian Horn  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR  
**Shooting Language** English  
**Production Period** March 2007 – November 2008  
**Distributor** Universum Film/Munich  
**World Sales** Beta Cinema / Dept. of Beta Film GmbH  
Andreas Rothbauer  
**Gruenwalder Weg 28 d · 82041 Oberhaching/Germany**  
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www.betacinema.com

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Helena, aged 6, is, like any intelligent young girl, a die-hard fanatic when it comes to *Prinzessin Lillifee*. Second only in her affections to chocolate and most likely coming ahead of that for her mother and enormous collection of stuffed toys, the stories of the pink-garbed, fairy-tale princess, ruler of the magic kingdom of Pinkovia and her pet pig, Pupsi, exercise and grip her imagination like few others.

The creation of Monika Finsterbusch, published by Coppenrath Verlag, *Prinzessin Lillifee*, says producer and co-writer Gabriele Walther (Caligari Film), “is positive and optimistic. She can do magic and wants to improve the world, but she’s not always successful! Because she’s so well-known and loved, we had a long development process because we don’t want to disappoint her literally millions of fans. Which is why, for example, we opted for the classic 2D animation while also keeping the glitter effect from the books. She’s magical and we show it, plus a few surprises!”

For her co-production partner, Walther “searched out various producers” and finally settled, again, on *ndF*. Again, because, says co-producer Frank Piscator, “we’d already worked together on the series Briefe von Felix and have worked with Coppenrath for ten years. It’s been a very successful partnership which we all wanted to continue, not just in Germany, but also internationally.”

To the casual observer (and anyone who isn’t color blind!), the overwhelming impression of *Prinzessin Lillifee* is pink! But, as Piscator says, “pink is for girls of all ages! It infects young girls like a virus!”

Behind the camera or, rather, storyboard, is veteran British animation director, Alan Simpson. His credits range from *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1987) to being supervising director on *Briefe von Felix* for Loonland Animation (2000).

Gabriele Walther started her career as a scriptwriter and was producer of Roland Emmerich’s first feature, *Das Arche Noah Prinzip*. Her credits are long and extensive, encompassing comedies and sitcoms for Sony Columbia TriStar, the above mentioned *Briefe von Felix* (her first foray into animation) and the non-fiction series *Windstaerke 8* and *Auf nach Afrika* (both for ARD).

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**Der Rote Punkt**

In *Der Rote Punkt*, her debut feature, writer-director Marie Miyayama brings us the story of Aki Onodera, a 21-year-old student living in Tokyo who lost both her parents in a car accident in Germany. Eighteen years after the tragic event, she traces their steps to where it happened and meets the Weber family. Elias, the teenage son, is drawn to the mysterious traveler, but his father, Johannes, is terrified she will discover the hidden and fateful link between Aki and his family.

“In 1998,” says Miyayama, “I was a translator for a Japanese family visiting Germany. They left the tourist trail to visit the small memorial by the side of the road, in the middle of nowhere, which commemorated where their relatives had been killed in a car crash. It inspired me to write the story of two people whose fates have been linked by an accident, one the victim, the other carrying a heavy secret. How are their everyday lives? What would happen if their fates cross?”

Born in Tokyo, after courses in Film Science and Creative Writing at Waseda University, Miyayama came to Germany in 1995 to study Theatrical Science at Munich’s Ludwig-Maximilians University. Since 1998 she has been studying Directing at the Munich film school: *Der Rote Punkt* is her graduation project.
“What is important to me, personally,” Miyayama continues, “is to depict the cultural difference. The young Japanese girl meets people whose lifestyle is completely different. When two cultures collide like this, that’s exactly the moment for the possibility of a deeper, human communication because the people are freed from their culturally-imposed habits and are confronted by their very existence.”

“The thread running through Der Rote Punkt,” she explains, “is silence. Aki speaks a very chopped-up kind of German. The Weber family has forgotten how to talk to each other. The father has retreated into his work, the son can express himself only through being wild. Aki lands on them like a typhoon out of the blue. It is her stoic and relaxed nature that finally has the father revealing the secret that is burdening him. Aki, who has been moving between two worlds, the living and the dead, can finally close the circle and take her life in her own hands.”

To bring Der Rote Punkt to the screen, producer Martin Blankemeyer has not only tapped high-level corporate sponsors, such as Toyota and Japan Air Lines, but also persuaded cast and crew to work on deferment. The result: production values way beyond what one would expect for this, a very personal, first feature.

Schattenwelt

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Companies Next Film/Berlin, Gambit Film/Ludwigsburg, in co-production with BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Deutscher Filmfoerderfonds (DFFF) Producers Clementina Hegewisch, Michael Jungfleisch Commissioning Editors Andreas Schreitmüller, Bettina Reitz, Bettina Ricklefs, Jochen Koelsch, Monika Lobkowicz Director Connie Walther Screenplay Ulrich Herrmann, in collaboration with Connie Walther & Peter-Juergen Boock Director of Photography Birgit Gudjonsdottir Editor Karen Loenneker Production Design Agi Dawaachu Principal Cast Ulrich Noethen, Franziska Petri, Uwe Kockisch, Tatja Seibt, Eva Mattes, Christoph Bach, Mehdi Nebbou Casting Sabine Schwedhelm Format 16 mm, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Freiburg and Berlin and surroundings, August – October 2007 German Distributor Salzgeber Medien/Berlin

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With the 30th anniversary of the RAF terrorists’ reign in Germany during the autumn of 1977 coming round this year, it might seem that Connie Walther had purposely chosen this time for the shooting of Schattenwelt, her third feature after Das erste Mal (1996) and Wie Feuer und Flamme (2001).

Producer Tina Hegewisch of Berlin-based Next Film admits that the project has acquired “a dubious topicality” in the light of the debate this summer about the release of ex-terrorist Christian Klar and the production of Constantin Film’s big-budget adaptation of Stefan Aust’s Der Baader Meinhof Komplex. “That wasn’t our intention,” she declares. “The film tells a fictional story set in the present day, which looks at how this chapter of German history has influenced personal lives and society rather than why a man became a terrorist.”

In fact, director Walther had wanted to make the film some time back, but her then producer had not been able to close the financing. A change of producers to Ludwigsburg-based Gambit Film and a subsequent co-production arrangement with Berlin’s Next Film earlier this year finally put an end to the film’s sojourn in “development hell.”

Principal photography began in Freiburg at the end of August with Ulrich Noethen – known from such films as Comedian Harmonists and Das Sams – playing ex-RAF terrorist Bernd Widmer who is released back into the community after serving 25 years in prison, and Franziska Petri (Forget America, Leo & Claire) as his young neighbor Valerie who turns out to be the daughter of a man Widmer was said to have killed during the attack on the bank president von Seichfeld.

The screenplay by Ulrich Herrmann also included input from Walther herself and from the former RAF terrorist Peter-Juergen Boock who appeared as one of the key figures in a two-part documentary by Stefan Aust on the autumn of 1977 broadcast on German television in September. “The involvement of Boock guarantees a certain authenticity to the storyline,” Hegewisch explains.

“It was important for me to depict both sides, perpetrators and victims,” adds Walther, noting that “the viewer should decide for himself where he stands.”

Working for the first time with Walther, producer Hegewisch says that she has “rarely experienced someone who prepares with such detail. Everything is thought through and reduced down to the visual dimensions and the mise-en-scene. Connie is a real team player and can motivate people – she has very precise ideas of what she wants to do and is able to convey this to other people.”

The decision to shoot the film chronologically – from Widmer’s release from prison in Freiburg through his journey with Valerie to find his son in Berlin – was not easy to realize on such a low budget production, “but it was important for Connie that a relationship gradually develops between the actors and they slowly grow into their parts.”

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Erkau’s tragicomedy focuses on four employees in a call center who are constantly talking on the phone as part of their job, but each have real problems on a personal level to communicate with another person. In four connected episodes, the film tells how the group of call center agents desperately try to find their place in life.

First up at the “D.O.M.-Call” center is the new colleague Sascha (played by “Shooting Star” Maximilian Brueckner) whose girlfriend has unexpectedly become pregnant – he is suddenly confronted with the responsibility of being the head of a family although he really wanted to put off growing up a little longer.

And then there is Adrian (‘new face’ Johannes Allmayer from the TV series Post Mortem), the call center’s sales supremo, who falls in love with a woman during one of his many calls, but is panic-stricken about meeting her in person.

A third colleague, Marie (Antje Widdra of Alles ueber Anna) is a single mother who, disappointed by men, tries to master life on her own without realizing what this survival strategy is doing to her son.

And, finally, there is Harms, the head of the call center (August Zirner from Herr Bello) whose confident and charming façade crumbles to dust when he accepts that his marriage is in tatters.

As if this was not enough, the four must join forces to try and save “their” call center by bringing in more business – or else the company will be closed in four weeks.

The setting of a call center was not unfamiliar to director Erkau: “I was young and needed the money to finance my first two years at the Academy of Media Arts (KHM) in Cologne,” he recalls, stressing that his own experiences rather than those of specific colleagues had inspired him during the writing of the screenplay.

"When people have been telephoning for eight hours, they often tend to be rather taciturn in their private life," he explains. "I am trying with cinematic means to transport this feeling of confinement and lack of orientation. The people have no feeling for space or time, they have switched on to autopilot."

During the script’s development Erkau says that he often thought of James Stewart from the 1940s as the model for the character of the call center manager Harms played by August Zirner. “It was very important for me that he is a sympathetic figure, that you don’t immediately condemn him, but like him. Here is someone who is trying to save his marriage and the call center in four weeks.”

Meanwhile, Maximilian Brueckner, whose credits include Sophie Scholl – The Final Days and Grave Decisions, was onboard from an early script draft, according to Erkau who spent a long time casting the female characters in the film. “I allowed myself the luxury of looking to see who interests me as an actor and whom we haven’t seen before,” he says.

Meanwhile, the move from the world of (prize-winning) shorts to directing his first feature-length film was not such a big leap for Erkau. “Due to financial reasons, I could only make shorts during my studies, but I always had the feeling that they were short feature films,” he explains. “It was a great release to be allowed at last to shoot for as long as I wanted!”

MB
Sommer

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Love Story Production Company SamFilm/Munich With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Deutscher Filmoerderfonds (DFF), FilmFoerderung Hamburg, FilmFoerderungsvanstalt (FFA) Producers Ewa Karlstroem, Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton Director Mike Marzuk Screenplay Sebastian Wehlings, Peer Klehmet Director of Photography Ian Blumers Editor Tobias Haas Music by Bernhard Drax Production Design Klaus R. Weinreich Principal Cast Jimi Blue Ochsenknecht, Sonja Gerhardt, Jannis Niewoehner, Uwe Ochsenknecht, Tim Wilde, Eva Mannschott Casting Uta Seibicke Casting Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, July - September 2007 German Distributor Buena Vista International (Germany)/Munich

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The path of true love never runs smooth, especially not for teenagers, as 15-year-old Tim discovers in Sommer.

As played by Jimi Blue Ochsenknecht, our young hero moves to an island in the North Sea to live with his grandmother when his Air Force father is posted overseas. There, among the sand, sunshine, and seagulls, he falls for the beautiful Vic (Sonja Gerhardt). The trouble is (and there is always trouble!), she is with Lars, the island’s coolest guy and head of the local clique.

Tim can feel that he and Vic are meant for each other and fights to win her affection. And, indeed, Tim does achieve his goal. Except Lars is unwilling to give in without a fight and sets a trap, into which Tim obligingly falls. It comes to a showdown at sea: a swimming race between the two, a race for all or nothing – quite literally.

Sommer is a film about the first great love, having as much fun as possible, friendship and dueling with the heart as well as the head. As SamFilm producer Ewa Karlstroem says, “this is the perfect feel-good film for everyone who was, at one time or another, in love.”

Sommer’s star, Jimi Blue Ochsenknecht, also appears in Die Wilden Kerle 5, as he did in the other four Wilde Kerle films. Sonja Gerhardt is best known for Schmetterlinge im Bauch, while Jannis Niewoehner appeared in Der Schatz der weissen Falken.

Director Mike Marzuk (Weissst was geil waer…?! opening this November) directs Sommer as a roller coaster ride of first love: moving, emotional and up close. The script comes from Sebastian Wehlings and Peer Klehmet, who have already earned their teen-comedy spurs with Kleinsrrippin Forever.

SamFilm, alias Ewa Karlstroem and Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton, is once again working closely with Buena Vista International (Germany) for the theatrical release in Germany.

Following on the heels of such hits as Das merkwuerdige Verhalten geschlechtsreifer Grossstaedter zur Paarungszeit, Es ist ein Elch entsprungen, Die Wilden Kerle 1-4 and doubtlessly the upcoming Die Wilden Kerle 5, Sommer looks set be yet another SamFilm success, leaping straight into the film charts come early next year.

Warten auf Angelina

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Romantic Comedy Production Company Feuerland Filmproduktion/Hamburg Producer Hans-Christoph Blumenberg Director Hans-Christoph Blumenberg Screenplay Klaus Peter Weber Editor Florentine Bruck Production Design Hans-Christoph Blumenberg Principal Cast Florian Lukas, Kostja Ullmann, Barbara Auer, Anna Brueggemann, Gudrun Landgrebe, Leslie Malton, Jana Pallaske, Joerdis Triebel Format Mini-DV, blow-up to 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Berlin, Pforzheim, August 2007

Contact Feuerland Filmproduktion Dorotheenstrasse 143 · 22299 Hamburg/Germany phone/fax +49-40-60 13 34 email: feuerlandfilm@aol.com

This summer has seen the German capital playing host to such international celebrities as Tom Cruise, Barbara Streisand, and Susan Sarandon coming for film shoots or concerts, but the celebrity rumor-mongers had gone into overdrive earlier in the year with the “news” that Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie had apparently been spotted apart-
ment-hunting in the center of the city. This rumor about “Brangelina” potentially becoming Berliners inspired director Hans-Christoph Blumenberg to let his imagination run riot and come up with the idea for Warten auf Angelina in mid-May.

“There were only three months between me having the first idea and us shooting the film in August,” Blumenberg recalls. “It was a real guerilla operation ‘below the radar’, as Clint Eastwood would say.”

The low-budget independent production was financed without any involvement from television or public funders “because we wouldn’t have been able to start until a year later if we had gone looking for public funding,” Blumenberg explains. “The time was too short and the idea was to get a snapshot of this particular moment.”

Florian Lukas (Nordwand) and Kostja Ullmann (Stellungenwechsel) play two young men who spend five days on a roof terrace in Berlin’s Mitte district to get an exclusive view of the most famous couple on the planet. “They are as far apart from one another as the Odd Couple, but they just have to get on for five days and five nights,” Blumenberg says.

Lukas – who also appeared in Blumenberg’s 2001 feature Planet der Kannibalen – plays Maik Tremper, a professional hunter of VIPs with residences in London and Monte Carlo, while Ullmann is Momme Ulmer, a lifeguard and film projectionist on the North Friesian island of Pellworm.

Two worlds collide, but compromises are constantly having to be reached between the commercial interests of the highly-paid photographer and a fan’s dreams. Could this really be the beginning of a wonderful friendship?

During the course of 120 hours on the rooftop, the two young men unexpectedly make the acquaintance of six very different women: the chic owner of a model agency, a dominant TV licensing fee detective with a love of the fine arts, a pizza delivery girl and kick box champion, a devious grande dame, and two self-assured sisters from East Berlin.

But everything turns out differently than Maik and Momme had expected or hoped for. They have both changed by the end of their summer adventure.

“I had made films with comic elements before, but this is the first one that is explicitly a comedy, a summer comedy,” Blumenberg argues. “It is like Waiting for Godot, but funnier.”

He admits that the surnames of the two heroes – Tremper and Ulmer – are little film historical homages to the German director Will Tremper and his Berlin films and to the great low budget director Edgar G. Ulmer, but spotting these insider details is not important for a general understanding of the film’s plot.

The short amount of time in which Blumenberg’s own Hamburg-based company Feuerland Filmproduktion had to put the project on the road led him to working for the first time with mini-DV. Moreover, the crew was kept to a minimum because of the tight finances and the location for 98% of the film’s action on the roof terrace. Thus, he relied on a “hand-picked” team which included the DoP Klaus Peter Weber from Planet der Kannibalen and editor Florentine Bruck from his two-part docudrama Deutschlandspiel. Apart from the headliners Lukas and Ullmann, this independent production also features an attractive lineup of guest appearances by the likes of Barbara Auer (Der Liebeswunsch), Gudrun Landgrebe (Rossini), Leslie Malton (Der grosse Bellheim), Joerdis Triebel (Emmas Glueck), Anna Brueggemann (Neun Szenen) and Jana Pallaske (Maerzmelodie).

MB
A declaration of love to the cinema. In a suburb of Istanbul, a few kids play a game …

Ismet Erguen is also active as an actress and production designer for film and television productions. It’s My Turn (Bende Sira – Ich bin dran, 2007) marks her directorial debut.
Kati and Jo are teenagers who dream of freedom, love and wind blowing their hair as they ride through the countryside near Dachau. But that’s not as easy as it seems in the land of three-armed power masts and motorized Bavarian cowboys. Kati is waiting anxiously for news about her application as an exchange student in the US. Jo, on the other hand, is more interested in beer and a guy who’s as interested in her as she is in him …

**Genre** Comedy, Coming-of-Age Story  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** Year of Production 2007  
**Director** Marcus H. Rosenmueller  
**Screenplay** Karin Michalke  
**Director of Photography** Helmut Pirnat  
**Editor** Anne Loewer  
**Music by** Gerd Baumann  
**Production Design** Johannes Sternagel  
**Producers** Nils Duenker, Joke Kromschroeder  
**Production Company** Monaco Film/Hamburg for BR/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Anna-Maria Sturm, Rosalie Thomass, Ferdinand Schmidt-Modrow, Florian Brueckner, Andreas Giebel, Johanna Bittenbinder  
**Length** 91 min, 2,594 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85

**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  
**Festival Screenings** Munich 2007  
**German Distributor** Constantin Film Verleih/Munich

Journalist Silvia travels to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo to shoot a documentary film. Immediately she is confronted with the reality on the spot. Only very few people seem to believe in the forthcoming first democratic elections. UN forces are helping rebel groups to inspire their confidence. And there are still renegade mercenary groups roaming the countryside indoctrinating children for war. Silvia has to realize that the people are acting like figures in an absurd game, whose rules she is unable to understand. Her trip turns into a personal nightmare when her driver runs over a child. As a result, she cannot escape what is happening and uses her journalistic abilities as the only way out, adhering to the old Congo saying: Débrouillez-Vous! This is what dictator Mobutu said to the Congolese meaning: Go and make ends meet for yourself!

The film tells a story of threatening everyday life in Congo and the possibilities of the individual to live and survive when playing his role.

**Genre**: Drama  **Category**: Semi Fictional Documentary  **Year of Production**: 2006  **Director**: Markus Passera  **Screenplay**: Markus Passera  **Production Design**: Mumbere Kwambasa  **Producers**: Markus Passera, Jens Metzler  **Production Company**: Markus Passera Filmproduktion/Freiburg, in co-production with Fachhochschule Dortmund  **Principal Cast**: Silvia Maria Fink, Richard Kasareka, Muhindo Bonne-Année, Kambere Mwangaza  **Length**: 93 min, 2,735 m  **Format**: HD Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  **Original Version**: French/German/Nande  **Subtitled Versions**: English, French, German, Italian  **Sound Technology**: Dolby SR/DTS Stereo  **Festival Screenings**: Mannheim-Heidelberg 2006, Afrikafilmsfestival Belgium 2007, Grenzland Filmstage Selb 2007  **Awards**: Best Documentary Selb 2007  **With backing from**: Filmstiftung NRW

Everyone knows it or thinks that they know it – but they really do not: the classic film *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925) by Sergei Eisenstein. Shortly after its completion, the film and original negatives were sold to Germany in 1926 and mutilated by censorship authorities. The film was then sent back to the Soviet Union and revised several times.

*On the Trail of Battleship Potemkin* presents the different versions, the German restoration from 2005, and statements from head restorer Enno Patalas, Eisenstein expert Naum Kleeman, and Helmut Imig, who adapted the original Edmund Meisel score. The film is a fascinating, film historical detective story.

**Genre** History, Art, Educational

**Category** Documentary

**Year of Production** 2007

**Director** Artem Demenok

**Directors of Photography** Michael Boomers (Berlin), Oleg Stinsky (Moscow)

**Editor** Michael Auer

**Original Music by** Edmund Meisel

**Musical Adaptation by** Helmut Imig, Lothar Prox (dramatization & consulting)

**Recording by** Deutsches Filmorchester Babelsberg, courtesy of Ries & Erler/Berlin

**Producer** Loy W. Arnold

**Production Company** Transit Film/Munich, in cooperation with Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek/Berlin

**With** Enno Patalas, Naum Kleeman, Helmut Imig

**Length** 42 min

**Format** Betacam Digital, color, 4:3

**Original Version** German

**Subtitled Version** Russian

**Sound Technology** Stereo

Like a microcosm, the small village north of Rome mirrors the processes which characterize the development and growing together of the countries of Europe.

The village remained almost completely cut off from the rest of the world until World War II. After the war, people from the impoverished south of Italy came to the Rome area. Today almost no one lives off agriculture anymore; most of the villagers work in Rome. The village, in turn, attracts more and more Romans and foreigners: The parish priest now counts people from over 20 nations among his parishioners. These include several hundred people from Eastern Europe, most of whom are trying to eke out a living on the gray labor market.

Are there any integration mechanisms or do inner barriers develop? Can the social networks of the village community carry the new burdens? The film tries to preserve what the people of Mazzano value about their history while simultaneously asking them about the changes which are calling into question acquired rights and convictions.

Peter Petrides Editors Robert Krieg, Monika Nolte Music by Michael Goetz Producer Monika Nolte Production Company World TV Krieg & Nolte/Cologne Length 86 min Format DigiBeta, color, 4:3 Original Version Italian Subtitled Version German Sound Technology Mono With backing from Filmstiftung NRW

Lotti Latrous enjoyed a happy affluent lifestyle – supporting her successful husband and caring for her family. She began to see herself as a selfish egoist, however, when her husband was transferred to the Ivory Coast. There she saw life from a different perspective and the larger social problems in the society in which she lived. Only then did she realize that to be truly happy, she needed to find spiritual fulfillment of her own soul. This realization drove her to Mother Theresa’s hospice. There, she came to appreciate the significance and richness of life, and realized that she had so much to offer. Opening her own AIDS clinic in a region beleaguered with wars, some questioned her decision to leave behind her family, including her 9-year-old daughter. But Lotti recognized that this was the price she had to pay in order to help the destitute and terminally ill. Combining the challenge of family obligations and the needs of her own heart, she created a life for herself, which has turned her into an internationally respected personality.

Today, she knows that it was the right decision. Her journey of personal self-discovery not only proved an enormous boon for the helpless people with whom she came into contact, but made Lotti reassess her own life, which is no longer defined by material things, but rather by independence and liberalism. She had everything, gave up everything, and feels happier than ever. Her incredible devotion to her work, her determination to give to others and her courage to fight against injustice makes her an important contemporary role model. Can the self-confessed “greatest egoist in the world” be the next Mother Theresa?

**Genre** Documentary Cinema **Year of Production** 2007

**Director** Stephan Anspichler  
**Screenplay** Stephan Anspichler  
**Director of Photography** Alban Kakulya  
**Editor** Thomas Belitz  
**Music by** Arthur Besson, Kay Scheibner  
**Producers** Stephan Anspichler, Claude Keller  
**Production Company** York Street Productions International/Hamburg, in co-production with Teleclub Switzerland/Zurich  
**Length** 92 min, 2,512 m  
**Format** HD Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German/French  
**Subtitled Versions** English, French  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Montreal 2007, Zurich 2007

**Stephan Anspichler** began his career in Tourism. Parallel to his formal training in business school, he worked as a freelance writer for several regional and national newspapers, as well as for specialist magazines. He then worked closely with the theater and film director Didi Danquart, as well as with the opera director Philipp Himmelmann, who inspired Anspichler’s own development as a director. He attended film school in New York and began to realize his creative potential. His graduation film, *York Street 1929*, screened at numerous film festivals and received awards in the Best Direction and Best Screenplay categories. Along with his other short film projects, including *Baton Boy*, he is currently involved in pre-production on two feature films and a further feature documentary.

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Einsame Insel

LONELY ISLAND

A melancholy comedy about a crisis-ridden architect, a pair of smitten hitchhikers, a lonely island, and the constant battle for love.

Genre Comedy Category Short Year of Production 2007 Director Stanislav Guentner Screenplay Stanislav Guentner Director of Photography Namche Okon Editor Rodney Sewell Music by Ivan Arnold Production Design Markus Dickhuber, Christoph Staehlin Producers Martin Blankemeyer, Ferdinand Freising Production Company Muenchner Filmwerkstatt/Munich, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Fernsehen und Film Muenchen (HFF/M)/Munich Principal Cast Martin Butzke, Karolina Horster, Simon Eibelshaeuser, Josef Baum, Keziban Inal Length 23 min, 634 m Format Super 16 mm Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.78 Original Version German Subtitled Versions English, French Sound Technology Dolby SR Festival Screenings Hof 2007 With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Foerderverein der HFF Muenchen

Stanislav Guentner was born in 1977 in Russia. After finishing his schooling in Dresden, he studied Music at the Heinrich-Schuetz Konservatorium in Dresden and worked as a director’s assistant and actor at the Teatr Kreatur in Berlin. He then studied at the Munich Academy of Television & Film. His films include: Mimikry (2000), Kaputt Regie, Kaputt Klavier (2001), Sag, dass Du mich liebst (2002), Praktisches Maedchen (2003), Schuesse (2004), and Lonely Island (Einsame Insel, 2007).

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44
TV producer Rainer has it all: big salary, luxurious penthouse, high life, hot car, even hotter girlfriend. The 30-something go-getter has reached the top by creating TV shows of the most stupid and vulgar kind. In his latest hit, a man gets the privilege of fathering a woman’s child if his spermatozoid wins a microscopic race to fertilize an ovum!

One day, mysterious young woman Pegah vengefully drives full speed into his car. After this near-death experience, Rainer has a major change of heart and decides to produce a thought-provoking news show for his station’s prime-time lineup. Devastated by the show’s poor ratings, Rainer quits his job and embarks on an investigation of the audience measurement system that keeps intelligence-insulting programs at Number One.

Teaming up with the beautiful Pegah and a gang of unemployed social misfits, Rainer sets out to prove that a conspiracy surrounds the boxes used in select households to estimate audience percentage. Determined to fight television’s dumbing down of society, Rainer and his new friends eventually go all the way with an intricate and ingenious plan to get the public interested in quality cultural programs. But the station execs who live off audience hunger for brainless TV are not willing to give up what they have ruthlessly built over the years …

**Genre** Comedy, Drama  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Hans Weingartner  
**Screenplay** Katharina Held, Hans Weingartner  
**Director of Photography** Christine Maier  
**Editor** Andreas Wodraschke  
**Music by** Martin Hossbach  
**Production Design** Udo Kramer  
**Producers** Hans Weingartner, Antonin Svoboda  
**Production Company** Kahuuna Films/Berlin, in co-production with Coop 99/Vienna  
**Principal Cast** Moritz Bleibtreu, Elsa Sophie Gambard, Milan Peschel, Gregor Bloéb, Simone Hanselmann  
**Casting** Simone Baer, Troeber Casting/Berlin  
**Length** 129 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  
**Festival Screenings** Toronto 2007 (Special Presentation), San Sebastian 2007 (In Competition)  
**With backing from** Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA), BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Oesterreichisches Filminstitut, Filmfonds Wien  
**German Distributor** Kinowelt Filmverleih/Leipzig

**Hans Weingartner** was born in Feldkirch/Austria. He studied Physics and Neurosciences in Vienna and Berlin and earned a diploma as a camera assistant from the Austrian Association of Cinematography, followed by postgraduate studies at the Academy of Media Arts KHM in Cologne. His films include: the shorts *Der Dreifachstecker* (1994), *Split Brain* (1997), and *Frank* (1999), and the features *The White Sound* (*Das Weisse Rauschen*, 2000), *The Edukators* (*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, 2004), and *Reclaim Your Brain* (*Free Rainer – Dein Fernseher luegt*, 2007).
Something terrible is about to happen in a small town in Germany. Nobody knows the reason why, except one person. Rico Bartsch. The 15-year-old grammar school pupil, an absolute outsider, is in love with the most beautiful girl at his school. What in the beginning is a longing that can never be fulfilled will come true at the end of the story. Beautiful Regine will beg for Rico’s love. Until then, several inhabitants of the town will die an unnatural death …

**Genre** Drama, Thriller  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Andreas Kleinert  
**Screenplay** Thomas Wendrich  
**Director of Photography** Johann Feindt  
**Editor** Gisela Zick  
**Music by** Andreas Hoge  
**Production Design** Gabriele Wolff  
**Producer** Friedrich Wildfeuer

**Production Company** Typhoon Films/Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne  
**Principal Cast** Frederick Lau, August Diehl, Fritz Haberlandt, Dagmar Manzel, Devid Striesow, Alice Dwyer, Traute Hoess  
**Casting** Anja Dihrberg  
**Length** 110 min, 3,018 m  
**Format** 16 mm  
**Blow-up** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Venice 2007 (Venice Days)  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW

Andreas Kleinert was born in Berlin in 1962. He worked as a props assistant and intern at the DEFA feature film studios and was also an assistant director to filmmakers like Rainer Simon and Hermann Zschoche. He studied Directing at the “Konrad Wolf” Academy of Film & Television in Babelsberg from 1984-1989 and graduated with Farewell, Joseph (Lebewohl, Joseph, 1989), which was nominated for a Student OSCAR. A selection of his other award-winning films includes: Lost Landscape (Verlorene Landschaft, 1992), Outside Time (Neben der Zeit, 1995), In the Name of Innocence (Im Namen der Unschuld, 1997), Paths in the Night (Wege in die Nacht, 1999), Ich moechte Zeugnis ablegen bis zum Letzten (TV, 1999), Kelly Bastian – Geschichte einer Hoffnung (TV, 2001), Coming Home (Mein Vater, TV, 2003), Stranger (Der Fremde kam, TV, 2005), Hurrenkinder (TV, 2006), and Head Under Water (Freischwimmer, 2007).
The consequences of a murder haunt the family and friends of the victim their whole lives long. A life sentence. There can be no real comfort.

In legal terms as well, nothing is forgotten: there is no statute of limitations for murder. Court exhibits are kept on hand until a final sentence is passed. The new technology of DNA analysis has proven extremely helpful in evaluating the evidence left behind at a crime scene, enabling much finer distinctions to be made. Hundreds of murderers who thought they had gotten away with it could be brought to justice after all.

In long and very personal conversations with convicted murderers, the film depicts the kind of lives they led in the time intervening between committing the crime and their ultimate arrest. Were they plagued by recurring nightmares? Or were they able to repress the incident as time went by, easing their conscience with a web woven of self-justification and refusal to own up to what they had done?

A documentary on the theme of guilt and redemption; a penetrating, multifaceted psychogram of the depths and suffering of the human soul.

Genre Society Category Documentary TV Year of Production 2007 Director Wolfram Seeger Director of Photography Wolfram Seeger Editor Wolfram Seeger Producer Wolfram Seeger Production Company EXIT Filmproduktion/Roesrath Length 85 min Format HDV, color, 16:9 Original Version German Subtitled Version English

Jara Korman’s life seems to be in perfect order: she’s pretty and healthy, has a nice husband, a beautiful home and the best prospects for a career at the university.

But when she meets Arie, an old, long-lost friend of her father’s, her ideal world starts to get out of control. From the moment she sees Arie, she is drawn to the erotic aura of this mysterious and egocentric man. She follows him, offers herself to him and waits for a sign of his affection. She allows herself to be humiliated and tyrannized by him. At times he is desirous of her, then he casts her aside, always testing the power of her love.

In the whirlwind of this ‘amour fou’, Jara tears down all the walls of her existence and begins a journey in search of herself and her own history, for she realizes that her former life has been a lie and that her parents are harboring a secret, to which Arie is the key.

Maria Schrader was born in 1965 in Hanover and studied Acting at the renowned Max-Reinhardt-Seminar in Vienna. One of Germany’s most well-known actresses, she has worked with some of Germany’s most successful directors in such films as Aimée & Jaguar (Max Faerberboeck), Bin ich schoen? (Doris Doerrie), Emil und die Detektive (Franziska Buch), Meschugge, Voeter, and Stille Nacht (Dani Levy), Rosenstrasse (Margarethe von Trotta), and Schneeland (Hans W. Geissendoerfer), as well as on stage in theaters in Germany and Switzerland. Together with director Dani Levy, she also co-directed Meschugge and Stille Nacht. Love Life (Liebesleben, 2007) marks her own directing debut.
There is an island where men remain boyz and legends become alive.

**Maui Boyz** tells the story of ten locals from the island of Maui. Despite how different their lives appear in the beginning, the documentary leads to the realization that this place is a unique world in itself – and that every single individual represents a piece in the almighty “Aloha Spirit”.

The lifeguard, Archie Kalepa, provides insight into his life, led in the tradition of the “Hawaiian Waterman”.

The “Paniolo”, Greg Friel, shares his experiences in what it means to choose the way of the “Hawaiian Cowboy”.

While we follow the group Ekolu to their musical appearances, or get to know the workers in Maui’s sugarcane fields, Robby Naish and a handful of other surfers long for the world famous “Jaws” wave at Maui’s North Shore.

All these men have one thing in common: they have remained boys-at-heart.

**Genre** Adventure, Road Movie, Sports  
**Category** Documentary  
**Cinema**  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Carsten Maaz  
**Screenplay** Carsten Maaz  
**Director of Photography** Carsten Maaz  
**Editor** Carsten Maaz  
**Music by** Marco Hertenstein, Ekolu, Keali‘i Reichel  
**Producer** Carsten Maaz

**Production Company** Maaz Pictures/Munich, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Fernsehen und Film Muenchen/Munich

**Principal Cast** Archie Kalepa, Greg Friel, Matt Kazuma Kinoshita, Peter Baldwin, Buzzy Kerbox, Jimmy Lewis, Robby Naish, Ahanu Tson-Dru, Lukela Keala, Donald Santos, Leonard Pagan, Jake Matsumoto  
**Length** 85 min  
**Format** DV 25 P, color, 16:9  
**Original Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Surround/Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Hawaiian International Film Festival 2007, Hof 2007  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern


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During his lack of musical inspiration, a monk nearly destroys the incarnation of God’s hand – a fly, which will soon later help him to fulfill his choral composition.

**Genre** Art, Comedy, Drama  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2005  
**Director** Ariane Mayer  
**Screenplay** Ariane Mayer  
**Director of Photography** Tim Ottenstein  
**Editor** Dan Olteanu  
**Music by** 6-Deutig  
**Production Design** Ariane Mayer  
**Producer** Ariane Mayer  
**Production Company** Ariane Mayer Filmproduktion/Offenbach, in cooperation with Fachhochschule Dortmund, Hochschule fuer Gestaltung/Offenbach  
**Principal Cast** Nikolaus Starkmeth, Musca Domestica  
**Special Effects** Ariane Mayer  
**Length** 8 min, 210 m  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.66  
**Original Version** no dialogue  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital SR EX 6.1  
**Awards** Golden Unicorn Alpinale 2005, Bronze Tadpole Camerimage 2005  

**Ariane Mayer** was born in 1977 in Munich and studied Visual Communication and Filmmaking at the Offenbach School of Arts and Design. She works as a freelance director, DoP, and gaffer for commercial, television, and cinema productions. **Musca** (2005) is her first film. She is currently working on the shorts **Pia Ahoi!** and **Marie-Sophie**.
Photograms in motion.

Photograms are photos made without a camera or a negative. Objects are simply put onto photographic paper which is then exposed. The results are white shadows, that still refer to the concrete object by its shape, but are more abstract because of the different opacities within the object and parts that are out of focus.

In *NightShade* these pictures show us different scenes in which “light” is absent or present. From the deep sea up into the night sky and through the perpetual ice. At times moths and mosquitos are attracted to the screen, until at the end artificial light is turned on and we are left with the blank screen.

**Genre** Experimental Animation  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2007  
**Director** Sabine Hoepfner  
**Director of Photography** Sabine Hoepfner  
**Editor** Sabine Hoepfner  
**Music by** Sabine Hoepfner  
**Producer** Sabine Hoepfner  
**Length** 8 min  
**Format** 35 mm, b&w, 1:1.66  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SR  
**Festival Screenings** Short Film Festival Hamburg 2007  
**Awards** Special Mention Hamburg 2007 With backing from FilmFoerderung Hamburg

Eva’s bags are packed, she’s ready to go.

The 35-year-old mother of a grown-up son, has little choice in the matter – the good jobs are practically all gone in the East German town of Eberswalde. Her boyfriend Marco, however, can’t stand to see her leave. Eva’s been offered a summer job in Switzerland; three months of milking cows on a mountain. Without hesitating, and at very short notice, she heads for the Alps to help farmer Daniel take care of 40 lively and lovely dairy cows.

The crusty cheese-maker is very skeptical of his new assistant – on the other hand he has his own agenda since his wife ran away and he cannot run the farm by himself. Eva is not so keen on a new husband but proves that she is a good worker and shows a great interest in the art of making cheese.

Eva and Daniel work well together. Slowly, they get to know each other, and become more intimate. So intimate that when her boyfriend Marco shows up unexpectedly to check what’s going on, he senses a change in his girlfriend. As summer wanes, and the season begins to turn, Eva re-determines the course of her life, and finally makes a surprising choice.

Genre Romantic Drama  Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2007  Director Tamara Staudt  Screenplay Tamara Staudt, in dramaturgical consultation with Wolfgang Kohlhaase  Director of Photography Michael Hammon  Editor Joerg Hauschild  Music by Peter von Siebenthal  Production Design Andreas Piontkowitz, Irmhild Gumm  Producers Gerhard Meixner, Roman Paul  Principal Cast Anna Loos, Stefan Gubser, Steve Wrzesniowski, Oliver Zgorelec, Stephanie Glaser, Peter Wyssbrod, Dieter Stoll, Robert Hoeller, Ursula Karusseit

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German films quarterly

4 · 2007
Marquand and Maria are painters and lovers who live together. After Marquand wins an important prize, with a considerable amount of money attached, his creativity wanes. As Maria works on a series of paintings, Marquand visits his friend Gregor, a horse breeder and philosopher, sleeps with the angelic Angie and visits his daughter Lucia several times. Marquand and Lucia, who have begun a tender affair, spend a few nights in a hotel on the coast where they agree not to speak a word. Maria, who has no idea, still knows all the same. Their love is over. She abruptly stops work on her series, starts on a new painting titled ‘The Visible and the Invisible’, and goes back to her old lover, Gregor. Back from his short trip, Marquand paints a final painting, well aware that the 40 pills in his bottle of vodka will have the desired effect …

Rudolf Thome was born in Wallau/Lahn in 1939 and studied German, Philosophy and History in Munich and Bonn. He began writing film reviews in 1962 for various newspapers and magazines. In 1964, he collaborated with Max Zihlmann and Klaus Lemke on his first short film, Die Versoehnung. He then became managing director of the Munich Film Critics’ Club in 1965 and founded his own production company, Moana-Film, in 1977. He received the 2nd place Guild Award in the category Best German Film for Berlin – Chamissoplatz in 1981, and the International Film Critics’ Award in Montreal in 1989 for his film The Philosopher. In 1993, he went on to establish his own distribution company, Prometheus. His film Paradiso (1999) won a Silver Bear at Berlin in 2000. His other films include: Stella (1966), Red Sun (Rote Sonne, 1969), Supergirl (1971), Made in Germany and USA (1974), Love at First Sight (Liebe auf den ersten Blick, 1991), Das Geheimnis (1995), Just Married (1998), Venus Talking (2001), Red and Blue (Rot und Blau, 2002), Woman Driving, Man Sleeping (Frau faehrt, Mann schlaeft, 2003), You Told Me You Love Me (Du hast gesagt, dass Du mich liebst, 2005), Smoke Signs (Rauchzeichen, 2006), and The Visible and the Invisible (Das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare, 2007).
Sebastian never had a girlfriend. His grandfather supports him and tries to help him to find the right woman. His mother doesn’t really know anything about his life. Even his friend Axel and his therapist cannot help him to solve the problem. In the end he decides to challenge his luck and discovers that he has nothing more than a breath of luck.

Genre Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Love Story, Melodrama
Category Feature Film Cinema
Year of Production 2007
Director Nico Sommer
Screenplay Nico Sommer
Director of Photography Dimitri Hempel
Production Design Anne Dettmer
Producer Nico Sommer
Production Company Susessauerfilm/Kassel, in co-production with Kunsthochschule Kassel
Principal Cast Tom Lass, Thorsten Kaphahn, Claudia Jacob, Livia S. Reinhard, Robert Hofmann
Casting Nico Sommer
Length 60 min
Format HDV, color, Letterbox
Original Version German
Subtitled Version English
Sound Technology Stereo

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

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PANELS, EDN PITCHINGS

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Deadlines for entries
Market:  15 March 2008
Festival:  15 October 2007 and 5 January 2008
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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, since 1966 the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company. In 2004, new shareholders came on board the Export-Union which from then on continued operations under its present name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

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

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

German Films itself has **14 members of staff**:
- Christian Dorsch, managing director
- Mariette Rissenbeek, public relations/deputy managing director
- Petra Bader, office manager
- Kim Behrendts, PR assistant/festival coordinator
- Sandra Buchta, project coordinator/documentary film
- Myriam Gauff, project coordinator
- Simon Goehler, trainee
- Christine Harrasser, managing director’s assistant/project coordinator
- Angela Hawkins, publications & website editor
- Barbhe Heusinger, project coordinator/distribution support
- Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator
- Michaela Kowal, accounts
- Martin Scheuring, project coordinator/short film
- Konstanze Welz, project coordinator/television

In addition, German Films has 10 foreign representatives in nine countries.

German Films’ budget of presently €5.4 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 €360,000 – towards the work of German Films.

German Films is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, a network of 27 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, Goeteborg, Warsaw, Thessaloniki, Rome, and Turin, among others
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets (Berlin, Cannes, AFM Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Shanghai)
- Staging of the “German Premieres” industry screenings in New York, Los Angeles, Washington D. C., and Rome
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, video, and television
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation, and German films being shown
- Organization of the annual NEXT GENERATION short film program, which presents a selection of shorts by students of German film schools and is premiered every year at Cannes
- Publication of informational literature about current German films and the German film industry (German Films Quarterly), as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- An Internet website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, as well as information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the 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 European arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- On behalf of the association Rendez-vous franco-allemands du cinéma, organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting

In association and cooperation with its shareholders, German Films works to promote feature, documentary, television and short films.
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ISSN 1614-6387

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LOW TEMPERATURE BUT HIGH ENERGY
07.-17.02.08