IN ROME IN COMPETITION
THE POLL DIARIES by Chris Kraus

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Christoph Hochhäusler was born in Munich in 1972. He studied Architecture in Berlin from 1993 to 1995, but then moved to the University of Film and Television (HFF) in Munich, where he founded the film magazine Revolver together with fellow students Benjamin Heisenberg and Sebastian Kutzli. Working with different colleagues, he still edits the magazine today. His first feature film This Very Moment (2003) – a variation on the Hansel and Gretel theme made while still a student – was received very well internationally and also shown in regular French cinemas. Nevertheless, it proved difficult to finance his next film Low Profile (2006) – however, the film triumphed over opposition from German television broadcasters and funding committees with an invitation to Cannes (Un Certain Regard) and outstanding reviews. In his latest film The City Below (2010), Hochhäusler tells a story from the world of high finance in Frankfurt, the nucleus of which is the Old Testament story of David and Bathsheba. Again, the film was shown in Cannes’ Un Certain Regard; reviews were mixed, but jury president Claire Denis commented very positively in her Internet diary. At present, a trilogy entitled Dreileben is being made as a television production: Christoph Hochhäusler is making one of three thematically linked films, the other directors being Christian Petzold and Dominik Graf. Much interest has been shown in an open, controversial email exchange between the three of them published in Revolver. Christoph Hochhäusler operates a blog at parallelfilm.blogspot.com.

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FILM IS RHYTHM

A portrait of Christoph Hochhäusler

The latest films by Christoph Hochhäusler, Low Profile and The City Below, were presented in the section Un Certain Regard in Cannes. They are also perceived internationally as part of a scene frequently given labels such as the Berlin School or Nouvelle vague allemande. It includes directors such as Christian Petzold, Angela Schanelec or Maren Ade, and quite a number of others in the meantime. On the one hand, Hochhäusler seeks out this context very deliberately. He does not see himself as an isolated figure; he values cooperation, discourse and even fierce debate – in committed discussion, but also in practice.

Together with fellow student Benjamin Heisenberg he wrote the screenplay for his first film This Very Moment, and his co-author on The City Below was German novelist Ulrich Peltzer, recipient of numerous awards. Hochhäusler publishes the film magazine Revolver in collaboration with friends who are also filmmakers. In conjunction with Christian Petzold and Dominik Graf, he is currently making the trilogy Dreileben: its individual films are related almost like members of the same family.

Hochhäusler explains why work in a group is important to him: “I always had the feeling that I could find out what really interested me more quickly as a result of friction, having to convince others and tell them things. And I am happy to get criticism and good ideas from others – I believe in traffic in ideas; even as an author you are more of a discoverer than an inventor. I have never had the feeling that I need...
to protect my own ideas. And what I like about film is the sense of undertaking … you set off together with the aim of finding something out.”

But this also means that Christoph Hochhäusler contradicts others when it seems necessary to him. He defends himself against a film policy that adopts the safe approach, against convenience in all its forms. He enjoys discourse, struggling for his own interests and the mutual concern of cinema.

His biography is certainly unusual for a director. There was no television in his parents’ house: “When I was growing up I was a snob, anti-pop culture.” And so Hochhäusler arrived at film later on, as he entered adulthood, so to speak – and the experience was all the more overwhelming as a result: “The power of the medium hit me completely unawares. The immediacy of a close-up. The sensation of a tracking shot. The contradictions of wanting to see and yet being afraid to. The adjacency of seduction and disgust, as in the case of Lynch, for example. I found Wild at Heart unbelievably stirring. I was shocked by its drastic approach, but even more shocked that I was so easy to manipulate, even contrary to my own convictions. I wanted to understand and learn to make use of ‘machinery’ that could trigger such a powerful experience.”

There is no doubt that he has been influenced by the aesthetic achievements of modernity. This is obvious, for example, in the way that he backs ambivalence and dispenses with false solutions as a matter of course. He never opens his characters to quick consumption, for instance. This applies to the mother who abandons her step-children in This Very Moment, to the youthful hero of Low Profile, who assiduously (even with something like genius) sabotages his future, and also to Cordes the banker in The City Below, who makes – without really being able to say why – a breakneck effort to escape his own life.

The insights that one acquires in Hochhäusler’s films – into the psyche, biographies, motivations – are like looking into sharp fragments of mirrors. One can discern something, multiplied and broken up, but it never unites to become a clear picture.

The individual weight, and in a certain sense the balance of all the elements in his films – from the acting to the settings, from the plot to the sound, editing and music – is sure to irritate some conventional expectations. The interiors and exterior views in The City Below, for example, almost become something resembling actors themselves – Hochhäusler studied Architecture before his successful application to the University of Film and Television in Munich.

One identified role model is Michael Haneke, particularly regarding the tenacity with which he has remained true to himself for decades. Against a background of flatter concepts of realism and plot-point ideologies, Hochhäusler’s films are definitely no easier to grasp than those by Haneke.

The US film critic Michael Sicinski writes, quite correctly, of The City Below: “Instead of merely narrativizing the economic collapse, Hochhäusler collapsed the economy of narrative; instead of allowing characters to traverse cinematic space, The City Below permits space to virtually come after the viewer with a vengeance.”

It is film as a spatial, but also a compositional art, as a confident art form between the arts. Ultimately guided, perhaps, by music: “That is...
Maggie Peren, born in Heidelberg in 1974, wrote her first screenplay Forget America in 1997 during a course in Literary Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. It was filmed under the direction of Vanessa Jopp in 1999 and received several awards including one for the Best Up-and-Coming Director at the Munich Film Festival and the Bavarian Film Award in 2001. The screenplay for The Phantom, written in collaboration with Dennis Gansel in 1999, was also filmed for television and received several Grimme Prizes in 2000. A year later, she wrote the screenplay for the cinema feature Girls on Top (2001), which was directed by Dennis Gansel. This success was followed by four screenplays for debut films, including the cinema features Ganz und Gar and Kiss and Run, for which Maggie Peren received a Grimme Prize in Silver (Screenplay and Acting) as well as several other awards. The screenplay for Napolia (in cooperation with Dennis Gansel) received the German Film Award as Best Unrealized Screenplay before being filmed in 2003/2004. In 2003, Peren wrote the screenplay for the short film My Parents, which won more than 30 prizes at short film and student festivals, including the Channel Four Audience Award in London. Maggie Peren also wrote the screenplay for the short film Hypochondriac, which was her directing debut (2004). Her work on the screenplay for her second film as a director, Special Escort, began in summer 2005, and it was filmed for the cinema in 2007. Parallel to this, she produced the screenplay (with co-author Stefan Schaller) for the successful children’s film Hands Off Mississippi, based on a novel by Cornelia Funke (dir: Detlev Buck). This feature received the Bavarian and German Film Awards for the Best Children’s and Youth Production. It was followed in 2007 by the first of the Cheeky Girls series, filmed by Ute Wieland. Maggie Peren has just completed the shooting of her refugee drama The Colour of the Ocean.

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A PLEA FOR INNER LIBERTY

A portrait of Maggie Peren

Maggie Peren sits on a Biedermeier sofa in the study of her old-style apartment in Munich, her legs tucked on one side. There is a painting hanging on the wall behind her. It shows a girl smiling past the viewer in a rather laconic way. I ask Peren who painted it and she tells me about the artist Jozef Melicherc˘ík and how fascinating she finds his works. As our conversation continues, my gaze drifts back repeatedly to the “laconic girl” behind her, and I wonder why this particular motif appeals to Peren so much. I begin to think the question may be answered in the course of our interview.

Maggie Peren has just completed the shooting for her latest film, The Colour of the Ocean – a project close to her heart, as she admits: “After I had seen We Feed the World in 2005, I couldn’t believe the way we are undermining the existence of people in the Third World with our subsidized foodstuffs, and the fact that those people are so desperate they flee across the Atlantic in boats to Europe.”

Peren is making a very European film in The Colour of the Ocean, for which she also wrote the screenplay. An African refugee boat is stranded in the middle of the Spanish holiday idyll Gran Canaria, shaking the encrusted moorings that many people call life – German holiday maker Nathalie questions her apparently secure existence, and a Spanish policeman escapes his self-chosen, inner imprisonment. Peren spirits her viewers off to this holiday paradise to reveal the existent rifts in an apparent idyll, not for the sake of beautiful images.
The 36-year-old director made *The Colour of the Ocean* with an international cast – in Spanish, French and German. Although it was not easy to generate German film support for a trilingual production that was also made abroad, Peren has not regretted her decision to direct it for one moment: “It was extremely important to me to tell this story in a subjective way – in other words, from three different perspectives. To do that, I had to adopt the African, the Spanish and the German viewpoint. It certainly benefited me a lot working together with different nationalities. After all, several European countries feel the effects of this issue. During shooting, the Spanish were very interested in the subject, and they asked a lot of questions. I am sure they will enjoy the film as well.”

The emerging refugee drama captures attention with its realistic portrayal, although Peren consciously avoided one-to-one realism. “From the beginning, it was important to me to reject the documentary perspective for this film and tell the story of the refugees’ problems in the style of a parable. In other words, every character stands for a specific standpoint,” Peren explains. By adopting the viewpoints of her characters, the filmmaker immerses the audience in a microcosm of diverse standpoints and so makes it possible to experience the complex subject on an interpersonal level.

This is an approach that has proven effective for all her films and screenplays. In her directorial feature debut *Special Escort* (2007), for example: here, we also find complete dedication to her leading characters, whose financial difficulties lead them to establish an escort service for ladies willing and able to pay.

Peren, who describes herself as “fanatical about authenticity,” says in this context: “I would like people to believe in my main characters, feel close to them and understand them. I don’t deliberately provoke laughter with my comedies or tears with my dramas. I don’t consciously play with emotions, but I do consider them admissible.” Bearing this in mind, Peren demands all her actors can give. “Drilling my actors,” she says with some sympathy and grins mischievously.

Peren not only reaches German audiences with this kind of filmmaking. Her film has also been a success abroad: *Special Escort* was shown at the Festival of German Films in Spain, where it won the Audience Award. The Spanish viewers laughed far more than the Germans. That really floored me, especially as they had to read subtitles. In Germany people laughed too, but I get the feeling that German comedies work best when the tone is extremely clear,” she tells me.

Peren prefers to focus on the more subtle shades of her characters’ emotional spectrum. She allows the viewer to take a look at her protagonists’ imperfections, places them in totally absurd everyday situations, and shows characters who cannot change the way they are, but still make the best of things. In this way, she comes very close indeed to reality. Peren’s characters never experience comic or dramatic moments in a superficial way; they always result from the seriousness of their actions. And that is always somehow connected to liberation, as well. “That is the thread running through my creative work; my films and books are always about liberty,” she explains. *Special Escort* is not just about men who offer their services on the Internet and have fun in the process; it is also about the inner liberty which they are granted by what they do.

And the main characters in *The Colour of the Ocean* also achieve new inner liberty and are able to give freedom to others as a result.

“My characters always emerge from their limitations and arrive in a place with more scope,” Peren explains.

Inner liberty and a wider scope – my eyes stray once again to the “laconic girl” on the wall behind Maggie Peren. And now I realize: the girl’s smile is not laconic. It is a smile of secret victory. The girl takes over the painting’s background as her own personal space; she adopts it, charges it with her own personality, and so creates a self-chosen liberty for herself. It is the very same trait embodied by filmmaker Maggie Peren’s characters.

* Sandra Marsch spoke with Maggie Peren
"The documentary film has always been important for us, but, above all, we are interested in telling good stories," says Uwe Dierks, one half of the Berlin-based production company Boomtown Media which he founded with partner Thomas Grube in 1999.

We had known each other for some time before we established our first company, Grube & Dierks, to produce and direct films together,” Dierks recalls. “We have now been working together for the past 15 years and have similar ideas about how to tell stories and are interested in the same topics.”

As he points out, Boomtown productions such as Rhythm Is It! and Trip to Asia show that we set great store on a film’s dramaturgy. If you want to compete with the other big films in the cinemas,
you need to have the right images and technical quality, but, primarily, it is the quality of the story that counts. Moreover, we want to take the audience on an emotional journey when they are in the cinema.”

While Boomtown was first and foremost a home for Grube to develop his projects in an atmosphere of creative freedom and independence, the company has always been open to taking on the projects by other filmmakers. These have ranged from Norbert Servos and Khaled El Hagar’s 2003 dance film Elements of Mine through Susanna Boehm’s Porgy & Me to Gerardo Milsztein’s To Fight For – The Year of Decision.

“It was always our goal to produce other people's films as well as for economic reasons because you can’t have the whole burden of a company resting on the shoulders of one person,” Dierks explains.

“And so, we are currently producing Marcus Vetter’s Cinema Jenin and will also be involved in his next film,” he continues. “We want to intensify this approach with just a few people. It is also about having a common view of things: the filmmakers may be all quite different, but what we have in common is that we want audiences to take pleasure in a positive outlook rather than showing them only dark, difficult and problematic things. We are already surrounded by enough of that because you only have to turn on the news to see the latest catastrophe.”

“But when we take people on a journey in the cinema for two hours, we want to inspire them and have them leave the cinema with a positive feeling. Even with a difficult film like To Fight For – The Year of Decision, we want to show that there is a solution and that one can look ahead.”

Looking back at the last 10 years of the German documentary scene, Dierks admits that there have been various ups and downs in the fortunes of the documentary format in the cinemas.

When Rhythm Is It! was released in 2004, few documentaries were making it into the German cinemas or making much impact with audiences. The film’s subsequent success – more than 800,000 people have seen the film to date, with cinemas still booking it more than six years after the original release – brought the theatrical documentary back into the spotlight and the public’s attention.

The result was that such documentaries as Into Great Silence and Etre et Avoir enjoyed critical and commercial success, but the documentary’s lot in the cinemas has become harder in the last couple of years.

“It is not that there isn’t an audience for these films or that critics and cinema-owners are not well-disposed towards documentaries,” Dierks stresses. “But the large number of films coming into the cinemas these days makes it harder for smaller films – and that includes documentaries – to get the necessary visibility. These films need to stay longer in the cinemas in order to generate that all-important word-of-mouth.”

Nevertheless, Dierks and Grube are keeping true to their desire to make films for as many people as possible: “We don’t see our goal in just making films for ourselves, but rather for a wide audience.”

While the German home market is naturally the first address for Boomtown’s productions, they have looked consciously for subjects for their films that have a universal form of expression or approach that might cross borders.

For example, Dierks looked beyond Germany for financing partners for Trip to Asia after the success of Rhythm Is It! and received support from Alan Yentob of the UK’s BBC.

Moreover, the company acquired a better insight into the changing trends in the international market after setting up its in-house sales arm Boomtown Media International in 2005 to handle the international distribution of its output.

“This enables us to see very clearly the countries where people like the kind of stories we want to tell and the way we tell them. And it can also be very useful for the financing of new projects,” Dierks explains.

“As far as possible, we have kept all of the rights to our films to sell them through this sales arm, and we have our own DVD label for releasing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.”

But Boomtown Media isn’t just about documentaries.

“Our goal was always to make fiction films as well,” Dierks declares. “This will be our next step and we have two projects being developed by Thomas at the moment: one of them has evolved out of a previous documentary and another story idea comes from something he has had in his head for some time.”

However, this step to fiction does not mean that Boomtown will abandon its lean structure and expand to take on new staff.

“We will be looking to draw on the know-how and experience of fellow producers and story editors, which will give us both more time for development,” Dierks says. “Thomas is writing both screenplays in English and the scale of both films means that they will have to be structured as international co-productions.”

Uwe Dierks spoke with Martin Blaney
We’re in Eisenstein, an upmarket café-restaurant in Hamburg’s Altona district, a superb example of an old industrial building repurposed, and also appropriately named for what turns out to be a very wide ranging conversation with Justus von Dohnányi, a writer-director and, above all, actor who has an encompassing love of film.

The end of September saw the premiere of Oskar Roehler’s Jüd Suss – Film ohne Gewissen, in which von Dohnányi plays the notorious film’s director Veit Harlan. What was it like, a director playing a director? “Not easy!” is the reply. “I watched the original film and a documentary on him. I spoke with his son Thomas, who has very divided and critical feelings towards his father, and got information wherever I could to find out what he was like as a man. I felt he was obsessed with power. Goebbels was the only man he had respect, fear for. Harlan had this great self-security but could also be strongly submissive and servile towards Goebbels. He was also one of the time’s most successful directors, which made him a star and so very vain.”

As an actor, von Dohnányi uses certain mechanisms to get closer to each role, “but it’s very different according to what the role requires. For Veit Harlan I used research, for others I take an external approach, such as what would they be if they were an animal? How would they move? What tics and gestures do they have? And so on. At the same time I always stick to what is available in terms of the script or historical documentation.”

In the case of Jüd Suss – Film ohne Gewissen, the story of how a film was created, Roehler has his own perspective, so this is not an actual portrait of how it was, but him translating an idea into reality.
“That means the characters are overdrawn,” von Dohnányi explains, “but are very strongly tied to the story. Since my character is close to the historical reality, we tried very hard to stay with facts.”

Busy beyond the dreams of most actors, and also humbly grateful for the fact, von Dohnányi is currently playing in Yoko, a children’s film, and is gearing up for a sequel to the highly successful Men in the City. In writer-director Simon Verhoeven’s comedy about five men in their 30s and 40s and how they deal with life, he again plays Bruce Berger, a pop singer.

In Der ganz größer Traum des Konrad Koch, in which acting colleague Daniel Brühl plays the man who, in 1874, brought football from England to a boarding school in Braunschweig as a teaching aid, von Dohnányi plays an old-fashioned bank manager who is against these new fangled and especially foreign ideas.

As an actor, von Dohnányi looks for competence in his director: “I hope he can convey a view of what he’s filming,” he explains. “He first has to have an idea! He, or she, also needs to know the language of images and I would wish for the ability to organize technically, which means also taking time to work with actors on the content, explaining why and how they’re playing something. There needs to be time for rehearsal, too.” He then continues to praise Oskar Roehler’s “strong grip on his material and being able to convey what he sees and wants.”

When not on set, von Dohnányi is a self-confessed cinema fan.
“I watch everything possible!” he says. “I hardly ever watch TV, though.” While admitting he is not so keen on films for just a young audience (“Teen comedies, for example. No longer my world!”) he takes in German and international films, arthouse and commercial films, in fact “everything from comedy to genre to blockbusters with popcorn. I live in Hamburg and Berlin, so it’s off to one of the big cinemas!”

Among von Dohnányi’s recent favorites are Sin Nombre (“The most exciting film I’ve seen this year”), Precious and, lower down the list, Inception: “I look sometimes for recommendations from friends or colleagues, sometimes it’s the director or actor or cinematographer or writer. With some filmmakers, such as Woody Allen or the Coen Brothers, I don’t care what they make because they’re so exciting! Sometimes I just go to the cinema to see what’s showing and get a positive surprise from a film I don’t know much about. I like to concentrate on the screen and get the big experience with the loudness and darkness. At home the phone always rings!”

With perhaps this time the writer in him coming more to the fore, von Dohnányi explains, “The alpha and omega is that the story must function. Then the film’s ahead already and I’m happy when it’s well made, when the actors do a good job or the director has a great signature.” He cites The Ghostwriter here, “whatever one thinks of Polanski, it is technically good. He knows what he wants to achieve and gets the result from the audience. Blockbusters sometimes work only in parts,” he continues, “whereas small films achieve it more often. But they are often just to entertain and that’s fine, like watching a football game, it’s fun.”

The film that carries his name as writer, as well as director, actor and producer, is Bis zum Ellenbogen (2006), a comedy crime caper film about three men who meet by accident, one subsequently dies but not before he tells the others about a bank full of black money. It can be gotten at easily, but only by the dead guy. So the others transport the body across Germany.

“I’d written several scripts already,” von Dohnányi explains, “and thought, it’s a small story, I can make it with friends. My co-producer was Lars Büchel, from Element E in Hamburg, Jan Josef Liefers and Stefan Kurt co-starred. Germany was in World Cup fever at the time so we dressed the corpse up as a fan. I’d only done serious stuff till then and wanted to do comedy. It worked very well, made money and we didn’t have a broadcaster or film funder aboard either. We had more than 100,000 viewers, got our money back and a bit more! We were very pleased.”

Hollywood’s new baby, 3D, gets short shrift from von Dohnányi. “I’ve yet to see a good one! I saw Avatar and can’t understand all the fuss,” he states. “Film is driven by a good story, when you have one that works then it’s great and you enthuse people.” He is a fan, it must be said, of “the Americans’ willingness to invest in development: They take it seriously, whereas in Germany it’s not always so well-developed.” He is, however, a supporter of new media: “It allows good films to be sold, like Blair Witch Project and Paranormal Activity. But then it still comes down to the writing, back to good stories, well told.”

Von Dohnányi believes “German cinema is developing in a very good direction at the moment. There is a range and great variety of different filmmakers.” He cites Lars Becker, Tom Tykwer, Fatih Akin, Andreas Dresen, Oskar Roehler, Oliver Hirschbiegel and Dominik Graf as “auteur filmmakers with their own vision. There are also the old stalwarts like Bernd Eichinger and I also look at Til Schweiger to see how and where he goes. It helps the industry when we also make successful mainstream films. Comedies, especially romantic ones, have the best chance of making their money back. We can’t rely on action,” he continues, “because that has to be for the English-language market. A German film is primarily for the German market!”

What about when von Dohnányi isn’t working or watching a film? “I’m still very busy!” he laughs, “Being a family guy! I don’t have an all-consuming passion, like sailing around the world. I like being with my family, going to the theater, getting inspired by culture. I write a lot; scripts, ideas, developing stories gives me a great deal of pleasure. I’m working on material I want to realize, but nothing’s hatched till it’s hatched! I’m not a chicken counter! It’ll get placed on the market when it’s ready.”

But upcoming and hatched is the film Ruhm. From the novel by Daniel Kehlmann, it is directed by Isabel Kleefeld and produced by Little Shark Entertainment, with whom von Dohnányi made Hardcover (2007), and begins shooting at the end of October.

And with that, von Dohnányi drains the last of his coffee, checks his watch and says he has to be going. The cinema next door is showing the Swedish comedy The Swimsuit Issue, he has yet to see it and is hoping to be pleasantly surprised.

Justus von Dohnányi spoke with Simon Kingsley
The independent expert jury, which was appointed by German Films to select the German entry to compete for the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film, has selected under the chairmanship of Steffen Kuchenreuther the film When We Leave (Die Fremde) by Feo Aladag.

The jury on its decision: "When We Leave is an extraordinarily well written, atmospherically precise and moving film with outstanding acting performances. The film deals in a highly dramatic and subtle way with the struggle of a young German-Turkish mother for her self-determination in two value systems."

Feo Aladag on the jury decision: "It is an incredibly great honor that our film has been chosen by the German selection committee. My goal had always been to make a universal film which can reach people and touch them across ethnic, cultural and linguistic barriers. I now await the next round with great anticipation and very much hope that When We Leave will also convince the members of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences."

To date, When We Leave has been invited to 35 international film festivals and received the prize for Best Film on many occasions, including at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. The film had its world premiere at this year’s Berlinale. Moreover, When We Leave won the Film Award in Bronze for the Best Feature Film as well as Best Lead Actress (Sibel Kekilli) at the German Film Awards. The nomination of When We Leave as one of the three candidates for the Prix Lux (Film Prize of the European Parliament) and the pre-selection for the European Film Award is evidence of a broad international interest.

Chicago-based Olive Films acquired the US rights from CINEPOOL at the film market in Toronto. The US theatrical release is planned for February 2011.
BAVARIA SUPPORTS 3D MUSKETEERS

"A story from France, directed by an Englishman, and made in Germany," is what director Paul W.S. Anderson said about the new production of The Three Musketeers at the press conference at the end of August in Munich. But it’s not only the 3D technology that makes the difference in this Musketeer adaptation: the filmmakers have a fresh new approach to Alexandre Dumas’ classic tale. From late August to early October, the literary adaptation was shooting on location in Bamberg, Würzburg, Burghausen and Munich.

Paul W.S. Anderson, Jeremy Bold and Robert Kulzer are producing, with Martin Moszkowicz executive producing. The leading roles have been taken by none other than Orlando Bloom, Christoph Waltz, Milla Jovovich, Mads Mikkelsen, Matthew Macfadyen, Ray Stevenson, Luke Evans, Logan Lerman, James Corden and Juno Temple. FilmFernsehFonds Bayern is supporting the project with 1.6 million Euros; a further 400,000 Euros are being provided by the Bavarian Banking Fund. Constantin Film plans to release the film at the beginning of September 2011.

SHORTS BOUND TO RETURN TO THE SILVER SCREEN

Until the 1980s short films had their place as a regular component of cinema programs. When film politics changed, however, they lost their role as supporting films and gradually disappeared from the silver screen, being replaced by commercials in almost all the movie theaters. Although short films managed to maintain their importance and survived by being screened mostly at festivals, they almost disappeared from regular cinema programs.

In September 2010, the German Short Film Association, in cooperation with the KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg and interfilm Berlin, launched the campaign “Kurz vor Film” (“Short Before Film”) to encourage, convince and support cinema managers in letting short films return to cinema programs as supporting films. With the generous support of the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the partners are given the opportunity to take the necessary actions, such as short film events, petitions and cinema trailers with famous actors acting as campaign godfathers who explain why short film should return to the silver screen. Additionally, the German Film Funding Law supports cinema operators financially if they program short films as supporting films.

In the past decades short films have proven that they are in no way inferior to feature films and have their rightful place alongside them as an entertaining part of an enjoyable cinema evening. Perhaps the approach of the German Short Film Association will encourage similar initiatives in other countries, making supporting films once more an inherent part of the European film culture. More information is available at www.kurz-vor-film.de.

GERMAN FILMS VOD

In mid-June, German Films launched its new – and free – Video-On-Demand platform, offering buyers, festival delegates and sellers the possibility to screen new German films via VOD online streaming. Currently, over 30 titles are available on the German Films website (www.german-films.de) under the Distributors’ Corner button.

To gain access to the VOD online streaming, the user must register into the system and request a voucher code for the desired film(s). Requests will be clarified with the respective world sales companies to check if the territory is available for the requested film(s). German Films will then provide the voucher codes for the selected films. Once the voucher codes have been entered into the system, the film is then available for a 24-hour screening window.

The selection of titles on the VOD platform will be updated with new films on a regular basis. For further information, please contact: vod@german-films.de.

FESTIVAL SEASON IN BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

After all the jubilee celebrations which took place in October for MFG Filmförderung’s 15th anniversary, November is “festival month” in Baden-Württemberg. In addition to numerous smaller festivals for national audiences, the International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg will be taking place from 11 – 21 November 2010 as well as the French Film Days in Tübingen and Stuttgart from 4 – 10 November. Within the framework of the French Film Days, which has become the largest showcase of French films in Germany, the winner of this year’s Distribution Promotion Award will be announced. The prize, which is sponsored by MFG and Unifrance, awards 20,000 Euros for the cinematic distribution of a French feature or documentary film in Germany.

The 8th annual German-French Rendez-vous is also taking place in the area, from 25 – 27 November in Heidelberg. In addition to the co-production market and panel discussions on current topics about production and media policies, an event about 3D will also be on offer.
**GERMAN CURRENTS / BERLIN & BEYOND**

The 4th Annual Festival of German Films – German Currents (20 – 24 October 2010) was presented by the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles in collaboration with German Films, the American Cinematheque and Lufthansa, with the support of the Berlin & Beyond Film Festival, ELMA (European Languages and Movies in America), FoG (Friends of Goethe) and nordmedia.

German Currents returned this year to the Aero Theatre and other venues around Los Angeles. This year’s Oscar® submission from Germany and the opening night film When We Leave by Feo Aladag, as well as the second night screening Rock Hudson – Dark and Handsome Stranger by André Schäfer took place at the Egyptian Theatre. Animals United by Holger Tappe and Reinhard Klooss, the first German animated film in 3D, screened at The Landmark, and the children’s matinee film Vicky, the Viking by Michael “Bully” Herbig was shown at the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles; the rest of the program took place at the American Cinematheque’s Aero Theatre in Santa Monica. The line-up was as follows: Autumn Gold by Jan Tenhaven, The Robber by Benjamin Heisenberg, The Silence by Baran bo Odar, The Woman with the 5 Elephants by Vadim Jendreyko, and Vincent Wants to Sea by Ralf Huettner.

Berlin & Beyond. America’s premier festival of new and celebrated films from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, showcased 24 feature-length and six short films in different program sections at the historic Castro Theatre in San Francisco from 22 – 28 October. The opening film, Vincent Wants to Sea by Ralf Huettner, was presented by screenwriter and leading actor Florian David Fitz. More than fifteen guests from Germany attended the festival organized by the Goethe-Institut San Francisco in cooperation with German Films and Lufthansa. The program line-up included the German entry to the Academy Awards® in the category Best Foreign Language Film When We Leave by Feo Aladag. A major part of the program was also part of the German film festival German Currents in Los Angeles.

**OF HEROES & EXPERTS IN THE ART OF LIVING**

Two film ideas from Hamburg have made it into the seven Baltic projects selected for the First Motion Program: The villages surrounding the Estonian part of the Peipsi Lake are home to the “Old Believers”, caught between the modern information society and traditional religious structures.

Fascinated by their way of life, Marc Brummund is developing and producing a multimedia project between cinema and Internet to draw attention to this part of the population. First shoots have been completed and more will follow in October. Robin from Hamburg shares his experiences as an intern with New York superhero Captain Impact in his blog, an online-video diary and on Facebook. This fictive cross-media format marks producer Stefan Gieren’s debut since graduating from Hamburg Media School. Production will begin in October. Developing new formats is only a subsection of the First Motion project by Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein. More information as to market development, finance, training, cooperation and distribution is available from www.firstmotion.eu.

**GERMAN FOCUS AT ENCOUNTERS BRISTOL**

In cooperation with German Films, the AG Kurzfilm (German Short Film Association) is part of the German Focus of this year’s Brief Encounters International Film Festival (16 – 21 November 2010). Traveling through space and time, they will present two programs at the upcoming festival edition. In “Outer Space” the audience will learn about terrestrial and extraterrestrial space travelers, dark and entertaining visions of the future, as well as rocks talking about the history of mankind. The award-winning shorts Delivery X are only two of many delights to be expected.

The second program, “Inner Space”, will take the spectators back to filmmaking in the GDR, where directors tried to bend or even break the governmental rules they had to abide by. Many of them managed to introduce a certain something into their films that did not entirely match the state doctrine or even worked underground. The films paint a diverse picture of life in the GDR with the means of irony, humor, music, strange drawings or simply absurd accounts of seemingly normal situations. André Eckardt, managing director of the German Institute of Animated Film (DIAF), will be on hand to give some background information and present the films.

Another highlight will be the happy hour organized by German Films on 18 November 2010, where industry professionals can enjoy snacks, drinks and a nice chat with some of the filmmakers of the 18 German shorts which are featured in the various sections of the festival. The German Focus is kindly supported by the Goethe-Institut London. More information is available at www.encounters-festival.org.uk.
SHORT REPORT & FESTIVAL CALENDAR DUE FOR PUBLICATION

The awarding of the German Short Film Award on 18 November 2010 provides the AG Kurzfilm (German Short Film Association) with the ideal framework to present two of its most successful publications. Over the past years, the awards ceremony traditionally has been the place to provide the audience with the new edition of the short film magazine SHORT report. Addressing filmmakers and film students, producers, festivals, funding and film institutions as well as program curators and journalists, it is published annually in German and English. Complementing the other industry publications that only marginally deal with short films, among other things this year’s edition will focus on the impact new forms of screening have on short films and the role short films can play in film education.

Furthermore, the association’s sought-after wall calendar will also be available at the ceremony for the German Short Film Award. Once again, the 2011 edition contains the dates and entry deadlines of over 150 short film festivals and festivals with short film competitions worldwide including their websites. It will also be available for download from www.ag-kurzfilm.de. Printed versions of both publications can also be ordered from the association’s office: office@ag-kurzfilm.de.

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC IN LA ROCHELLE

Under the label “German Documentaries”, 30 German filmmakers and producers participated in this year’s Sunny Side of the Doc in La Rochelle which specializes only in documentary and television formats.

Despite the overall difficult situation on the market, which is noticeable in the buying-stops and massive restructuring at both public and private broadcasters, the German participants were satisfied with the outcome at Sunny Side of the Doc. Lots of new contacts were made and the central topic of interest was the further development of international co-productions, which of course is an extremely important financing tool, and will certainly continue to be so in the future, for documentary productions.

DEBUTS IN NRW

Two debut films from young directors were shot at the end of the summer in North Rhine-Westphalia. Markus Sehr, a graduate from the ifs international film school in Cologne, shot his first feature, Ein Inselnamens Udo, in Cologne. The production by the Cologne-based Hupe Film, in cooperation with Sönke Wortmann’s Little Shark Entertainment, has an impressive cast: the leading roles in this romantic comedy, which is also being supported by the broadcasters WDR and ARTE, have been taken by Kurt Krömer and Fritzi Haberland. The screenplay was written by Markus Sehr, together with Clemente Fernandez-Gil.

Dirk Lütter’s debut feature, Ein Platz in der Sonne, which was also shot in Cologne, is a bit more on the serious side. The director and cinematographer, who studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, tells the story of the young professional Jan. “I want to make a special kind of coming-of-age film, once which focuses on the commodification of interpersonal relationships,” Lütter says. The film, with Joseph Bundschuh and Anke Retzlaff in the leading roles, is being produced by the Cologne-based unafilm, together with broadcaster WDR.

SEE YOU AGAIN ON THE SEINE

For the 15th time, German Films, in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Paris, organized the annual Festival du cinéma allemand in Paris. In addition to the opening film, At Ellen’s Age by Pia Marais, nine further current German films were shown, including: the box-office hit Vincent Wants to Sea by Ralf Huettnner, Gravity by Maximilian Erlenwein, My Words, My Lies – My Love by Alain Gsponer and The Albanian by Johannes Naber. This year’s program enthused audiences in numerous sold-out screenings and resulted in some 4,500 admissions at the Cinéma L’Arlequin.

The event “Nouvelle Vague allemande” was organized by the Goethe-Institut and presented Everyone Else by Maren Ade, The Robber by Benjamin Heisenberg and The City Below by Christoph Hochhäuser, all of which will soon be released in French cinemas. The directors Heisenberg and Hochhäuser (publishers of the film magazine Revolver) invited the French director Maria Hansen-Løve (Father of My Children) to join them for a discussion round and interviewed her for their magazine. A further highlight in the program was the screening of the restored version of R.W. Fassbinder’s Welt am Draht.

TWO GERMAN SHORTS NOMINATED FOR EUROPEAN FILM AWARD

Since October 2009, 15 short films produced in 14 European countries have been nominated for the European Film Award by juries at selected film festivals throughout Europe. This year, two German shorts are among the nominees. The comedy Lights (Ampelmann) by Giulio Ricciarelli secured a nomination by winning the EFA Award at the Seminci Valladolid in October 2009. David O’Reilly’s animated short The External World was nominated upon its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival 2010. The winner will be presented during the European Film Award ceremony on 4 December 2010 in Tallinn/Estonia.
Alleine Tanzen

**Type of Project**  Documentary Cinema  
**Genre**  Melodrama, Society  
**Production Company**  German Film & Television Academy (dffb)/Berlin  
**With backing from**  Filmbüro Bremen  
**Producer**  Max Milhahn  
**Director**  Biene Pilavci  
**Screenplay**  Biene Pilavci  
**Music by**  Can Erdogan  
**Format**  HD, color, blow-up to 35 mm, 1:1.85, Dolby SR  
**Shooting Languages**  German, Turkish  
**Shooting in**  Ludwigsburg, Berlin, Katerini/Greece, Kayseri/Turkey, December 2009 – September 2010

In Alleine Tanzen ("Dancing by Yourself"), director and writer Biene Pilavci poses the question, "can my four siblings and I succeed, after many years marked by hatred and extreme violence, in building relationships with other people if our parents were unable to and their parents likewise?"

No easy viewing, but for that all the more gripping and powerful, least of which is that this is a true story, Alleine Tanzen is a journey of understanding. As Biene Pilavci says, "You cannot go anywhere without taking your past with you." To which one should also add, as Pilavci does, Berthold Brecht’s observation that, "The incorrigible are punished by reality."

In short, Biene Pilavci takes her family and herself under the microscope, with the wedding celebrations of her youngest sister Esra forming the timeframe and providing the dramatic framework. The film ends with Pilavci and some of her siblings traveling to Turkey to break the silence with their father, who served prison time and was then deported from Germany for his crimes, including grievous bodily harm and rape.

The dancing referred to in the film’s title is, naturally, not only that of the wedding celebration but also metaphorical, as in “dancing alone through life,” explains Pilavci, who also makes extensive use of family video archives and provides commentary in the form of an inner monologue.

It would be wrong, however, to see Alleine Tanzen as an exercise in depression and despair; quite the contrary. As the film’s producer Max Milhahn says, “We get to meet a family that still sticks together despite everything that has been thrown at it. Hope is their constant companion and they are well aware that their experiences of the past have a direct influence on their actions in the present.”

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Cinema Jenin

**Type of Project**  Documentary Cinema  
**Genre**  Art, Society  
**Production Companies**  Boomtown Media/Berlin, Filmperspektive/Tübingen, Cinephil/Tel-Aviv, in co-production with SWR/Stuttgart, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg, YES TV/Kfar Sava, Sundance Channel, Senator Film Produktion/Berlin  
**With backing from**  MFG Baden-Württemberg, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Rabinovich Foundation, Sundance Institute  
**Producers**  Uwe Dierks, Thomas Grube, Marcus Vetter, Philippa Kowarsky  
**Directors**  Marcus Vetter, Aleksei Bakri  
**Screenplay**  Marcus Vetter, Aleksei Bakri  
**Directors of Photography**  Aleksei Bakri, Mareike Müller, Marcus Vetter  
**Editors**  Saskia Metten  
**Format**  35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital  
**Shooting Language**  Arabic, English, German  
**Shooting in**  Jenin, Dubai, England, 2009 – 2010

Cinema Jenin, one of Palestine’s largest and most impressive movie houses, re-opened this August thanks to international support after remaining closed for more than 20 years since the first Intifada in 1987.

The seeds for this 1 million Euro renovation project were sown in 2005 when Ismael Khatib’s 11-year-old son Ahmed was shot dead
by the Israeli Army and the grieving father decided to donate his son’s organs to save the lives of Israeli children. Khatib’s action provided the inspiration for Marcus Vetter and Leon Schiller’s German Film Award-winning documentary The Heart of Jenin.

A year later, Khatib opened the Cuneo Center for Peace for the children of Jenin’s refugee camp as an alternative to their street life. Among the center’s activities, film courses were offered to the children for them to make short films, only to realize that they had no place to show them in.

Subsequently, Fakhri Hammad, a citizen of Jenin, Khatib and Vetter decided to bring the old cinema back to life with the support of a group of enthusiastic locals and foreigners, including former German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, rock legend Roger Waters of Pink Floyd, Kodak, and the Goethe-Institut in Ramallah.

In addition, Vetter and co-director Aleksei Bakri have chronicled the cinema’s resurrection in a documentary entitled Cinema Jenin.

“Marcus approached us to come onboard as partners and we didn’t hesitate for a second to say that we would be co-producers,” recalls Boomtown Media’s Uwe Dierks who attended the gala opening at the beginning of August.

While Cinema Jenin is in a different dimension to Boomtown’s previous projects – having another two production partners and over a dozen financing partners – Dierks says that it has been quite moving to see how the initiative has caught the imagination of people all over the world and given hope for change to the inhabitants of Jenin.

“We are very happy to have won Senator Film’s Helge Sasse as our German distribution partner and are already thinking together at this stage of what one can do apart from the classic film marketing to hold events and create more of a buzz around the film,” he continues.

It is planned to have the premiere of Cinema Jenin at the first Jenin International Film festival to be held next summer, followed by a second screening at the 28th Jerusalem International Film Festival in July.

**Geschichten aus Mullewapp**

**Type of Project** TV Series  
**Genre** Action/Adventure, Animation, Children’s Film, Educational  
**Production Company** Motionworks/Halle, in co-production with WDR/Cologne  
**With backing from** Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung  
**Producer** Romy Roolf  
**Directors** Theresa Strozyk, Tony Loeser  
**Screenplay** André Kussmaul, Armin Völckers, Ulla Ziemann  
**Production Design** Katharina Siebenborn, Tobias Gembalski  
**Music by** Andreas Hoge  
**Format** HD TV, color, 16:9, Stereo TV/Dolby 5.1  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting from** June 2010 – May 2011

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Mullewapp fans, never fear! … It won’t be long before Johnny, Franz and Waldemar return to the small screen in a new batch of exciting adventures inspired by bestselling children’s author and illustrator Helme Heine.

“After the success of the feature film Friends Forever, it really made sense to develop the brand further with another series for WDR’s Die Sendung mit der Maus,” producer Romy Roolf of Halle-based Motionworks says.

In the first series of 26 five-minute short films, the three friends — the mouse Johnny Mauser, the cockerel Franz von Hahn, and the pig Waldemar — had acted as detectives to solve all sorts of crimes in their home of Mullewapp.

Then, in the feature film, which took over 2.5 million Euros at the German box-office last year, the action focused on how the three friends first came to know one another.

“This time round, they are not just detective stories, but also episodes drawn from everyday life on the farm,” Roolf explains. “They can be love stories, adventure stories and, sometimes, the friends get into an argument because of wounded pride, but they then make up and are even greater friends than before.”
The new Mullewapp series sees Motionworks’ Tony Loeser co-directing with Berlin-born Theresa Strozyk who graduated from the University of Film & Television “Konrad Wolf” in Babelsberg in 2006 with a degree in Animation.

“Theresa came to us fresh from film school and worked on Kalli for MDR’s Sandmännchen series and we got to know her even better on the Artzooka series,” Roolf recalls. “With Theresa, we have the feeling that she has a good understanding of the world of Mullewapp. She may approach the stories in a slightly anarchic way, but does this while keeping in the spirit of Helme Heine.”

While the graphic and animation design for the series has been prepared at Motionworks’ headquarters in Halle, the actual animation work is being done at a German-managed studio in Vietnam.

The new series is likely to air in a year’s time from late summer 2011 as part of Die Sendung mit der Maus and will be distributed in Germany on DVD by Kinowelt.

As Jeremy Leven says, his film is “a simple story of something that every man experiences, and every woman knows – men are attracted to beautiful women, and it doesn’t matter if the men are single or married or engaged to be married, young or old, fat or thin or in between.”

“The humor comes out of how a man deals with this, and, in this film, the contortions he will go through to hide his attraction, making what could be of little or no real consequence, a growing disaster of his own making.”

“We were able to finance the film out of Germany and have succeeded in making a special kind of international comedy that will not only function in France and Germany, but also in many other countries,” Berg says.

“We had always wanted to work in this direction [of English-language production] – and Girl on a Bicycle is the first step,” he adds. “We have a strong package with the four leads – Vincenzo Amato (Paolo), Nora Tschirner (Greta), Louise Monot (Cécile), Paddy Considine (Derek) – and a great crew including people like DoP Robert Fraisse, composer Philippe Sarde and production designer Jean-Michel Hugon.”

While shooting at original locations in Paris was supervised by local service producer Elzèvir Films in July and August, the production then moved to sound stages at Bavaria Film studios on the outskirts of Munich for the filming of the interiors of various apartments.

Girl on a Bicycle

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Romantic Comedy Production Company Wiedemann & Berg Film/Munich With backing from FilmFersehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA), Tax Rebate for International Productions (T.R.I.P.) Producers Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann Director Jeremy Leven Screenplay Jeremy Leven Director of Photography Robert Fraisse Editor Michael Trent Production Design Jean-Michel Hugon Principal Cast Vincenzo Amato, Nora Tschirner, Louise Monot, Paddy Considine Casting Olivier Carbone, Suzanne Smith, Simone Bär Format 35 mm, color, cs, SRD Shooting Language English Shooting in Paris and Munich, July – September 2010

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This summer saw Munich-based production house Wiedemann & Berg Film make its first foray into English-language production with an international cast with the romantic comedy Girl on a Bicycle by American writer-director Jeremy Leven.

“I had always been a fan of Jeremy’s film Don Juan De Marco and we then met a couple of years ago in Cannes and talked about projects,” producer Quirin Berg recalls.

“We decided to work together on the development of a comedy set in Paris which would be universal, but with a clear identity,” he continues. “Since Jeremy is around half of the year in Paris when he is not in New York, he knows the city very well.”

Girl on a Bicycle centers on Paolo, an Italian tour bus driver living in Paris, who has just summoned up the courage to propose marriage to his German girlfriend Greta. But, the very next day, he encounters the alluring young French woman Cécile on her bicycle. Unable to get the image of this beauty out of his head, he seeks advice from his best friend, the Englishman Derek. In his attempt to meet Cécile to put an end to his obsession, Paolo knocks her over with his tour bus. His life is turned topsy-turvy as he tries to care for Cécile and her two small children and also still be there for Greta.

While shooting at original locations in Paris was supervised by local service producer Elzèvir Films in July and August, the production then moved to sound stages at Bavaria Film studios on the outskirts of Munich for the filming of the interiors of various apartments.
Kaddisch für einen Freund

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Tragicomedy

**Production Company** SiMa Film/Munich, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Producer** Martin Bach  
**Commissioning Editors** Jochen Radig, Birgit Metz, Georg Steinert  
**Director** Leo Khasin  
**Screenplay** Leo Khasin  
**Director of Photography** Mathias Schöningh  
**Editor** Horst Reiter  
**Music by** Enis Rotthoff  
**Production Design** Maximilian Lange, Oliver Meidinger  
**Principal Cast** Ryszard Ronczewski, Neil Belakhdar, Neil Malik Abdullah, Sanan Afrashteh

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*Kaddisch für einen Freund* (working title: “Kaddish for a Friend”) is the authentic and touching tragi-comic story of an intense friendship between two mismatched heroes in today’s Berlin.

Russian Jew and WWII veteran Alexander Rabinowitsch, now 84, does not want to go into a retirement home. He fights against the strains of his age, holed up with all his memories in his flat in Kreuzberg, observing the district’s decline with relaxed cynicism.

His Palestinian neighbor, 14-year-old Ali Messalem, has quite different problems: he longs for nothing more than to be accepted by his fellow Arab youths. In a test of courage, he breaks into the home of the Jewish arch enemy, which he then wrecks with abandon. Criminal charges arise and Ali faces a guilty judgment and expulsion.

Alexander is prepared to withdraw charges under one condition: Ali will help him to renovate the place entirely so the social services will decide that he, Alexander, is capable of taking care of himself. Thrown unwillingly together, the duo’s initial distance and hostility move through interest, recognition and tolerance to a genuine friendship.

But when Alexander is unable to keep his promise to prevent Ali’s court appearance, the boy’s deep-seated prejudices come to the fore again. Full of rage and disappointment, he breaks from the old Jew. With passionate conviction and the last of his strength, Alexander mobilizes for their special friendship …

Polish-born Ryszard Ronczewski (Alexander) is known best for his stage acting in his native country, but made many film appearances in small roles, culminating in his playing the lead in Robert Thalheim’s *And Along Come Tourists* (2007), which played at Cannes that same year. He also appeared in Dominik Graf’s *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* (2010).

Neil Belakhdar (Ali) was born in Algeria, moving with his family to Berlin at the age of one. He has been active since an early age in youth theater. His film appearances include Dennis Gansel’s *The Wave* and the upcoming vampire film *Wir sind die Nacht*.

*Kaddisch für einen Freund*’s writer-director Leo Khasin was born in Moscow in 1973, moving to Germany when he was eight. He made his film acting debut aged twelve, in Ephraim Sevela’s *Das Wiegenlied*, before moving into dentistry! In 2000 he entered the Kaskeline Filmakademie in Berlin, proceeding to make short films and videos. Among the former, *Durst* (2003) was nominated for the German Short Film Award. He studied Script Writing in Hamburg, where he developed this film. *Kaddisch für einen Freund* marks Khasin’s debut as feature film writer and director.

“My heroes are two confidants from the time when I was still a dentist,” Khasin explains. “My patients were a colorful bunch from every part of the world, including sentimental Russians stranded in Berlin and loud Arabs. But as much as I thought about them I couldn’t bring them together until, one day, a very scared young Lebanese boy was given a nod of encouragement by an old Russian Jew. It was the birth of my heroes, two dissimilar friends who are destined to overcome the gulf between cultures.”

After films such as *Enthüllung einer Ehe, Romeo, Folgeschäden, Bin ich sexy?, In Sachen Kaminski und Schutzlos*, which Martin Bach executive produced for other companies, *Kaddisch für einen Freund* is SiMa Film’s first own production. The company aims to produce, says Martin Bach, “courageous, unmistakably individual films of both quality and entertainment and so enable a new and up-to-date fresh look at the reality of our lives.”
Kokowääh

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Comedy, Romantic Comedy  
**Production Company** Barefoot Films/Berlin, in co-production with BJ Productions/Berlin, Warner Bros./Hamburg  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)  
**Producers** Til Schweiger, Béla Jarzyk, Tom Zickler  
**Director** Til Schweiger  
**Screenplay** Béla Jarzyk, Til Schweiger  
**Director of Photography** Christof Wahl  
**Editor** Constantin von Seld  
**Music** by Dirk Reichardt  
**Production Design** Silke Buhr

**Principal Cast** Til Schweiger, Emma Tiger Schweiger, Samuel Finzi, Jasmin Gerat, Meret Becker  
**Casting** Emrah Ertem  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Berlin, Potsdam, July – September 2010

Germany’s most successful cinema superstar, writer-producer-director-actor Til Schweiger, returns hot on the heels of his last smash hit, this time with his young daughter, Emma Tiger Schweiger, as his co-star.

Sticking to what he knows and does best, romantic comedy, in Kokowääh (kòkòwāː) as in ‘Coq-au-Vin’) the effervescent Schweiger plays scriptwriter Henry, who bounces from one unhappy relationship to the next. His career is also going nowhere fast. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, he gets the sensational offer to become co-author of the script of a best-selling novel. And he will be working with his ex-girlfriend and great love Katharina (Jasmin Gerat).

Henry has his second chance, both at work and romance, when...equally suddenly, the doorbell rings and there stands the eight-year-old Magdalena (Emma Tiger Schweiger), and his life is once again turned topsy turvy. The child is seemingly the result of one of Henry’s many one night stands and he is now charged with caring for her whilst her mother Charlotte (Meret Becker) is dealing with legal matters in the USA.

Henry, who now finds himself having to become an instant dad, is completely out of his depth, as is Tristan (Samuel Finzi), Charlotte’s husband, who had no idea he was not Magdalena’s biological father. After all, it’s not like Henry doesn’t have his hands full already, writing the script of his life and trying to win back his great love.

Okay, folks! What else do you need? Two words – Til Schweiger! This is going to be big and you know it!

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Löwenzahn – Das Kinoabenteuer

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Action/Adventure, Children’s Film, Educational, Family Entertainment  
**Production Company** Studio.tv.film/Berlin, in co-production with ZDF/Mainz  
**With backing from** Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)  
**Producers** Albert Schäfer, Milena Maitz  
**Director** Peter Timm  
**Screenplay** Henriette Pieper, André Georgi  
**Director of Photography** Achim Poulheim  
**Editor** Barbara Hennings  
**Music by** Martin Todsharow  
**Production Design** Heike Wolf  
**Principal Cast** Guido Hammesfahr, Ruby O. Fee, Petra Schmidt-Schaller, Dominique Horwitz, Helmut Krauss, Sanam Afrashteh  
**Casting** Simone Bär, Jessika Eisenkolb  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 16:9, Dolby Digital  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Thuringia, Berlin-Brandenburg, Baden-Württemberg, Austria, July – September 2010

Löwenzahn is to millions of Germans, both young and old, what Sesame Street is to Americans and Blue Peter to the British, a television series they are growing up or grew up with and, in this case, still going strong after thirty years. Each week, Mr. Fritz Fuchs enchants, entertains and informs. It’s a simple format and all the better for it, treating its audience with respect and taking them along for the gentle ride.
To celebrate its trigentennial, Löwenzahn is now hitting the big screen with a brand new adventure format, Löwenzahn – Das Kinoabenteuer. Fritz Fuchs’s home has been totally trashed by bad guys with an agenda: a wild pursuit across the entire country ensues, culminating in Fritz and his companion Laila undertaking the spectacular rescue of three cute puppies above a deep Alpine gorge!

“We’ve taken the familiar friends from Löwenzahn the series and combined them with a great deal of action, emotion and fun,” says Milena Maitz, the film’s producer (together with Albert Schäfer). “This is a big action, funny adventure with lots of tension. It’s much more breathless than the series: it has much more of everything! Whereas the series has documentary and social science elements, the film is pure entertainment in which Fritz Fuchs uses his scientific abilities, but there are no semi-documentary elements.”

The überaccomplished Peter Timm directs Löwenzahn – Das Kinoabenteuer with the same assured hand he brought to Rennschwein Rudi Rüssel in 1995 (winner of the Bavarian Film Award for Best Direction), Mein Bruder ist ein Hund (2004, winner of the 22nd Chicago International Children’s Film Festival’s The Best of the Fest Award), and 2006’s Rennschwein Rudi Rüssel 2 – Rudi rennt wieder, which took the Best Children’s Film Award at the 2007 Eilat International Film Festival in Israel.

And the classic cinema no-go area, working with children and animals? Not a problem! Ruby O. Fee, who plays Laila, “was a very quick choice,” Maitz relates. “The other children, one playing the bad guy, Roman Zenkert, in flashback, the other Fritz Fuchs, we found through a general casting based on their similarity to their adult counterparts.”

"Löwenzahn – Das Kinoabenteuer is aimed,” Milena Maitz explains, “at children up to twelve, but the format will also attract parents and maybe even grandparents.” In keeping with the film’s bigger-bigger-more-more! format, “we’ve used lots of dogs, hares, geese and for the mountain scenes we have three elephants! They are very sensitive animals,” she adds, “more demanding than some actors!”

Nocturne

Type of Project Documentary Cinema Genre Art, Music Production Company German Film & Television Academy (dffb)/Berlin, in co-production with IJB/Berlin Producers Ingo J. Biermann, Andreas Louis Director Ingo J. Biermann Screenplay Ingo J. Biermann, Stephan Schoenholtz Director of Photography Kai Miedendorp Editors Benjamin Laser, Ingo J. Biermann Music by Dmitri Kourliandski, Kairos Quartet Principal Cast Claudius von Wrochem, Simone Heiligendorff, Wolfgang Bender, Stefan Häussler, Dmitri Kourliandski Format HDCAM, color, cs, Dolby Digital 5.1 Shooting Languages German, English Shooting in Berlin, Vienna, December 2008 – September 2009

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Nocturne accompanies a piece of music, Night-turn for strings, from its birth in the composer’s head, via the arrangement of the interpretations and through rehearsals to its premiere, in this case the first reading of the notes by the musicians of the renowned Kairos Quartet. Featuring also the intellectual, sensory and emotional factors involved, this is a portrait of Dmitri Kourliandski’s inventive compositional methods as well as the working dynamics of a contemporary quartet.

“How does music take form? How does the composition become more lively, more intense? How does it get its style and character and what changes do the interpretations make? Those are the core questions,” says Nocturne’s producer-director-writer, Ingo J. Biermann. “In this genre hardly anyone tackles the sub-cultural or aesthetic context anymore.”

Nocturne further stands out because this is a film about new music that has yet to be composed, and being there during its genesis and onwards. “And my second interest,” Biermann continues, “is to accompany a string quartet whose inner dynamic, arising from their many years together, provides a basis for tension and excitement; something I have never ever seen captured in a film.”

The Kairos Quartet has been forging its reputation for contemporary music since it was founded in 1996, and took to the project eagerly.
Dmitri Kourliandski, from Russia, constructed *Night-turn* from sounds created by using the instruments in unconventional ways, for which he also invented a new way of writing the notes, some twenty techniques, each of which prescribes a new sound. Kourliandski wants to discover what happens to this material when it encounters people, musicians as well as listeners. As the composer himself says: “There can be no restrictions on art. ‘Abnormal’ sounds do not contradict today’s language position. On the contrary, such sounds form new active fields, where the decisive element is not the reliance on available experience, but the possibility of gaining a new one.” The result, for both musicians and listeners, is a brand new and unexpected listening experience.

“Music always touches the soul,” Biermann opines, “whether one is aware of it or not. I look for images that portray the effect of the music and intensify it, especially for viewers who have until now little experience of or access to contemporary music. I aim to make the music’s creation and the artistic creative process an experience audiences can share. *Nocturne* sharpens the senses to give rise to another understanding of how one can encounter contemporary music and the excitement that it gives rise to.”

**Ingo J. Biermann** was born in Stuttgart in 1978. He studied directing at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) from 2004-2010. His films include *Deed Poll* (2004), *Before the Concert* (2007) and *Mistress* (2009), which is part of German Films’ Next Generation 2010, as well as his feature film *Voice – Sculpting Sound with Maja Ratkje* (shooting until spring 2011 in several European countries). *Nocturne* is one of several feature films being realized as part of filmmaker Andres Veiel’s masterclass at the dffb.
It is important for me to make the story of the young transman Lukas accessible to a multi-faceted audience in a modern narrative style,” Bernardi explains. “It is a story which could happen a thousand ways like this or in a similar fashion and it’s one where I want to carry the spectator off into a world that is moving and probably also unknown in most instances. Above all, though, Romeo should electrify and speak with great naturalness and alternate quiet and loud humor about the deep human desire to be free.”

Velber, who set up her Cologne-based company BOOGIEFILM with Kristina Löbbert in June 2009, recalls that casting the two male leads was not plain sailing: “The actors we contacted via the agencies loved the screenplay and the story, but the young men of Middle Eastern background we approached to play Fabio had a problem with what they would have to portray on camera and turned the offer down.”

“We tried all of the agents, theaters, and youth theaters as well as street casting,” she adds, “but we are very happy with the actors chosen for the three leads – Rick Okon as Lukas, Maximilian Befort as Fabio and Liv Lisa Fries as the girlfriend Ine. They are remarkably mature in the way they play their scenes.”

“We had a coaching team from Berlin and London to give them 1 ½ weeks of intensive rehearsals to get them into their characters before the filming started. However, this didn’t just involve classic rehearsals, as Rick and Maximilian also had to go to nightclubs together as a gay couple.”

According to Velber, the choice of the SI-2K digital camera, which was deployed by the Oscar®-winning Slumdog Millionaire, means that DoP Moritz Schultheiss’ camerawork “will look more like American indie cinema than the Berlin School.”

“What’s more, we want to show a different side of Cologne than the one usually appearing in the Tatort series: not just the Cathedral, but also the Cologne of young people, gays and immigrants,” Velber notes.

Das rote Zimmer

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Comedy Production Company Moana-Film/Berlin Producer Rudolf Thome Director Rudolf Thome Screenplay Rudolf Thome Director of Photography Ute Freund Editor Beatrice Babin Production Design Reinhold Blaschke Principal Cast Peter Knaack, Katharina Lorenz, Seyneb Saleh, Hanns Zischler Casting Serpil Turhan Format HD, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Stereo Shooting Language German Shooting in Plöwen (Ostvorpommern), Berlin, Dahme, July – August 2010

Contact
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An avid reader of newspapers online each morning, director Rudolf Thome came across a series of articles early last year about an American woman who had founded an Institute for Philematology to research into the phenomenon of kissing and measure the changes in the hormones in the blood and saliva before and after the act of kissing.

“I thought that it would be fun to make a film about this subject and set to work on a screenplay in the spring of 2009,” Thome recalls. “The process of writing my screenplays can be followed ‘live’ on the Internet in my online diary (www.moana.de) and I often get reactions from people about the script. On this project, Cora Frost – who had appeared in Tigerstreifenbaby wartet auf Tarzan and Paradiso – wrote and said: ‘But, Rudolf, we’ve already made this film!’”

“I’m not worried if the subject matter and characters are similar to previous films,” he explains. “In fact, during shooting, I have discovered my screenplay anew through the actors as they give the characters life and through my work with the crew. I now know that the film will be very, very different from everything I have done before. My other films have often had light comic touches, but this film will be extremely comical. It often happened that we were laughing out loud on the set during the shoot!”

Das rote Zimmer (“Red Room”) centers on the philematologist Fred Hintermeier whose obsession for his research leads his wife to file for divorce and to mobbing from his colleagues at the institute. A chance meeting with the young Luzie in his favorite bookshop sees
him accepting her invitation to come to her “laboratory” in her house, which she shares with her friend Sibil. It is only once he has arrived there that Fred finds that he will become a subject of analysis for Luzie’s new book which is exploring men’s souls. And, at some point, the red room of the film’s title will play an important role.

While there are some Thome “regulars” in the supporting parts such as Hanns Zischler, the three lead roles of Fred, Luzie and Sibil are cast with three actors – Peter Knaack, Katharina Lorenz, Seyneb Saleh – working with the director for the first time.

Moreover, another innovation is that Thome is working for the first time with the RedOne digital camera. “It is an incredible experience,” he enthuses.

“Despite me being a computer freak, I had always held off taking that step and continued working on film stock. But now I can see what is possible: it opens a whole new world for me and saves me a lot of time because I can see the result straightaway.”

Düsseldorf’s famous art academy at the beginning of the 1970s is the setting for writer-director Rainer Kirberg’s latest film Das schlafende Mädchen (“The Sleeping Girl”) which features Jakob Diehl, one of the members of the famous German acting dynasty, Volksbühne stage actress Natalie Krane, and rising star Christoph Bach in the lead roles.

Diehl – who is also a musician and artist as well as being an actor – plays the young video performance artist Hans who is studying at the academy when he meets the young down-and-out Ruth in the city park. Fascinated by this mysterious girl, Hans makes her the focus of his video work with unpredictable consequences as life and art become ever more interchangeable.

“The film’s setting is particularly interesting because it was at the beginning of the use of video on a wider scale,” Kirberg explains. “It seemed most appropriate to use the form of the fake documentary for this story and let the action speak through the camera of the lead actor as an artist. I have often thought that films about artists were too theatrical, but here film and art come together in a very organic way.”

“While the form may be experimental in many respects, the underlying story has a classical dramaturgy,” producer Caroline Kirberg stresses. “And a big challenge for us was to create a real artistic identity for Hans with his atelier full of works of art and installations. There was a lot of attention to detail here with Jakob and [production designer] Steffi Lindner going out and taking lots of photos.”

Rainer Kirberg points out that it was a lengthy process for the development of the project and the raising of the finance, but the commitment of the four producers to hold true through thick and thin, even when the application for film subsidy was unsuccessful, is an indication of the project’s quality.

“What also makes the project so interesting is that the producers come from different backgrounds,” producer Caroline Kirberg adds. “One is more from the business angle, and others are from an independent and artistic background, while Joroni Film, for example, was a very important partner as a service provider for equipment since our budget was very limited.”

A film set in the Düsseldorf academy would not however be complete without Joseph Beuys appearing in some form or other. Rainer Kirberg doesn’t disappoint here. Thanks to previously unpublished documentary footage shot by the artist-filmmaker Hans-Peter Böffgen in 1971 during the strikes protesting Beuys’ dismissal, the audiences will be able to catch a glimpse of the legendary artist in a “prominent supporting role.”

Das schlafende Mädchen

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Art, Experimental, Drama, Love Story, Fake Documentary Production Companies Entropie Film/Düsseldorf, jucca film Angerbauer & Kirberg/Berlin, Monitorpop Entertainment/Berlin, Joroni Film/Berlin Producers Rainer Kirberg, Caroline Kirberg, Töni Schifer, Jonas Knudsen, Ansgar Wacker Director Rainer Kirberg Screenplay Rainer Kirberg Director of Photography Birgit Möller Editor Ansgar Wacker Production Design Stefanie Lindner Principal Cast Jakob Diehl, Natalie Krane, Christoph Bach, Erwin Leder Format HD, b&w, 1:1.85, Dolby Stereo Shooting Language German Shooting in Berlin and Düsseldorf, May 2010, September 2010

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**Sohnemänner**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Drama  
**Production Company** Home Run Pictures/Stuttgart, in co-production with MFG Baden-Württemberg  
**Producer** Peter Rommel  
**Director** Ingo Haeb  
**Screenplay** Ingo Haeb  
**Director of Photography** Oliver Schwabe  
**Editor** Monika Schindler  
**Production Design** Stephanie Brenner  
**Principal Cast** Peter Franke, Marc Zwinz, Bernhard Schütz, Renate Delfs, Vera Teltz, Leon Köhler  
**Format** Digital, color, 1:1.85, blow-up to 35 mm, Dolby SR  
**Language** German  
**Shooting** in Black Forest and Hamburg, August – September 2010

Principal photography wrapped in Hamburg in September on writer-director Ingo Haeb’s second feature **Sohnemänner** produced by Peter Rommel’s Stuttgart-based Home Run Pictures with ZDF’s Das kleine Fernsehspiel as part of the “Fifty-Fifty” initiative.

Rommel first got to know Haeb when he played the title role in Stefan Krohmer’s film *They’ve Got Knut* and they subsequently worked together on his feature directorial debut *Neandertal* (co-directed with Jan-Christoph Glaser).

A graduate of Cologne’s Academy of Media Arts (KHM) and Berlin’s German Film & Television Academy (dffb), Haeb had since also written screenplays for Lars Jessen’s *The Day Bobby Ewing Died* and his latest film *Hochzeitspolka*, in addition to developing his own projects.

Two years ago, Haeb and Rommel came together again for the new feature project **Sohnemänner**.

“We wanted to tell a story about the complex relationship between a father and son in a serious and humorous way,” Rommel says.

It’s only been a few weeks since 65-year-old Edgar (Peter Franke), a former doorman in Hamburg’s St. Pauli district, had his elderly mother Hilde (Renate Delfs) moved to an old people’s home. But when he goes to visit her, she isn’t there anymore. Uwe (Marc Zwinz), his son from one of his previous relationships, has “saved” his grandmother from what he considers to be undignified conditions and taken her to the Black Forest where he has set up home with his partner Johann. However, Edgar is not one to accept such humiliation and sets off for the south-west of Germany to wage a subtle power struggle with Uwe to wrestle back control over his mother’s care …

“This bruiser from St. Pauli is like a fish out of water when he comes to this region,” Rommel explains. “It is mountainous and the people speak a strange dialect in this alien place where he finds his son. He pretends as if he knew everything about his son’s gayness, but he actually doesn’t know anything. When his wife died, he washed his hands of his son and the boy grew up in his grandmother’s care. He had been indifferent to his son and this greatly affected Uwe.”

As Rommel points out, Peter Franke and Marc Zwinz had been in Haeb’s mind for the leads as father and son from the very outset.

Zwinz had previously worked with Haeb on *Neandertal* and, as they both live in Hamburg, he could be closely involved in the development of the screenplay and the tone for his character as Uwe.

Veteran theater and film actor Franke’s past credits include *Brother of Sleep* and *The Miracle of Bern* and he also appeared opposite Ulrich Tukur and Eva Mattes in the St. Pauli Theater’s production of *The Threepenny Opera*.

Meanwhile, **Sohnemänner** marks Rommel’s return to shooting in Baden-Württemberg and working with the regional film fund MFG Baden-Württemberg after more than six years.

“I come from Stuttgart, so I know the Black Forest very well and could come up with possible locations for the film,” Rommel concludes.

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**Der Sommer der Gaukler**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Comedy  
**Production Companies** gff sued/Munich, Moviepool/Munich, in co-production with BR/Munich, ORF/Vienna  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Business Location Südtirol – Alto Adige (BLS)  
**Producers** Hans W. Geißendörfer, Ernst Geyer  
**Director** Marcus H. Rosenmüller  
**Screenplay** Robert Hültner, Klaus Wulfertstetter

Maxi Schafroth, Marcus H. Rosenmüller, Max von Thun (Photo © gff sued/Matteo Bossi)
The film’s producer Hans W. Geißendörfer, who is one of the co-producers of this year’s Golden Palm-winner Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives, had originally been approached by Robert Hültner with a screenplay based on his historical novel of the same name about Emmanuel Schikaneder. The theater impresario later became known as the librettist of Mozart’s The Magic Flute.

“When we started thinking of who might be right to direct, ‘Rosi’ was the first on our list,” Geißendörfer recalls. “Once he had read the screenplay, he didn’t need much persuading to accept the offer because he could see the comic potential of the story.”

The film’s story is set in the summer of 1780: Schikaneder’s theater troupe is on its way to Salzburg when it gets held up in a small mountain village on the Austrian border due to a missing performance permit. Meanwhile, a dispute is escalating in this village between the mine owner Paccoli and the rebelling mine workers. The situation immediately inspires Schikaneder with the idea for a new play – but, before long, not only the mine workers, but also Schikaneder’s actors have taken to the picket line since their boss seems to care more about spending time with high society than his actors. A hastily put together open-air performance by the troupe then leads to major disruption.

The cast includes Max von Thun (one of the leads in Geißendörfer’s most recently completed feature In der Welt habt ihr Angst), Lisa Maria Potthoff (who appeared in Klaus Würbitzky’s Der Himmel hat vier Ecken earlier this year), live performer/filmmaker Maxi Schafroth, and Anna Maria Sturm (who previously worked with Rosenmüller on Beste Gegend and Beste Zeit).

Shooting on the 3.5 million Euros project began with five days on location in South Tyrol with support from the newly created economic development agency Business Location Südtirol – Alto Adige (BLS) in Bozen. The production then moved for the bulk of its shoot to the Museumsdorf Bayernischer Wald in Tittling where production designer Josef Sanktjohanser had several additional sets constructed to join existing buildings in the open-air museum to recreate a village setting in autumn 1780.

The production team will then cross over the border into the Czech Republic to travel to the historical town of Cesky Krumlov where the film’s opening scene from a performance of Agnes Bernauer will be shot in the Castle’s baroque theater, which is said to be the most completely preserved of its kind in the world.

Post-production will be undertaken at ARRI in Munich, and Movienet – who released Rosenmüller’s first feature film Grave Decisions – will also distribute Der Sommer der Gaukler in Germany.

UFO in Her Eyes

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Company Corázon International/Hamburg With backing from Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Hubert Bals Fund Producer Klaus Maeck Director Xiaolu Guo Screenplay Xiaolu Guo Director of Photography Michal Tywniuk Editor Nikolai Hartmann Music by Mocky Production Design Joe Yao Principal Cast Coco Shi, Udo Kier Casting Sabotage Sister, Xiao Wu Format 35 mm, color/b&w, cs, Dolby SR Shooting Language Mandarin Shooting in China, May – June 2010

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Winner of the Prix Opening Shot (Fondation Gan, France) for Best Script of the Cannes Cinéfondation Residence 2008, Xiaolu Guo’s UFO in Her Eyes is the story of an anonymous Chinese village woman, Kwok Yun, whose life changes abruptly when, one very hot afternoon, she sees a UFO flying through the sky.

Previously, Kwok lived a largely unnoticed life, with no dreams, no plans. But now everything changes. The village chief uses the unexpected event to boost the village – to get the economy roaring like in so many other places in China, to stimulate tourism, to get government support, and even to contact the USA.
Kwok Yun goes from outcast to important messenger. She is promoted by the communist party and even eventually leaves her old anonymous peasant life, heading towards a bright new future.

“I was partly inspired by Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* and Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*,” says writer-director Xiaolu Guo. “The film, which is visually rich, alive, improvisational and darkly funny, portrays the lives of ordinary individuals dealing with radical political changes in a chaotic contemporary Chinese society.”

In *UFO in Her Eyes*, Guo draws on the rural Chinese village where she grew up in Zhejiang province, south China, where the old peasants, who had experienced everything from feudalism to communism and now capitalism, could no longer adjust to the new demands. “Whilst the young ones,” she says, “were often confused by their elders’ anger, bored by the village and just wanted to leave. I felt this myself: there was nothing apart from poverty and the oppression of a very strong tradition and a tough totalitarian society.”

Born in 1973, Xialou Guo went to Beijing at the age of eighteen to study at the film academy, writing five novels over the next few years. In 2002 she moved to London to continue her film studies. She has made a name for herself as a writer and filmmaker, both in China and in Europe.

**Corazon International** was founded in 2004, primarily as a production company for Fatih Akin’s film projects but also to participate in international co-productions. The company’s credits include *Head-On* (Golden Bear 2004), the Turkish co-production *Takva – A Man’s Fear of God* and Akin’s own *The Edge of Heaven*.

Guo’s first feature (this is her second), *She, A Chinese*, screened in Locarno in 2009 and won the festival’s top prize, the Golden Leopard. Starting life as her second novel in English, *UFO in Her Eyes* is, says producer Klaus Maeck, “an interesting, authentic story, framing a subtle portrait of social development, the visualization of which emotionally touches viewers, making them curious to immerse themselves in the story onscreen. Guo takes a bittersweet view on the flip side of the economic miracle – where simple people pay the price for this brave new world.”

**Die Unsichtbare**

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**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Drama

**Production Company** teamWorx Film & Television/Ludwigsburg, in co-production with SWR/Stuttgart, ARTE/Strasbourg, RBB/Potsdam

**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, BKM, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Producers** Jochen Laube, Fabian Maubach

**Director** Christian Schwochow

**Screenplay** Heide Schwochow, Christian Schwochow

**Director of Photography** Frank Lamm

**Editor** Jens Klüber

**Production Design** Stine Fischer Christensen, Ulrich Noethen, Dagmar Manzel, Ronald Zehrfeld

**Casting** Anja Dihrberg

**Format** RedOne 4K, color, cs, Dolby Digital

**Shooting Language** German

**Shooting in** Berlin, July – August 2010

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“Never change a winning team” – that was the unanimous verdict of the group behind Christian Schwochow’s graduation film *November Child*, which was nominated for two German Film Awards and attracted over 176,000 cinemagoers last year.

So, it wasn’t long before Schwochow, his co-screenwriter/mother Heide Schwochow, producer Jochen Laube, and DoP Frank Lamm were hatching their next project together.

“The pressure was great after the success of the first film,” recalls Laube, “and we often had a reaction from the funders and TV stations that the new project was quite different from *November Child*. Nevertheless, we had reliable partners for the financing in SWR and MFG Baden-Württemberg, and attracted Falcom Media as distributor this time.”

Set in the world of a drama academy, *Die Unsichtbare* (working title, “The Invisible”) centers on the 21-year-old Fine who is really too withdrawn and unsure of herself to be an actress. But then, to everyone’s surprise, she is faced with a major challenge when the well-known theater director Friedmann chooses her, of all people, for the lead in his new production. He sets an experiment in motion as Fine is pushed to her limits playing the extrovert and washed-out female...
The Crocodiles 3

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Children’s Film, Family Entertainment Production Companies Westside Filmproduktion/Krefeld, Rat Pack Filmproduktion/Munich With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Christian Becker, Lena Schömann Director Wolfgang Groos Screenplay Christian Ditter, Thomas Bahmann, Ralf Hertwig, Peter Thorwarth Director of Photogra-

figure of Camille. As Camille, she succeeds in nearing her neighbor Joachim and conquering him. At home, she stops being her mother’s unshakeable support in the care of her mentally handicapped sister and brings the family unit out of kilter. Challenged by Friedmann to go even further, Fine is in danger of losing hold of herself in the continuing quest for her self.

Three of the actors from November Child also appear in the new film: Ulrich Matthes in a guest role as Ben Kästner, Anna Maria Mühe as a fellow drama student Irina, and Christina Drechsler as Fine’s handicapped sister.

“We had cast throughout Germany to find the right actress for Fine, but Christian had seen Stine Fischer Christensen in Susanne Bier’s After the Wedding and was convinced she was the one,” Laube says.

“Stine speaks German with an accent, but it is explained in the screenplay that she hails from Denmark,” Laube continues. “Although she has mainly worked in film, Stine also attended drama school and had similar experiences to Fine, which she could bring into the character.”

“Whoever doesn’t want to lose out these days has to pretend early on that they know exactly who they are,” says Schwochow about the subject matter of his new film. “The sooner they appear to know their place and their predetermined path, the greater the chances of success. But what then falls by the wayside? Trial and error. Searching. Society simultaneously offers more and more identities and ways of life and then demands individuality – how is one supposed to decide without searching? Like Fine, young people lose themselves much easier today in identities which don’t have anything to do with them. It’s no surprise then that many are already ripe for therapy in their mid-20s.”

They say that all good things come in threes – and Westside Filmproduktion and Rat Pack Filmproduktion are now set to score a hat-trick with the third film of The Crocodiles gang coming into German cinemas early next year.

The producers had already been considering a third and final outing for The Crocodiles during the shooting of the second film in summer 2009, with the young actors playing the gang members suggesting ideas to director Christian Ditter for a sequel, such as bringing the two rogues Dennis (Jacob Matschenz) and Kevin (Axel Stein) back from the first film.

Ditter worked on a screenplay with input from fellow screenwriters Thomas Bahmann, Ralf Hertwig, and Peter Thorwarth before delivering his final draft to be directed by Wolfgang Groos.

“We had always wanted to work with Wolfgang because he had shown in previous work like Hangtime – Kein leichtes Spiel and the Rennschein Rudi Rüssel TV series that he has a real knack for working with children,” producer Lena Schömann recalls.

“It’s not always the case in film franchises that you can keep all of the young actors from one film to the next, but we’ve managed this with the Crocodiles gang,” she adds. “The kids have grown up a little bit more since last time and they are starting to have other interests: for example, Olli [played by Manuel Steitz] goes off on holiday with his girlfriend, while Kai [Fabian Halbig] has gone to basketball camp. They are beginning to grow out of the need to be in a gang, but this story sees them experience their last big adventure and a great mission.”

In the final part of the trilogy, The Crocodiles are celebrating Hannes’ (Nick Romeo Reimann) birthday with a spin around the go-cart track at breathtaking speeds. Everyone is having fun when Frank (David Hürtten) suddenly loses control of his cart and crashes into a concrete wall! He is taken to the hospital in a critical state and it is touch and go whether he will survive. The doctors have to find a donor for his damaged liver – and the ideal match is Frank’s brother Dennis who is currently doing time in prison with his partner in crime Kevin. In a race against time, The Crocodiles come up with an unconventional plan to save Frank.

“Some of the locations from the first two films will re-appear in the third one such as the children’s family homes which we shot in Hückelhoven, but we also have a number of new settings to make things exciting and varied. The gang’s headquarters are this time in a skyscraper in Bochum and we were able to use a prison in Vorstadtkrokodile 3
Recklinghausen that closed last year for the prison break scenes,” Schömann says.

The first two films based on the characters from Max von der Grün’s bestseller have been seen by over 1.4 million cinemagoers in Germany alone and won countless national and international prizes, including the German Film Award this year.

Meanwhile, the German theatrical distributor Constantin Film plans to release the final part of The Crocodiles trilogy at the end of January next year to coincide with the winter half-term holidays.

**Weil ich schöner bin**

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama, Family Entertainment Production Company Filmgalerie 451/Berlin With backing from Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, BKM, German Federal Film Board (FFA) Producers Frieder Schlaich, Irene von Alberti Director Frieder Schlaich Screenplay Claudia Schaefer Directors of Photography Benedict Neuenfels Editor Karina Ressler Production Design Anne Schlaich, Sasa Zivkovic Principal Cast Mariangel Böhnke, Angeles Aparicio, Mira Aring, Lavinia Wilson Casting Antje Scholz Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR Shooting Language German Shooting in Berlin, July – August 2010

**Contact**
Filmgalerie 451 GmbH & Co. KG · Irene von Alberti Saarbrückerstrasse 24 · 10405 Berlin/Germany phone +49-30-33 98 28 00 · fax +49-30-33 98 28 10 email: info@filmgalerie451.de · www.filmgalerie451.de

Thirteen-year-old Charo is ‘enjoying’ the worst time of her life: puberty! She is also living illegally in Germany, together with her mother. When the latter is caught by the police, she decides to move back to Colombia with her daughter, which ends up with Charo having to fight for her future in Germany all by herself.

Based on a true story, **Weil ich schöner bin** ("Cos I’m More Beautiful") is aimed primarily at a younger audience but is, of course, suitable for grown-ups too!
**Wunderkinder**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** History, Family Drama  
**Production Company** CCC Filmkunst/Berlin, in co-production with Degeto Film/Frankfurt  
**With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)  
**Producers** Artur Brauner, Alice Brauner  
**Director** Marcus O. Rosenmüller  
**Screenplay** Stephen Glantz, Rolf Schübel, Kris Karathomas, Marcus O. Rosenmüller, from a story by Art Bernd  
**Director of Photography** Roman Nowocien  
**Music by** Martin Stock, Michael Zechbauer  
**Production Design** Petra Albert  
**Principal Cast** Kai Wiesinger, Catherine Flemming, Gudrun Landgrebe, Gedeon Burkhard, Konstantin Wecker, Natalia Avelon, Mark Zak, Elin Kolev, Mathilda Adamik, Imogen Burell  
**Casting** Uwe Bünker  
**Format** ARRI Alexa, color, 1:1.85, Dolby SR  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Berlin, Brandenburg, North-Rhine-Westphalia, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, September – November 2010

*Wunderkinder* is in every aspect a children’s (which is also to say family) film. It tells of musically unusually talented children developing a deep and genuine friendship extending beyond their different religions and nationality. But when WWII comes to the Soviet Union, they and their families face a deadly threat.

The protagonists, the Jewish children Larissa and Abrascha, are violin virtuosos. Hanna, a young German girl, is also extremely talented. Living in Poltava, then The Ukraine, in 1941, they all share one great love: music. Their world is one of curiosity, joy and talent. But due to the insanity of grown-ups at home and abroad, their world is turned upside down and they are suddenly told they are no longer allowed to be friends!

Because *Wunderkinder* “is a film with children for children”, says Alice Brauner, the film’s producer (together with her veteran father, Artur Brauner), it is narrated completely from their perspective. Thus, for example, in the scenes where the families are forced to hide in a hunting cabin deep in the forest, for the children this becomes a fantasy adventure of hide-and-seek.

“This thematic is front and center in *Wunderkinder,*” Alice Brauner continues. “Of course, parents and adults will enjoy the film as well, but beyond just popcorn-cinema.” Not that she has anything against viewing and simultaneously consuming snack foods, but she also sees the need for a healthier cinema diet too: “It’s about offering children a film that makes some demands on them whilst at the same time still being entertaining. Friendship and music are universal themes that affect every child, which is why in Germany, for example, we are in talks with the ratings body, the FSK, to avoid any scene which would get us a rating higher than Age 6.”

*Wunderkinder*’s universal themes also make the film timeless. As Alice Brauner explains: “It plays out in World War Two, but it could just as easily take place against the background of any war or conflict; Sunni against Shite, Israelis and Palestinians, Indians and Pakistanis. But since my father is working through his own experiences from that time, it takes place in this setting.”

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**Yoko**

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema  
**Genre** Family Entertainment  
**Production Company** Blue Eyes Fiction/Munich, in co-production with Deutsche Columbia Pictures/Berlin, B.A. Produktion/Munich, Achte Babelsberg Film/Potsdam, DOR Film/Vienna, Fido Film/Stockholm  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, HessenInvestFilm, Bayerischer Bankenfonds (BBF), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), MEDIA, ORF, Österreichisches Filminstitut (ÖFI), Filmfonds Wien  
**Producers** Corinna Mehner, Martin Husmann  
**Director** Franziska Buch  
**Screenplay** Gerrit Hermans, KNISTER, Claudia Boysen  
**Director of Photography** Jan Fehe  
**Editor** Paul Sedlacek  
**Music by** Klaus Badelt, Ian Honeyman  
**Production Design** Uwe Szielasko  
**Principal Cast** Tobias Moretti, Justus von Dohnányi, Jessica Schwarz, Jamie Bick, Friedrich Heine, Lilly Reulein  
**Casting** Emrah Erten, Stefany Pohlmann  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Munich, Augsburg, Karlsruhe, Frankfurt, Potsdam, Vienna, Tyrol, August – October 2010
Another massively charming family entertainment film from Blue Eyes Fiction, the company that keeps ‘em coming, Yoko is the story of a cute and mysterious Yeti child who one day suddenly appears in the tree house belonging to 11-year-old Pia, who has lost her father.

Yoko has escaped from the nasty big game hunter Thor van Sneider, who wants to capture and turn him into an international sensation. But Pia is determined to protect her new-found friend with supernatural talents and a very special sense of humor.

But the small Yeti from the icy Himalayas is not suited to our climate; the unusual heat and van Sneider’s equally determined efforts to capture him begin to take their toll, draining him of his life energy. Pia and her friends decide to get Yoko home as fast as possible – but van Sneider has other ideas...

Yoko’s director Franziska Buch was born in Stuttgart and learned her craft at Munich’s University of Television & Film, after which she has become a recognized expert in making high-quality entertainment, including such audience and critics’ hits as Bibi Blocksberg und das Geheimnis der blauen Eulen (2004), which took the main award at children’s film festivals in Chicago, Moscow, Bombay and the Czech Republic.

Blue Eyes Fiction was founded in 2003. The company’s creative engine is Corinna Mehner, who states: “Our intention is to produce high-quality projects for an international audience.” Just one sample from the company’s filmography demonstrates how much she has succeeded to date: Hexe Lilli – der Drache und das magische Buch (2008), which proved a huge German domestic success and also sold around the world. A sequel, Hexe Lilli – die Reise nach Mandolan (also from the gifted pen of Yoko’s writer, the prolific children’s author KNISTER) will be released early next year. A third Hexe Lilli film is currently in pre-production.

Yoko is getting a major studio release through Sony Pictures and is being sold worldwide by CINEPOOL – “Not from bad parents”, as they say in German!
A one-way trip to the dark side of the European dream. Where no one looks. Where no one cares. Where exile, loneliness and money prevail. This is the story of Arben, the Albanian, who leaves the poorest country of Europe for the richest. He needs money to marry and obey the rules of his people. But the eldorado has its own rules, it is not welcoming to strangers and only the strongest survive. The Albanian is one of them, and he will pay the price. And learn that losing his innocence does not guarantee a fair return ticket.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2010 Director Johannes Naber Screenplay Johannes Naber Director of Photography Sten Mende Editor Ben von Grafenstein Music by Oli Biehler Production Design Ina Timmerberg Producer Boris Schönfelder Co-Producer Dritan Huqi Production Company Neue Schönhauser Film/Berlin, in co-production with ON Film Production/Tirana Principal Cast Nik Xheililaj, Xhejlane Terbuńja, Ivan Shvedoff, Amos Zaharia, Stipe Erceg, André Hennicke Casting Uwe Bünker Length 104 min Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German/Albanian Subtitled Versions English, French Sound Technology Dolby Digital 5.1 Festivals Moscow 2010 (Feature Competition), Karlovy Vary 2010 (East of the West Competition), Pristina 2010 (In Competition), Pusan 2010, Bergen 2010 (In Competition) Awards Silver George Special Jury Prize & Best Leading Actor Moscow 2010 With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), National Center of Cinematography Albania

Johannes Naber was born in 1971 in Baden-Baden. He studied Philosophy and Indian Philology at the Freie Universität Berlin and Film at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy. Active as a freelance director, scriptwriter and gaffer, his films include: Leinfelden-Echterdingen (1997, short), Popstar (1999, music documentary), Anfassen erlaubt (2005, documentary), Der Zweifel (2007, short), and the feature The Albanian (2010).
Hanna and Simon have been a couple for 20 years. They live in Berlin, side by side in combative harmony. They are attractive, modern, mature, childless, cultivated, down-to-earth. Affairs, wanting children, moving in together, miscarriage, fleeing and returning: this anchorwoman and art technician have put a lot behind them, but they don’t have so much ahead of them anymore. That is until both, without knowing about the other’s actions, fall in love with the same man, Adam.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Tom Tykwer  
**Screenplay** Tom Tykwer  
**Director of Photography** Frank Griebe  
**Editor** Mathilde Bonnefoy  
**Music by** Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek, Reinhold Heil, Gabriel Mounsey  
**Production Design** Uli Hanisch  
**Producer** Stefan Arndt  
**Production Company** X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, ARD Degeto/Frankfurt, ARTE/Strasbourg  
**Principal Cast** Sophie Rois, Sebastian Schipper, Devid Striesow  
**Length** 119 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  
**Festivals** Venice 2010 (In Competition), Toronto 2010  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filmstiftung NRW

The External World

A boy learns to play the piano in a universe of absurdity.

**Genre** Comedy  
**Category** Animation, Short  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** David OReilly  
**Screenplay** David OReilly, Vernon Chatman  
**Editor** David OReilly  
**Music by** Bram Meindersma  
**Animation** Tobias von Burkersroda, Jim Levasseur, Max Stöhr  
**Producers** Henning Kamm, David OReilly  
**Production Companies** DETAiLFILM/Berlin, DOR/Berlin

**Voices** Hanayo Nakajima, Julian Barratt, Pearl Brilmyer, Adam Buxton, Christopher Kline, Tenko Nakajima  
**Length** 15 min  
**Format** HD, color/b&w, 16:9  
**Original Version** English  
**Sound Technology** 5.1  
**Festivals** Venice 2010 (Orizzonti Competition)  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Board (FFA), BKM

David OReilly was born in 1985 in Kilkenny/Ireland and is based in Berlin. At 15 he began working as an assistant at local animation studios, teaching himself 3D software in his spare time. He discovered cinema in 2005 when he was given the keys to an unused private theater with an enormous film library. Since then he has created a wide variety of independent short films. Noted for his disregard of conventions, his work is regarded as a groundbreaking force in contemporary 3D animation. His films include: RGB XYZ (2008), Octocat Adventure (2008), Please Say Something (2009), and The External World (2010).
The Day of the Cat – inspired by true experiences of Swiss author Thomas Hürlimann – tells a fascinating story of love and political power. The film grants a personal and unusual insight to the life of a statesman, portraying the Swiss Federal President’s last two days in office. While preparing for a royal state reception in honor of the Spanish King, an intrigue is planned behind his back, intending to cause his downfall. Private interests and the struggle for political power get tangled up and result in a dangerous mixture of highly explosive forces.

Der grosse Kater

THE DAY OF THE CAT

**Genre** Drama, Love Story  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Wolfgang Panzer  
**Screenplay** Claus P. Hant, Dietmar Güntche  
**Director of Photography** Edwin Horák  
**Editor** Jean-Claude Piroué  
**Production Design** Josef Sanktjohanser  
**Producers** Dietmar Güntche, Wolfgang Behr, Claudia Wick, Benito Müller, Wolfgang Müller  
**Production Company** Neue Bioskop Film/Munich, in co-production with Abrakadabra Films/Zurich, Barry Films/Berlin  
**Principal Cast** Bruno Ganz, Ulrich Tukur, Marie Bäumer, Christiane Paul, Edgar Selge, Justus von Dohnányi, Antoine Monot, Jr.  
**Length** 89 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitle Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festivals** Montreal 2010  
**Awards** Bavarian Film Prize 2010 (Producer’s Award)  
**With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), HessenInvest, Eurimages, Zürcher Filmstiftung, Bundesamt für Kultur

**Wolfgang Panzer** was born in 1947 in Munich and grew up in Turin and Lausanne. He studied Romance Languages and Literature, Sociology and Journalism in Lausanne and Fribourg. During his studies, he started working as a reporter and editor for Swiss Television. At the age of 23, he returned to Munich for his studies at the University of Television and Film (HFF). Since 1978, he has been working as a freelance author, producer and director.
Lila returns to Berlin after spending a year in the U.S., only to find that everything’s changed: her school has been taken over by Paris-Hilton-Queens, her mother has just fallen in love again, and her 11-year-old sister Luzy is totally hysterical about some band Lila’s never even heard of. But then, out of the blue, she meets this guy named Chriz – and falls head over heels in love with him. What Lila doesn’t know is that Chriz is actually the celebrated star of Berlin Mitte, the band everyone is going crazy about. Lila doesn’t have a clue what’s happening as she stumbles into the biggest romantic mess you can imagine …

SINGLE BY CONTRACT is a fresh-faced romantic comedy about every girl’s secret fantasy.

Genre Romantic Comedy Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2010 Director Marc Rothemund Screenplay Kristina Magdalena Henn, Lea Schmidbauer Director of Photography Martin Langer Editors Alexander Dittner, Hans Funck Music by Roland Spremberg, Gerd Baumann Production Design Carola Gauster Producers Ewa Karlstroem, Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton Production Company SamFilm/Munich Principal Cast Anna Fischer, Kostja Ullmann, Roman Knižka

Casting Uwe Bünker Length 105 min Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

Marc Rothemund began working as an assistant director in 1990 on commercials and TV productions. In 1995, he served as the German AD for Gérard Corbiau’s Oscar®-nominated Farinelli and followed that a year later with Dietl’s Rossini. He then made his directorial debut with SAT.1’s Wilde Jungs and two episodes of the ZDF Anwalt Abel series. His other films include: Love Scenes from Planet Earth (Das merkwürdige Verhalten ..., 1998), Ants in the Pants (Harte Jungs, 1999), Hope Dies Last (Die Hoffnung stirbt zuletzt, TV, 2001), Das Duo – Der Liebhaber (TV, 2003), Sophie Scholl – The Final Days (Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage, 2005), which was nominated for an Academy Award in the category Best Foreign Language Film, and SINGLE BY CONTRACT (Groupies bleiben nicht zum Frühstück, 2010).
Although Janis lived in Seaside for the past 20 years and most of the inhabitants have heard her name, almost nobody has seen her face. Because she resides here, but does not participate in the everyday life of Seaside, Janis calls herself an invisible person.

Since Janis had a terrible accident at the age of 22 she became paralyzed and spent the following decades in bed, leaving her bedroom just one or two times a year – watching the world around her house through a surveillance camera connected to her laptop.

With the camera she can look at all the spots that otherwise would stay concealed – her living room, her kitchen and especially the life outside her house. Since Janis cannot be part of the world that surrounds her, she takes at least a small extract to her own little world.

The film gives an insight into the universe of Janis Sawyer, one of the few permanent residents of Seaside, and looks at her hometown, once the location of the feature film The Truman Show, through her eyes.
The Days to Come is the story of an upper middle-class Berlin family on their personal journey from the present day into a near future, a journey into a time of uncertainty and grave changes. Due to a rare antibody reaction, Laura Kuper has to choose between her desire to have children and Hans, the love of her life. Her sister Cecilia is driven into the abyss of a newly developing terrorist movement by her unreturned love to Konstantin. And then there is Philip, the youngest child of the family, pulled into a hopeless war for Germany for the few remaining oilfields of Asia.

A destabilized family tackles a destabilized world, entering their future with all their hopes and fears.

**Genre** Future Drama

**Category** Feature Film Cinema

**Year of Production** 2010

**Director** Lars Kraume

**Screenplay** Lars Kraume

**Director of Photography** Sonja Rom

**Editor** Barbara Gies

**Music by** Christoph M. Kaiser, Julian Maas

**Production Design** Irina Kromayer

**Producers** Katrin Schlösser, Frank Döhm, Lars Kraume, Matthias Glasner, Jürgen Vogel

**Production Company** Badlands Film/Berlin, in co-production with UFA Cinema/Munich Berlin Cologne Potsdam, WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg, ARD Degeto Film/Frankfurt, Dream Team Filmproduction/Hürth

**Principal Cast** Bernadette Heerwagen, Daniel Brühl, Johanna Wokalek, August Diehl, Susanne Lothar, Ernst Stötzer, Mehdi Nebbou

**Casting** Nessie Nesslauer

**Length** 128 min

**Format** 35 mm, color, cs

**Original Version** German

**Subtitled Version** English

**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, HessenInvest, Filmstiftung NRW, Cine Tirol, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

Das Leben ist zu lang
LIFE IS TOO LONG

No crisis is as disastrous, overwhelming and unfair as Alfi Seliger’s. The Jewish filmmaker, hypochondriac and family man has a whole slew of troubles: his pubescent children, Romy and Alain, think he’s a ridiculous loser, while his wife, Helena, thinks they’re being generous. Not only that, his bank is going under and his new film project is being panned. Alfi is getting deeper and deeper into a web of intrigue and conspiracy. Natasha, the gambling-addict wife of a big producer, is after him, and so is onetime German world star Georg Maria Stahl. Friends are turning into enemies, hope into paranoia, and when even his psychiatrist advises him to end his miserable life, Alfi tries to kill himself, in a very theatrical gesture.

But as befits a born “nebbish”, a loveable loser, even his suicide fails – he survives and wakes up to his old life – but is it really the same?

Unexpectedly, his life takes a turn for the better, and soon, one tempting offer chases the next, long-held dreams suddenly come true – but is it all for real? Alfi struggles with his destiny, and when he confronts it, his bravest ploy begins.

Casting Simone Bär
Length 86 min Format 35 mm, color, cs
Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SRD With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), MEDIA

In Buenos Aires, 31-year-old Maria runs up against a long-kept family secret whose origins go back to the time of the Argentinian military dictatorship.

During a stopover on her way to Chile, 31-year-old Maria recognizes a nursery rhyme in Buenos Aires. Maria does not speak a word of Spanish, but without understanding what she is singing she remembers the Spanish lyrics. Disturbed and thrown off course, she breaks off her journey and wanders through the unfamiliar city.

On the phone to Germany she tells her father, Anton, about her experience and the peculiar fascination the unfamiliar city has on her. Two days later, Anton suddenly turns up at Maria’s hotel with something to confess; Maria spent the first three years of her life in Buenos Aires during the military dictatorship at the end of the seventies, until the people she had always thought were her parents adopted her and brought her to Germany. Father and daughter begin a journey together in search of Maria’s biological parents. Anton does everything he can to not lose his daughter.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature Film Cinematography  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Florian Cossen  
**Screenplay** Elena von Saucken, Florian Cossen  
**Director of Photography** Matthias Fleischer  
**Editor** Philipp Thomas  
**Music by** Matthias Klein

**Production Design** Victoria Pedemonte  
**Producers** Jochen Laube, Fabian Maubach  
**Production Company** teamWorx Televisions & Film/Ludwigsburg, in co-production with BR/Munich, SWR/Baden-Baden, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg/Ludwigsburg  
**Principal Cast** Jessica Schwarz, Michael Gwisdek, Rafael Ferro  
**Casting** Walter Rippel, Nina Haun  
**Length** 95 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, cs  
**Original Version** German/Spanish/English  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital 5.1  
**Festivals** Montreal 2010, Zurich 2010, Hof 2010  
**Awards** Audience Award, FIPRESCI Prize & Ecumenical Prize Montreal 2010 With backing from MFG Baden-Württemberg

**Florian Cossen** was born in Tel Aviv/Israel in 1979 and spent his childhood in Israel, Canada, Spain and Costa Rica before completing high school in Germany. He began working as an assistant director on advertising, television and feature films, before studying Film Directing at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy from 2002-2009. During that time he made several short films, including *Wolf’s Night (Wolfsnacht)* and *L’oubli*, shot in Montreal and co-directed by French-Canadian director Antonin Monmart. He was a visiting student at the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires for six months in 2006 and received a scholarship to attend a Hollywood Perspective workshop at the University of California in Los Angeles (2005). *The Day I Was Not Born (Das Lied in mir)* is his first feature.
Nantucket. The little island off the east coast of the United States is the capital of American whaling in 1850. Sailors, traders, harpooners – they all hope to make big money on land or on a whaler – and if not, then at least to have big adventures. One of them is Ishmael, who wanders through the bustling harbor in search of a whaling boat that will take him out to sea. Together with the homeless boy Pip and the fear-inspiring Polynesian harpooner Queequeg, he signs on as a crewmember of the Pequod.

The commander of the whale boat is the charismatic, some would say despotic, Captain Ahab, an experienced seaman and whale hunter who lost his leg several years earlier in a struggle with the gigantic white sperm whale Moby Dick. Now he is obsessed with taking revenge on the legendary creature. Neither his long-suffering wife nor his crew suspect the true extent of his obsessive thirst for vengeance. Only Starbuck, the First Mate of the Pequod, a very religious and level-headed man, fears that this journey will not be a regular whale-catching expedition …

Production Design Rob Gray Producer Herbert Kloiber Co-Producer Rikolt von Gagern Production Company Tele München/Munich, in co-production with Gate Film/Munich Principal Cast William Hurt, Ethan Hawke, Charlie Cox, Gillian Anderson, Eddie Marsan, Billy Boyd, Donald Sutherland Length 2 x 90 min or 110 min Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.78 Original Version English Sound Technology Dolby Surround With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

Mike Barker has worked with many of Hollywood’s biggest stars. He directed the film noir Best Laid Plans (1998) with Academy Award®-winner Reese Witherspoon, and cast Academy Award®-winner Helen Hunt and Scarlett Johansson in the adaption of Oscar Wilde’s A Good Woman (2004), as well as Pierce Brosnan in Butterfly on a Wheel (2007). Before Moby Dick, he directed the TV two-parter The Sea Wolf (2009) with Sebastian Koch, Neve Campbell, Stephen Campbell-Moore and Tim Roth. Roth also starred in Barker’s production of the historical drama To Kill a King (2003), which was shown in competition at the film festivals of Emden, Moscow and Montreal. Barker made his directing debut in the first season of Silent Witness, the internationally successful and popular crime series starring Amanda Burton, followed by the mini-series The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, an adaptation of the novel by Anne Bronte.
On the eve of World War I, 14-year-old Oda von Siering returns to Poll, her family home on the Baltic coast, a region uneasily shared by Germans, Russians and Estonians. With her are the mortal remains of her mother, who passed away in Berlin. Awaiting the bright and inquisitive girl are her father Ebbo, an eccentric scientist with a dubious interest in racial breeding; her aunt Milla, who flees reality through music and affairs; and other members of her aristocratic German family, who are clinging to their privileges in a world on the brink of disaster. Upon finding a wounded Estonian anarchist on the estate, the passionate, impulsive Oda fearlessly hides him and secretly nurses him back to health, aware that her deed could trigger a chain reaction of uncontrollable violence.

The Poll Diaries hauntingly evokes the end-of-days atmosphere of a doomed society at the crossroads of the German and Russian Empires in the early years of the 20th century. Following his award-winning Four Minutes (Audience Awards at the Hamptons and San Francisco, German Film Awards and Best Film Award in Shanghai and Sofia), director Chris Kraus now presents the masterly portrait of a segment of civilization and humanity sliding into chaos and anarchy.

Genre Drama, History Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2010 Director Chris Kraus Screenplay Chris Kraus Director of Photography Daniela Knapp Editor Uta Schmidt Music by Annette Focks Production Design Silke Buhr Producers Alexandra Kordes, Meike Kordes Co-Producers Danny Krausz, Kurt Stocker, Riina Sildos, Chris Kraus Production Company Kordes & Kordes Film/Berlin, in co-production with Dor Film/Vienna, Amrion/Tallinn, SWR/Baden-Baden, BR/Munich, ARTE/Strasbourg, ARD Degeto Film/Frankfurt, ORF/Vienna Principal Cast Paula Beer, Edgar Selge, Tambet Tuisk, Jeanette Hain, Richy Müller Length 134 min Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version German/Russian/Estonian/French Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby Digital Festival Toronto 2010, Rome 2010 (In Competition) With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), BKM, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmstiftung NRW, MFG Baden-Württemberg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Österreichisches Filminstitut, Filmfonds Wien, Estonian Film Foundation, Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Eurimages

Already a noted scriptwriter, Chris Kraus scored a notable success with his directorial debut, Shattered Glass (2002), which was awarded two Bavarian Film Prizes, among other awards. His second film, Four Minutes (2006), won over 50 German and international awards. In The Poll Diaries, Kraus continues his tradition of introducing sensational young talents to the movie-going public: after Hannah Herzsprung in Four Minutes, it is now the turn of Paula Beer.
Robot World – A Meeting With Your Alternate Double

Robot World depicts the evolution of robots from a mechanical somnambulist to an autonomous sensorium. The neoclassical violinist Matt Howden emphasizes the film’s message: these artificial people are our alternate doubles.

There is no recognizable narrative structure to Robot World. This compilation works with the open structure of a topic’s pattern. This thematic pattern demonstrates that the construction of robots is in fact evolutionary. This applies to both the exterior as well as the interior level. The exterior evolutionary line of machine beings begins with a “protozoan” in the form of nano-robots, advances to the development of arms, hands and legs as well as to insect-type swarm beings and even develops cold-blooded animals, mammals and humanoid robots. This biological development is accompanied by an imitation of typically human activities such as discovering rooms, being a playmate for children, leading wars or performing operations on a human body. These imitations are like a trace of the interior evolutionary line of robots.

The compilation Robot World offers no narration and invites the viewer to reflect on the differences of our apparent doppelgaengers.

Genre Experimental Category Documentary Year of Production 2010 Director Martin Hans Schmitt Screenplay Martin Hans Schmitt Editor Martin Hans Schmitt Music by Matt Howden Production Company martinhansschmitt.com/Munich Length 60 min Format Digital Betacam, color, 16:9 Original Version no dialogue Sound Technology Stereo

Martin Hans Schmitt studied at the University of Television & Film Munich. Since 2003, he has been producing research and instructional films for the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. He also produces stereoscopic 3D films and essayistic documentaries. His films include: Cyber-Heidi 3D (2001, short), Porno Talk – About Deposit Bottles and Dream Girls (2005, documentary), Highway World – Living, Changing, Growing (documentary, 2007), and Robot World (documentary, 2010).
Soul Boy

Nairobi, Kenya. 14-year-old Abila lives with his parents in Kibera, one of the largest slums in East Africa. One morning the teenager discovers his father ill and delirious. Someone has stolen his soul, mumbles the father as he sits huddled in a corner. Abila is shocked and confused but wants to help his father and goes in search of a suitable cure. Supported by his friend Shiku who is the same age as him, he learns that his father has gambled his soul away in the company of a spiritual woman. The teenager does not want to believe it and sets about looking for the witch. When he finally discovers her in the darkest corner of the ghetto, she gives him seven challenging tasks to save his father’s lost soul. Abila embarks on an adventurous journey which leads him right through the microcosm of his home town …

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2010 Director Hawa Essuman Screenplay Billy Kahora Director of Photography Christian Almesberger Editor Ng’ethe Gitungo Music by Xaver von Treyer Production Design Naima Mungai Producers Marie Steinmann, Tom Tykwer Co-Producers Verena Rahimig, Sanka Hemi Lakhani


Hawa Essuman was born in 1980 in Hamburg. She performed in various theater plays and two films before she found her way into the world of production, where she worked on TV commercials and documentaries before taking the plunge into directing on a Kenyan TV drama series. She then wrote and directed Selfish and later The Lift, both released in 2009. Soul Boy celebrated its premiere at the 2010 Göteborg Film Festival. She is currently working on her next film project, a feature set at the Kenyan coast.
May 1968: The student protests in West Berlin are in full swing, and in the middle of it all, my 21-year-old brother Reinhard. He openly flirts with socialist tenants, partly out of protest against our conservative father. Reinhard resolves to take drastic measures and relocate to East Germany – a complete scandal. It is the last we hear from him.

Eight months later, in January 1969, Reinhard is found dead. His suicide is baffling. What drove him behind the Iron Curtain, and what happened to him there? Nearly forty years later, I go in search of traces of his short life in East Germany. Along the way, I encounter several people who, like my brother, went “against the current” from West to East, like the exiled Berlin Jew Salomea G, who chose the other system and joined the communist party as an unofficial employee. Or Henriette S., who as a child moved to East Germany with her mother, only to flee to the West with her daughter in 1974. Later she was imprisoned by the State Security.

Twenty years after the demise of East Germany, Transit uses my family’s story as a point of departure for examining the reasons behind all these decisions and the allure of the other Germany.

**Genre** Family, History  
**Category** Documentary Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2010  
**Director** Angela Zumpe  
**Screenplay** Angela Zumpe  
**Director of Photography** Peter Petrides  
**Editors** Regina Bärtschi, Matthew Sweetwood, Daniel Bier  
**Music by** Ilja Coric  
**Producer** Holm Taddiken  
**Co-Producer** Angela Zumpe  
**Production Company** Cine Impuls/Leipzig, in co-production with paste up production/Berlin, MDR/Leipzig  
**With** Salomea Genin, Henriette Schulz-Molon, Stefan Wolle  
**Length** 80 min  
**Format** XDCam 720 50p, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Stereo  
**Festivals** ACHTUNG Berlin 2010, Palace Film Festival Balchik 2010, DOK-Woche Leipzig 2010  
**With backing from** Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Sächsische Landesmedienanstalt, MDR, Hochschule Anhalt, FB Design Dessau

**Angela Zumpe** was born in Berlin. After studies at the Academy of Arts in Berlin, she received a scholarship to study Film at New York University. Specializing in digital video production and digital screen design and a professor for Audiovisual Media at the the Hochschule Anhalt in Dessau since 1998, a selection of her works includes: **Westausgang** (2003), **The Other America** (2004), **Colors of Ageing** (2005), **Flüsterspiel** (2007), and **Transit** (2010), among others.
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Deadlines for entries: 1 October 2010 and 15 December 2010
Deadlines for Market: 1 March 2011
German Films Service + Marketing is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, the Association of New German Feature Film Producers and the Association of German Film Exporters, and operates today in the legal form of a limited company. In 2004, the company was reorganized and now operates under the name: German Films Service + Marketing GmbH.

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

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

German Films itself has 12 members of staff: Mariette Rissenbeek, managing director Petra Bader, office manager Julia Basler, project coordinator/documentary film Katherine Grzelak, managing director’s assistant/project coordinator Angela Hawkins, publications & website editor Barbie Heusinger, project coordinator/distribution support Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator Michaela Kowal, accounts Kim Liebeck, PR assistant/festival coordinator Martin Scheuring, project coordinator/short film Konstanze Welz, project coordinator/television Stephanie Wimmer, project coordinator

In addition, German Films has foreign representatives in key territories around the world.

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

German Films is a founding member of the European Film Promotion, a network of European film organizations 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, Gothenburg, Warsaw, 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, Shanghai)
- Staging of “Festivals of German Films” worldwide
- Staging of the “German Premieres” industry screenings in New York, Rome, Copenhagen, and Stockholm
- 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, information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions, and a VOD platform for buyers and festival delegates
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film
- Collaboration with Deutsche Welle’s DW-TV KINO program which features the latest German film releases and international productions in Germany
- Organization of the “German Films Previews” geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- Organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting

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