German Films
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AT ROME In Competition
THE LAST STATION by Michael Hoffman

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Ayse Polat was born into a Kurdish-Alevite family in Malatya/Turkey in 1970. At the age of seven, she came to Germany and grew up in Hamburg, where she completed her university qualifying examinations in 1990. Subsequently, she studied Philosophy, Cultural Science and German Literature in Berlin and Bremen. After making the first Super-8 short films and video works during her schooldays – the video work Entfremdet won a promotional award – and gaining experience at theaters in Hamburg, she made her first short feature film during her studies: Fremdennacht, a 15-minute film promoted by the Hamburger Filmbuero at that time. It was followed by the short film Ein Fest fuer Beyhan (25 min), which was shown at many international festivals, acquired by the Goethe Institute, and awarded several prizes – including one in Muenster and at the Turkish Film Festival in Nuremberg. Graefin Sophia Hatun (15 min) participated at the festival in Locarno and won the jury award in Ankara. Polat’s first full-length feature film was Auslandstournee in 2000; after its premiere in Karlovy Vary, it was screened at many festivals and won several prizes. Polat’s second feature film En Garde was premiered in the Locarno competition in 2004, where it won the Silver Leopold for the second best film in the competition as well as an award for the Best Actress (ex aequo for Maria Kwiatkowsky and Pinar Erincin). It went on to win several more prizes later. In 2008 Polat moved from Hamburg to Berlin, where she founded her own production company PunktPunktPunkt Filmproduktion, with which she completed her latest feature film, Luks Glueck, in 2009.

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Most people on the German film scene probably first heard of director Ayse Polat when she won two prizes at the International Film Festival of Locarno in 2004: the Silver Leopard for her film En Garde and also the prize for Best Actress, which was shared by her two leading actresses.

En Garde tells the story of two girls and their friendship, but it is also about self-discovery; an unusual form of “coming-of-age” film. “As I saw it, the film centered on the development and metamorphosis of the main character, Alice,” says Polat. “The way she is liberated from her inner imprisonment.”

Even before the prizes she won with En Garde, Polat had been spoiled by success. She has won several awards for each of her two feature films and three short films to date. Most striking of all, it is very rare in Germany for a filmmaker to enjoy long-term success when he or she has never attended film school and “only” acquired filmmaking skills as an autodidact – and even more so in the case of a woman.

Her short films already delineated specific thematic fields that were to become important for her subsequent feature films. Fremdennacht was about the spectacular suicide of Turkish asylum-seeker Kemal Altun in 1983. Ein Fest fuer Beyhan tells the story of a Turkish girl who runs away from home. Graefin Sophia Hatun is based on the factual case of a married noblewoman who was kept prisoner by her husband for many years in the 18th century. One of her servants was Turkish.

It is also possible to recognize a great interest in reality in Polat’s work, and in stories that can be understood as parables of freedom. “I simply make films about myself and things that I know. It is only natural that experiences of the family and my origins play a part – but...
alongside a lot of other themes. Sure, migration is a formative experience, but you experience a lot of other things in life too, things that are just as formative."

But Polat does go on to say that there is a “female view” of things: “The way violence is handled is different, or the human body and relationships are treated differently. The portrayal of women is deeper, more multifaceted and complex.”

How can one best describe Ayse Polat’s directing style? “A Fellini fan, Satyricon is one of my favorite films,” Polat also cites Jarmusch, Cassavettes, Varda, Bunuel and Kubrick as prime role models; classics of author cinema, in other words. “The concept of the author film had very negative connotations in Germany from the 1990s on. To be honest, it is still sometimes considered a swear-word. I see this concept as representative of the best filmmaking tradition. It’s all about handling material with your own personal signature, from a viewpoint that is not predefined and falsified by issues such as ‘digestibility’ and ‘target group orientation’.”

From the time that she spent working in theater, Polat has a dislike for elitist attitudes like “a bourgeois vanity that takes itself so terribly seriously.” She finds this attitude in some German films as well. “Low Profile by Christoph Hochhaeusler really impressed me,” Polat says. “It’s all about a vision: I love fantastic stories, a bold imagination with courage to dream, films that attempt to visualize the subconscious. On the other hand, I have problems with films that seek quasi to force their viewers into realism, films that develop a kind of morality regarding reality. I don’t think that you can arrive at truth via simple reality; you need digressions.”

Her new film is, for the first time, a comedy. Luks Glueck tells the story of the German-Turkish Luk, who wins the lottery with his family. With the money, Luk wants to change his life, to finally be happy. But in the end, he realizes that he has to figure out just who he is first, before he can change himself and his life.

“I can’t really explain why I made the film as a comedy. There aren’t really certain topics that move me to write a story. At first, images appear, ones that touch me, a longing glance, a contradictory gesture, or an absurd encounter. Then, bit by bit, the story develops. And in the end a question arises, but one that doesn’t expect an answer, one that is simply happy remaining a question.”

Ayse Polat spoke to Ruediger Suchsland
Sebastian Schipper was born in Hanover in 1968. After studying to be an actor at the Falckenberg Schule in Munich, he shot his first short film in 1994 entitled Wunderhell. His second short film, Helden Sommer, followed a year later and in 1996 he appeared in Anthony Minghella’s The English Patient. He has played roles in, amongst others, Maja (1996), Wintersleepers (Winterschlaefer, 1997), Run Lola Run (Lola rennt, 1998), Eine ungehorsame Frau (TV, 1998), Der Koenig von St. Pauli (TV, 1998) and Nightsongs (Die Nacht singt ihre Lieder, 2004). He has scripted and directed three feature films: Gigantic (Absolut Giganten, 1999), A Friend of Mine (Ein Freund von mir, 2006) and Sometime in August (Mitte Ende August, 2009). He is currently completing work on the script for his fourth feature Odysseus and is about to star in Tom Tykwer’s forthcoming feature Drei.

“I think the challenge for films is that you want to fly and still touch the ground at the same time,” 41-year-old director, scriptwriter and actor Sebastian Schipper says of the motivation behind his work. “You want a miracle but you want to believe in it.”

Although his work as a director has yet to reach a substantial worldwide audience, it’s fair to say that over the last ten years Schipper’s trademark mixture of understated surrealism, offbeat humor and a perceptive insight into human psychology have carved him a significant niche in his German homeland. Despite starting out as an actor—including a role in Anthony Minghella’s multiple Oscar®-winning The English Patient—it’s as the screenwriter and director behind three defiantly German films that he has earned a reputation as one of the country’s most promising cinematic talents.

Gigantic came first, a witty and touching story about three friends enjoying their last night together in Hamburg before one of them moves to Cape Town. Initially the movie sank with little trace, but its DVD release provided a second opportunity for it to reach its audience. “For the first half a year after the film came out,” Schipper reminisces, “it was a disaster. Nobody really knew the actors, it was obviously a small budget film, and Germans just didn’t trust it. Then it got nominated for a German Film Award, and then it won a German Film Award in silver, and about a year after it got distributed I realized a lot of people got a kick when I said, ‘Yeah, I directed that film’. They’d say, ‘Really? I saw that film eleven times!’ I never saw any film eleven times!”

The film’s strengths lie in the relationship between its three central characters and Schipper’s exploration of what unites and separates them as much as it does in its memorable set pieces. Amidst the unlikely tension of a table football game, a clash with drag-racing Elvis impersonators and hours spent drinking in empty bars or kicking heels in parking garages emerges a lingering portrait of urban German life and camaraderie that reaches far beyond its geographical roots.

Schipper is sanguine about its initial lack of success, however. “It was not an obvious comedy: three guys, one last night, a German film, especially in those days. German hit films are comedies or they’re people marching. Whether they’re marching for Hitler or East Germany, there’s not a big difference. The Germans must march or they give up to be funny. But Gigantic was what the French call a comedie humaine. You don’t laugh your arse off.”

Its subsequent growing cult status, however, paved the way for his second film, A Friend of Mine. Once again, Schipper immerses himself in the minutiae of human relationships, singling out a short period in his protagonists’ lives and zooming in on little details that have significant repercussions. Karl, played by Daniel Bruehl, is an unfulfilled twentysomething who steps out of the comfort zone of his
job in car insurance to spy on a rental company. There he meets Hans (Juergen Vogel), a worker whose easygoing approach to life simultaneously infuriates and liberates Karl, and once again an unusual friendship provides the foundation for a series of bizarre incidents that help to shake Karl out of his torpor. Schipper’s growing confidence as a director and scriptwriter makes for a series of quietly provocative scenes, not least a beautifully filmed car race along a rainy autobahn, but instead of upping the pace once more for his latest film he chose to move in the opposite direction.

**Sometime in August** was inspired by a Goethe short story, *Elective Affinities* (*Wahlverwandtschaften*), and is a refreshingly intimate tale of a couple’s intentions to enjoy weeks alone renovating a summer house outside Berlin. Their peace is disturbed by the arrival of two more guests who inadvertently reveal the fractures within Hanna (Marie Baeumer) and Thomas (Milan Peschel)’s relationship. Its gentle pace has led some to dismiss it as whimsical but repeated viewings reveal its depth and a profound understanding of human nature at that point in people’s lives where they need to take responsibility for their actions and work out where they really belong.

“It’s amazing the attention the old master pays to the very beginnings, the very seeds, the things invisible to the naked eye. I think this is how things change between people, constantly,” Schipper explains of his attraction to a writer who he admits he was at first far from keen to read. “My films so far are about an inner monologue,” he continues, elaborating on the connections between this and his former work. “My ‘Bermuda Triangle’, the place where I’ve been paddling around for ten years of filmmaking, is marked by *Catcher in the Rye*, Truffaut’s 400 Blows and *Hamlet*. Those are my biggest ‘buoys’. And of course *Hamlet* is so absolutely amazing because it is about that inner monologue: a guy being portrayed as interesting who doesn’t know what to do.”

One of the more unusual things about Schipper’s films is that they rarely offer closure in the traditional cinematic fashion. He allows his audience only to imagine a life before the cameras started rolling, and a future thereafter without a defined ending, happy or otherwise. Within each film, however, we experience the intricately plotted and subtle growth of his central characters. Another hallmark of his three features has been their use of music, often at the expense of all other incidental sound during a scene. **A Friend of Mine** was notable for being one of the first films cleared to use a song by the legendary 1980’s band Talk Talk, and **Sometime in August** features a specially commissioned soundtrack by cult US singer songwriter Vic Chesnutt.

“Music and images, they just dance,” the music fan grins. “They tango, they’re like two sex addicts who can’t keep their fingers off one another! My deepest connection with films is that I really like to read and I really like listening to music. When you read you’re a director; you picture what you’re reading and you start to cast people. A lot of books that I’ve read have taken place in my grandmother’s house. Music is the same: you really listen and you go somewhere. I think the most important thing about filmmaking and directing is that you have this daydream thing.”

A huge fan of Jim Jarmusch’s black and white films – “he tells a story in such a laconic way,” the director effuses – Schipper was first singled out by Tom Tykwer, the director and composer behind *Run Lola Run* in which Schipper also appeared. “I got to know him as an actor when we did Wintersleepers,” Schipper recalls. “Already I knew I did not really want to be an actor. I’ve known Tom now fourteen years and he produced two of my three films, and he was the biggest help in getting my third film financed. He’s really like a big brother of mine.”

Tykwer is also producing Schipper’s next film, a thriller set in Germany that looks set to be as huge a stylistic leap from **Sometime in August** as that was in turn from **A Friend of Mine**. **Odysseus**, Schipper confides, is “a journey into darkness, into violence, into fear, for a very average German who works as an editor in a publishing house. It’s set perfectly in Germany because we’re so secure, so cushioned in a way.” He’s clearly excited by the prospect. “When Tom was asked at the last Berlinale what he was up to next, his answer was that he would do *Cloud Atlas* with the Wachowski Brothers and then he’ll produce my new film. That felt awesome!”

Furthermore, Tykwer is responsible for putting Schipper back in front of the camera, giving him a starring role in *Drei*, which shoots this autumn. Although he prefers to write and direct, the Berlin resident couldn’t resist the offer. “I’m not a very good actor,” he laughs, “though I would have loved to be a great actor. But it’s a part that’s really close to me: I’m just a guy that has relationship things going on. I think that might be one of my strongest assets for directing, however. The actors realize how much I admire them.”

With Schipper’s career shaping up to be a slow burner much like his movies, international success can’t be too far behind. His films have already travelled abroad with successful screenings in the US and a potential UK-based DVD release for **A Friend of Mine** on the horizon. Asked if he has an international audience in mind for his work, he smiles. “I’ve thought about making a movie in English. Actually I have a couple of projects in mind. When I travel to foreign screenings I think that people understand my humor, which means a lot to me. But for now I am trying to tell German stories that people can relate to. I think that, if I may be allowed to pat myself on the shoulder here, I have a feeling that I speak the language that people understand universally in some way, of humor, of romance. **Sometime in August** recently won the first prize at the French Romantic Film Festival (Festival de Carbourg). A French film festival that only shows love movies, films about love, and the German wins the prize!”

It is almost, as Schipper himself would most likely humbly admit, a miracle of sorts, but it’s one based as firmly in reality as it is in his original daydreams …

*Sebastian Schipper spoke with Wyndham Wallace*
“I was surprised so many Greek and Latin names had already been taken by American or British companies,” says Stelios Ziannis when he was searching for a name for his world sales company Aktis Film International which was launched at the beginning of this year.

“I then felt Aktis would be just right because it comes from the Ancient Greek and means ‘beam of light’,” Ziannis explains. “And this beam of light brings film to life and can stimulate the intellect.”

SETTING UP SHOP

With almost two decades of working in the field of world sales and TV distribution, Ziannis made the decision at the end of 2008 to set up shop on his own in Leipzig and Halle after Kinowelt’s new owner StudioCanal announced plans for a re-orientation of the German company’s operations.

Greek-born Ziannis, who had made films on super 8 mm and 16 mm with friends during his student days in Munich and later formed his own small distribution company, entered the film industry proper in 1989 when he joined Filmverlag der Autoren with responsibility for sales and later for acquisitions and relations with the license-holders. He remained with the company when it was taken over by Kinowelt in 1999 and made the move to Leipzig in 2003, subsequently becoming head of world sales for the in-house international sales division Kinowelt International, handling the films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Percy Adlon as well as the Asterix and Lucky Luke animated films, among others.
Aktis Film’s first market appearance was at the Berlinale’s European Film Market (EFM) in February 2009 where Ziannis presented Rudolf Thome’s new feature film *Pink* starring Hannah Herzsprung, who was in one of the festival’s official juries, and such catalogue titles as Wolf Gremm’s *Kamikaze 1989*, with Rainer Werner Fassbinder in his last acting role, and the late Wolf Vollmar’s *The Officer Factory* based on the bestseller novel by Hans Hellmut Kirst.

From the outset, Ziannis planned to concentrate on world sales and acquisitions, TV sales for German-speaking territories, the co-production of new German and international films, and film classics. Apart from the EFM, Aktis Film aims to have a presence at such markets as MIP-TV, Cannes’ Marché du Film, MIP-COM, and the MIDEM music trade fair in January.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

A new dimension to the company’s activities came with the forging of a strategic partnership with the Studio Halle umbrella of companies which includes the post-production service-provider Digim, equipment rental company Camelot, Monarda Publishing Ltd., and the music and documentary film production and distribution companies Arthaus Musik and RM Arts.

“This gives me an infrastructure that helps me enormously in my day-to-day operations and future planning,” Ziannis says. “This ranges from graphic design through subtitling, the production of DVD screeners, administration of licenses and legal affairs.”

“Together, we can realize projects which couldn’t be managed by one alone, and interesting synergies can be achieved on German or international productions which make use of Studio Halle’s services and then have the world sales coordinated by Aktis.”

An example of such a collaboration between Studio Halle and Aktis includes Silvia Beck’s documentary *Nyman in Progress* which is currently being produced by RM Arts with Arthaus Musik and Digim, with WDR and ARTE as co-producing broadcasters and support from MDM.

The portrait of the internationally successful composer Michael Nyman will explore the musical history of his works, revealing the complex relationships he enjoys with many of the film directors, musicians and artists he has worked with, as well as highlighting his views on everything from music, politics, fashion to the disappearance of London’s Routemaster bus, football and the new media. The British composer came to Halle for a concert which was recorded at Studio Halle and will be featured as excerpts in Beck’s film.

Moreover, the highly-acclaimed *Walter Felsenstein Edition* of six opera films was extensively restored by digital images, released on DVD by Arthaus Musik, and is now having its TV sales handled by Aktis Film.

In addition, Aktis Film will handle international sales on another Studio Halle co-production, *Hotel Deutschland II*, with Stefan Paul’s Arsenal Film, as a sequel to Paul’s original documentary *Hotel Deutschland* 20 years after the German reunification.

“The collaboration with Studio Halle also brings the benefit that one has access to a pool of knowhow about the latest digital technology,” Ziannis notes. “I think it will be increasingly important in the future to be aware of the changes which will come with digital technology, whether it is in the field of production or sales.”

He points out that the current financial crisis besetting the broadcasters and theatrical distributors means that fewer films have been bought at the markets this year. “So we have to think very carefully about the titles we acquire,” Ziannis argues. “That’s where diversity helps because it is dangerous if you concentrate on only one genre in your catalogue.”

### PLATFORM FOR AUTEURS

Given his background at Filmverlag der Autoren and Kinowelt and the network of contacts built up over the years, it is no surprise that Ziannis would like to see Aktis Film as “a platform for the German Autorenfilm, but for quality European titles as well.”

“In addition, I have the catalogues of music, opera, and arts programming from RM Arts and Arthaus Musik, which have expanded my portfolio, and I am interested in handling quality mainstream German and international feature films.”

One of his first acquisitions in this direction is the tragicomedy about student life, *13 Semesters* by Frieder Wittich, produced by Claussen+Woebke+Putz Filmproduktion, which 20th Century Fox will release in Germany in November.

The film was nominated for this year’s Hesse Film Prize after its world premiere at the Zurich Film Festival at the end of September. The German premiere follows at the Hof International Film Days and a market screening was booked in Rome.

At the same time, Ziannis has a back catalogue of more mainstream titles like Roger Michell’s *Titanic Town* or Carlos Saura’s *Tango* for the German TV market and will be looking to have other such films where he can handle the international rights as well.

While this first year has been spent consolidating the new player’s position in the world sales market, Ziannis is already looking ahead to taking the next step in Aktis Film’s development which will see him becoming more involved in project development and production.

*Stelios Ziannis spoke with Martin Blaney*
Katharina Wackernagel has chosen Godot, a local café, for our meeting. She’s wearing a bright red dress, sitting right by the door and looking exactly as she does on her publicity photos. I, of course, fail to see her as I barrel inside to find a plug. Because if I don’t then the battery on my laptop will ensure this interview is good for, oh, ten minutes! But I’m lucky. I find one, get set up, and then wait. Shortly afterwards, we have one of those mobile phone conversations where both parties are standing maybe three or four feet apart, each looking around for the other.

That sorted, Katharina Wackernagel seated, she is most keen to talk not about herself, but her brother’s debut film, Résiste – Aufstand der Praktikanten.
“We’ve done shorts before,” Wackernagel says, “but this is our first big project and it was really intensive work. Since we live together we also discussed it in the kitchen each evening! It was my first time on a film from the first letter of the script to the finished product. Now it’s ready and is coming out mid-November.” Said brother is Jonas Grosch, “he was nominated for the First Steps Award. The film is great! You mustn’t forget to say that!”

Currently enjoying a short summer holiday, hanging around in Berlin’s café rich Prenzlauer Berg district, Wackernagel was born in 1978 in Freiburg but grew up in Kassel and hails from an acting family (mother, grandmother and uncle are all actors).

She started her career aged 17 in the ARD series Tanja. “It was such fun that I went from there. I couldn’t imagine going back into education and, with no professional training, I learned on the job.”

In fact Wackernagel was definitely an early starter. At the tender age of seven she set up her own theater group! “It was called Rote Handschuhe,” she explains. “There were five of us. We learned our texts from a record, built our own sets and did the show right here, kind of thing!”

Later on, Wackernagel joined the Staatstheater Kassel’s youth drama club, where her mother was engaged (at the theater, not the club!). It was there that Tanja’s producer discovered her and “the growing young girl found herself playing a girl growing up! Tanja drops out of school, so did Katharina! She moves from home early, me too!,” Wackernagel continues. “I moved to Berlin on my own and thought I was grown up! Then I realized I knew nobody here! I was a bit overwhelmed and but wanted to carry it through. I think I overestimated myself to begin with, but it was a good time.”

She started doing short films from her younger brother’s scripts. Then came the 2003 hit Das Wunder von Bern, her first cinema film. That was followed by Die Boxerin, “very important for me. I was cast so differently to before. I had to learn boxing! I could do something so different and also made many lasting friendships.” Then came the Thalidomide drama Contergan (the drug’s German trade name) and Wackernagel was now “established. I was playing female roles, here a mother. I no longer felt typecast.”

Unlike many in her industry, Wackernagel is “happy as an actress in front of the camera. I don’t write. There is so much still to try and I’m not ready to do something else. I love singing for fun although I don’t play any instrument. I don’t want to start my own band! Not till I know I can do it!”

But Wackernagel does enjoy “going out with my brother, sitting outside with a glass of wine, kicking around ideas. We think up characters but then I leave it to the writers to write.”

Her short holiday is just that: short. Wackernagel has already signed for two crime films next year. “I play a cop, with director Martin Eigler. I was a cop in his film Stralsund. We don’t have titles yet but they’re for ZDF, the Monday crime slot I think.”

Also coming up is the two-part TV event movie Vulkan in which southern German property values take a terminal dive. “It’s by Uwe Jansen and I play Andrea, the lead’s girlfriend. The characters are very good.”

And then Wackernagel is back to beating the drum for Résiste, a socio-romantic-comedy about an intern who is sick of being a permanent intern and a French girl who decides what Germany needs is a good revolution! “My brother loves comedies,” Wackernagel explains. “The more difficult a subject, the more important it is to do it with humor. Résiste is not a totally realistic portrayal. It’s set in Berlin but works with metaphors. I play the French annoyance!”

For her general health and well-being Wackernagel likes to “run every day. Well, I try to! It’s a kind of meditation. I love music – everything mixed: ska, swing, soul. Anything I can dance to I can also run to.”

And only now does she start to list just how busy she’s been!

“At the start of the year I was in Africa for six weeks, in Cape Town, for a film by Dieter Wedel called Mit Glanz und Gloria, a TV two-parter for pubcaster ZDF. It’s about a con artist who parts people from their money and then has a great life with it. I play the wife of a victim who loses everything, including me!”

Then she was in Scotland for another ZDF film, this time for Ken Follett’s Ice Fever. “It’s the story of the head of a laboratory,” Wackernagel relates, “who develops a virus. It’s Christmas, I’m his daughter, the virus is stolen, the criminals get snowed in and stuck in the same house as the family that’s celebrating.” Many of us have had family Christmases along those lines, have we not?

“So after all this traveling, I then made a film, Abschied in der Nacht, this summer and was in Denmark and Syld,” Wackernagel continues. “The script is by Niki Stein, it’s also for ZDF and is set in 1945 in an internment camp on the North Sea. It’s about a woman who is caught between a former German soldier and a British one.”

But now Wackernagel is ‘finally’ in Berlin, a city she “likes so much in the summer, just to meet with friends and sit in my favorite cafés!” Godot, for example.

Katharina Wackernagel spoke with Simon Kingsley
“THE WHITE RIBBON” REPRESENTING GERMANY FOR THE OSCAR®

The independent expert jury, which was appointed by German Films to select the German entry to compete for the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language film, has decided under the chairmanship of Alfred Huermer to submit the film The White Ribbon (Das weisse Band) by Michael Haneke.

The jury on its decision: “The White Ribbon convinces through its narrative and aesthetic quality as well as its extraordinary characterization of a village community in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century.”

The production by X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin (producer: Stefan Arndt) in co-production with Wega Film/Vienna, Les Films du Losange/Paris and Lucky Red/Rome was released by X Verleih in German cinemas mid-September. Sony Pictures has secured the rights for the USA and plans to open the film in US cinemas in February 2010. The film rights have already been sold worldwide to over 30 territories.

Stefan Arndt on the jury’s decision: “Seldom was I so pleased about a committee’s decision. We will now do everything to convince the Americans of our wonderful film.”

FULL FILMING SCHEDULES ON THE RHINE AND RUHR

“Quiet please, we’re rolling!” is something heard often in a lot of places in North Rhine-Westphalia this fall. Among the many productions shooting along the Rivers Rhine and Ruhr are Lars Kraume’s Die kommenden Tage, a family drama starring Bernadette Heerwagen, Johanna Wokalek, Daniel Bruehl, and August Diehl. The film was shot in Wuppertal, Duesseldorf, and Cologne, among other NRW locations. Lars Jessen is also shooting his new project, Hochzeitspolka, in Cologne and the surrounding areas with Christian Ulmen about a man who ends up in the Polish provinces.

Christoph Hochhaeusler (Low Profile) is also working on his new film – Unter Dir die Stadt, about the secret affair between a bank manager and the wife of one of his employees – in Bonn, Duesseldorf and Cologne, with Nicolette Krebitz, Robert Hunger-Buehler and Mark Waschke in the leading roles. The Cologne-based MMC Studios will be hosting the 3D remake of The Gate by Alex Winter. After that, Jean-Paul Rappeneau will move into the MMC Studios to work on his thriller Foreign Affairs.
HAMBURG’S NEW WEBSITE

Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (FFHSH) has re-launched its website: www.ffhsh.de. “We are very pleased with the new, more transparent layout and the user-friendly menu navigation of our profile as a funding institution and are proud to be able to better present and communicate our services to the film industry,” commented FFHSH-CEO Eva Hubert. The newly designed website, as well as the Film Commission’s website (www.fchsh.de), offers a clear graphic design and user-friendly structure, and features online videos to films funded by FFHSH as well as information about Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein as media locations. The Internet presence of the Filmwerkstatt Kiel has also been adapted to the new layout. The new online editor is Marein Budiner.

FFF-FILMS AT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

Confirmation of the successful support of up-and-coming directors by FilmFernsehFonds Bayern is the competitive participation of numerous FFF-funded films at this summer’s international festivals: Lancelot von Naso’s Ceasefire (produced by Drife Filmproduktion), screened in the official competition at the Montreal World Film Festival and Tomasz Emil Rudzik’s graduation film from the University of Television & Film Munich, Desperados on the Block (produced by Toccata Film) screened in San Sebastian’s Zabaltegi – New Directors.

Felix Fuchssteiner’s Losing Balance (produced by mind’s eye media), which received screenplay support from FFF, was also shown in Montreal’s competitive section for debut films. And Byambasuren Davaa’s latest documentary The Two Horses of Genghis Khan kicked off the festival summer with its premiere on Locarno’s Piazza Grande. All four director’s fine-tuned their talent at the University of Film & Television Munich.

ONLINE PREVIEW – MORE SHORTS ON OFFER

In March 2009, the online version of the annual catalogue German Short Films was updated and expanded. Since then, the German Short Film Association (AG Kurzfilm) has launched the Online Preview on their website. International industry representatives may apply to receive limited, free access from www.ag-kurzfilm.de to view German short films.

In September 2009, the list of titles online was expanded with 40 additional films to include shorts from the distributor interfilm Berlin and the “Konrad Wolf” University of Film and Television in Potsdam-Babelsberg.

Online Preview is intended to make the screening of German shorts and the availability of information more accessible to festival organizers, curators, film journalists, cinema operators, sales agents and other cultural institutions. The streaming technology is made available by the short film portal Shortstream.
THREE GERMAN SHORTS NOMINATED FOR THE EUROPEAN FILM AWARD

On 12 December 2009, the ceremony of the European Film Awards will be held in Bochum. The winner in the Best Short Film category will be chosen from thirteen films that have been nominated by juries at European film festivals since October 2008. This year, three German productions are among the nominees:

- What’s Left (Was bleibt) by David Nawrath was nominated in January during the Festival Premier Plans in Angers;
- Lola Randl’s The Suffering of Mr. Karpf – The Birthday (Das Leiden des Herrn Karpf. Der Geburtstag) won the EFA nomination at the Berlinale 2009;
- Renovation (Renovare), a German-Romanian co-production by Paul Negoescu, was added to the list of nominees at the Vila do Conde Film Festival in Portugal in July.

INDUSTRY TIGERS 2009

Constantin Film is the most successful producer and distributor of German films from the past year. In the allocation of this year’s reference funding by the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the Munich-based company was named the “Industry Tiger” for the fourth time in both categories. In total, the German Federal Film Board awarded €13.4 million in reference funding to the most successful German producers, distributors and short filmmakers of the previous year.

Constantin Film attracted points in the production rating with no fewer than 12 films and came away with reference funding totaling €2.2 million. Second position was taken by SamFilm, which received reference funding of €900,000 for five productions, ahead of Warner Bros. with €600,000 for nine feature films.

“Reference funding is of great importance as planning reliability for the financing of German feature films,” said Peter Dinges of the FFA’s executive board. Therefore, given the consistently high market share for German productions in the cinemas, it was particularly important that the German Federal Film Board was also able to pay out the funding this year.

The most successful production of 2008 was Rabbit Without Ears (Barefoot Films/SevenPictures Film/Warner Bros. Entertainment) which picked up reference funding of around €1.14 million. Together with the reference funding from 2007, the comedy by Til Schweiger thus reached the maximum sum of €2 million. The second most successful production of 2008 was The Wave (Rat Pack Filmproduktion/Constantin Film Produktion/B.A. Produktion/Zweite Medienfonds GFP) with €900,000 ahead of The Baader Meinhof Complex with €800,000.

The artistically most successful German films for festivals and awards last year were Leroy (Dreamer Joint Venture Filmproduktion) and Waltz With Bashir (Razor Filmproduktion), followed by The Counterfeiters (Magnolia Filmproduktion), Cherry Blossoms – Hanami (Olga Film) and Pool of Princesses (Reverse Angle Factory).

Constantin Film Verleih was also honored with the “Industry Tiger” in the distribution category in 2008 – for the fifth time in a row. The company received funding of €600,000 with a total of 17 films, followed by Warner Bros. Entertainment with €300,000 for ten successful theatrical releases and Universum Film, who also picked up total funding of €300,000 for five films.

The reference funding is based on a points system which takes both the number of sold cinema tickets as well as film prizes and festival distinctions into account. This year saw around €10 million worth of reference production funding being allocated to 107 films. Funding of
32 cents was calculated per cinema ticket sold and festival point. Around €2.9 million was paid out in reference distribution funding for 92 films from the categories of feature film, children’s film and documentary film. Sixteen cents were calculated per spectator as in the previous year.

Short films were individually rated according to special certificates and festival participation for the first time this year in accordance with the new Film Law, and €562,000 was awarded to a total of 100 shorts. The year’s most successful short was Summer Sunday, produced by Caros Films Fred Breinersdorfer and Sigi Kamml.

THE WINNER GOES TO HOLLYWOOD!

The support of young talents is a key element and has always been an avowed goal of MFG Filmförderung Baden-Württemberg. Projects by newcomer directors and producers are supported directly from the available funds – and thus not restricted to a dedicated source of funding. Therefore, in 2008, over 40% of the budget for production funding flowed into supporting the next generation.

The regional funder in the south-west of Germany has made its own particular mark with such funding programs as “Young Documentary”, “Fifty-Fifty” or the MFG-Star prize for up-and-coming directors, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. All of the MFG-Star prize winners to date, including Hans Steinbichler, Aelrun Goette or Alain Gsponer, have proven to be extraordinary talents and have confirmed the decisions of the pre-selection jury and the main judge with their later works. The MFG is especially pleased with an innovation that has been introduced on the occasion of the anniversary: until now, the prize had consisted of the financing of a course of further education as chosen by the prize winner. In future, the prize winners can be offered a residence grant in the Villa Aurora in Pacific Palisades during the first quarter of the year – at a time when the Oscar® ceremony regularly takes place!

DER FILM IN PRAGUE

For the fourth consecutive year, the Goethe-Institut in Prague organized the successful German-language film festival DER FILM, in cooperation with the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Swiss Embassy in Prague. For 10 days from October 1st – 10th, an exceptional selection of current German, Austrian and Swiss films were presented at the Aero and Svetozor cinemas in Prague and at the Art cinema in Brunn. A special program within the festival presented a Josef Hader Retrospective, six classics from the DEFA Studios, and films and documentaries dealing with the events of the year 1989. A total of some 30 features and documentaries were on offer this year. The festival opened with Caroline Link’s highly-acclaimed A Year Ago in Winter.
Seventeen-year-old Lila is finding life as a teenager hard going. The last thing she needs is to fall in love with a superstar and him in her. But that’s exactly what happens in SamFilm’s romantic comedy, Alles fuer Lila. Of course, Lila doesn’t know that Toto, the cute guy she meets in Berlin’s botanical garden is also ChrIZ, lead singer of the hotter than hot band Berlin Mitte. Throw in added complications such as her younger sister Lucy, her widowed mother falling for a guy ten years younger, her best friend since infanthood, Nike, developing feelings for her and you have the perfect recipe for an emotional roller coaster ride that, yes, of course is going to have a happy end.

SamFilm, which is to say producers Ewa Karlstroem and Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton, won the Golden Industry Tiger 2008 as the most successful German film production company. Their credits include The Wild Soccer Bunch 1-5, A Christmoose Carol, Summer and Love Scenes from Planet Earth. That’s a total of more than 12.5 million cinema tickets sold.

Once again, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures is taking charge of distribution, which guarantees a highly professional and high-visibility marketing and publicity campaign aimed at getting the film not just to a young audience but beyond, to young women aged up to 39 years.

Alles fuer Lila also marks SamFilm’s ongoing relationship with director Marc Rothemund. His credits include the aforementioned Love Scenes from Planet Earth, Ants in the Pants, the Grimme Award-winning TV-movie Hope Dies Last and Sophie Scholl – The Final Days, which was nominated for the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film in 2006.

“Our main target group,” says Ewa Karlstroem, “is obviously teenage girls and young women. But when you look at comparable films, such as Notting Hill and The Princess Diaries you can see that they attracted women from 20 to 39 years in very strong measure, even though the main target group was younger.” Karlstroem continues: “The subject of The Princess Diaries, imagine you’re suddenly a princess, is exactly the same as Alles fuer Lila – imagine you love a star and he returns your feelings. It’s very universal and interesting beyond the main target audience. It’s a subject adults are drawn to. And where better a place to surrender to such dreams than in the cinema!!”
Bergig is the story of a love that cannot be. Jan is married and has two children. Mona is nearly twenty years younger. And yet they have fallen for one another.

In a mountain cabin, far from their everyday lives, Mona and Jan try to discover what they feel for each other, whether and how they can be together. But reality draws them back in. Jan is attached to his family, and he is scared to give them up for what might be a flash-in-the-pan love affair. Mona does not know how far she can trust her feelings since she has been so disappointed by love in the past. Nonetheless, the two of them continue further and further, trying to understand, to find, to feel.

At the end there is no agreement reached: each one leaves the other room to go their own way, which perhaps also leads them both to find, to feel.

In Bergig, Daschner continues, “the two protagonists, Jan and Mona, move through this landscape which, because of this, becomes the receiver and also transmitter of various feelings. The two of them have sought out this place, the remoteness of nature, to meet free from external compulsions. But the difficulty of their situation doesn’t stop outside the door of their refuge.”

Julia Daschner studied at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. Having worked on various projects at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Film Academy and the University of Television & Film in Munich, Bergig is her first solo project as a feature film director.

Cindy liebt mich nicht

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Love Story Production Company av medien penrose/Stuttgart, in co-production with Penrose Film/Berlin, in cooperation with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel/Mainz With backing from MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg Producers Felix Eisele, Julia Kleinhenz, Katja Siegel, Bernhard Stegmann Director Hannah Schweier Screenplay Hannah Schweier Director of Photography Thorge Horstmann Editor Barbara Toenniesen Music by Matthias Klein Production Design Nora Grabowski Principal Cast Clemens Schick, Peter Weiss, Anne Schaefer Casting Wendland Casting/Karen Wendland Format S16 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Shooting Language German Shooting in Mannheim and surrounding areas, Gedser/Denmark, September – October 2009

Contact
av medien penrose gmbh Alexanderstrasse 115 · 70180 Stuttgart/Germany phone +49-7 11-24 89 930 · fax +49-7 11-24 89 93 25 email: jkleinhenz@penrosefilm.de www.penrosefilm.de

After coming to international attention with her 30-minute short Stand Straight (Aufrecht Stehen), which was the opening film for the Berlinale 2007’s Perspectives German Cinema sidebar, filmmaker Hannah Schweier turned to Cindy liebt mich nicht, the first joint novel by Jochen-Martin Gutsch and Juan Moreno, for her first feature-length film and graduation project from the Baden-Wuerttemberg Film Academy in Ludwigsburg.

In Schweier’s adaptation of the 2005 novel, two thirtysomethings – Franz (Clemens Schick), a barman working in the “Cindy liebt mich nicht” bar, and David (Peter Weiss), a trainee at the public prosecutor’s office – are both having an affair with a young woman at the same time without either of them knowing about this love triangle. Maria (Anne Schaefer) is a special kind of woman who gives everyone exactly what they seem to need, and yet continues to live in her very own world. The two men meet when she suddenly disappears and they decide to set off together to look for her. The trail initially leads them to Maria’s parent’s home, from there to a psychiatric clinic, and then finally to Denmark where they discover the secret of Maria’s true story, but also learn some truths about themselves …

“Searching together for her leads them to a surprising truth after which nothing is as it once was,” Schweier explains, adding that the
film shows “the great longing, looking for and finding of love and the question why we decide on somebody.”

She sees the film as being “about the existential questions that a relationship evokes: why I am together with someone? Do I love them for what they are? Or for what I am looking for? What must I risk for this?”

“In the end, this story is about liberation from illusions which the characters have had of Maria, but also from themselves and their own lives,” Schweier suggests. “They mature because they no longer let themselves become entrapped by the supposedly limitless options and because they come to realize that loving always means vulnerability. They also realize that love is, above all, one thing: the decision for a person despite all of their weaknesses.”

“We knew Hannah from the Film Academy although we were in different years,” recalls Felix Eisele who launched the Berlin-based company Penrose Film with fellow production students Julia Kleinhenz and Katja Siegel last year. “Then, by coincidence, she came to us with the idea for Cindy liebt mich nicht since the Film Academy had changed its rules and could now have external production companies involved as a partner if it was a feature film project.”

The young producers already knew Schweier’s short Stand Straight and were therefore particularly keen to read her screenplay for the feature film.

“What interested me personally was that it spoke as if from my own life and about people one meets each day,” Julia Kleinhenz recalls. “I had the feeling that I was reading a part of my life. But it doesn’t only appeal to our generation as the story also speaks to older and younger generations as well.”

“It was very clear from our discussions with her that this subject was something that had occupied her for some time,” Eisele continues. “We were really bowled over by the fact that she had thought long and hard about how to put this up on the screen.”

Schweier’s meticulous approach also extended to the casting of the three lead characters in the love triangle. “Hannah had already had some ideas of whom to cast while she was working on the script,” Kleinhenz explains. “She already knew Clemens Schick from working with him on Stand Straight, so that was clear relatively early on. And then she spent a very intensive time with casting director Karen Wendland going around all of the theaters to see the new young acting talents coming through.”

In fact, the triangle was completed with the casting of stage actors: Peter Weiss who graduated this year from the Ernst Busch drama academy and will be a member of the ensemble at Halle’s Neues Theater; and Anne Schaefer, a member of the ensemble of actors at Munich’s Staatsschauspiel since 2006/2007.

Cindy liebt mich nicht is the first production of a new company – av medien penrose – which was founded by the three Penrose Film producers with Stuttgart-based Bernhard Stegmann of the established player av medien in spring 2009. Structured as a co-production with Penrose Film and with access to equipment and post-production facilities from the Film Academy in Ludwigsburg, the film received backing from MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg.

In addition, the producers are especially indebted to the commissioning editors Milena Bonse and Burkhard Althoff of ZDF’s Das kleine Fernsehspiel unit. “They were real partners and stood by us all the way,” notes Eisele. “They gave useful tips during the development of the script and have also been there for us during the shoot.”

MB

Drei

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Love Story Production Company X Filme Creative Pool/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, Degeto/Frankfurt, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg Producer Stefan Arndt Director Tom Tykwer Screenplay Tom Tykwer Director of Photography Frank Griebe Editor Mathilde Bonnefoy Music by Reinhold Heil, Johnny Klimek, Tom Tykwer Production Design Uli Hanisch Principal Cast Sophie Rois, Devid Striesow, Sebastian Schipper Casting Simone Baer Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SR-D Shooting Language German Shooting in Berlin, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, London, October – November 2009

Contact X Filme Creative Pool GmbH Kurfuerstenstrasse 57 · 10785 Berlin/Germany phone +49-30-230 833 11 · fax +49-30-230 833 22 email: info@x-filme.de · www.x-filme.de

This autumn has seen Tom Tykwer directing his first feature film in the German language since his 2000 production The Princess and the Warrior.

Starring Sophie Rois, Devid Striesow and Sebastian Schipper, Drei (“Three”) is described by Tykwer as “a long-coveted wish to finally make another full-length movie in my home country and in my own language with protagonists I’m familiar with and whose conflicts I have particularly detailed knowledge of, protagonists whose controversies are relevant to many, perhaps even to an entire generation.”

The Berlin-set love story, he explains, “revolves around the desires, hopes, mysteries and contradictions of three people – two men and a woman – who are confronted with fundamental questions of cohabitation and the ‘right’ way of living. What does the ‘right way
of living’ mean today – in a social, emotional, political and private sense?”

Budgeted at 4.8 million Euros, Drei centers on Hanna (Rois) and Simon (Schipper), both in their mid-forties, who have been living together as a couple in Berlin for 20 years. Without either of them being aware of the fact, they both fall in love with the mysterious, yet fascinating Adam (Striesow). This secret stimulates and complicates the relations between the three lovers.

“In addition to being his first German project for ten years, it is also the first original feature script he has written himself since Princess,” producer Stefan Arndt notes. “Drei is also very much in our tradition together: we have always been interested in the workings of love – after all, our first company was called Liebesfilm (“Love Film”) – and Tom’s first feature Deadly Maria dealt particularly intensively with love and emotions.”

“For me personally, I see Drei as the third part of a trilogy which began with Wintersleepers and continued with Run Lola Run,” Arndt explains. “There were the relationships between the three couples in Wintersleepers, and then young people still coming to terms with the last vestiges of puberty in Lola. Drei, meanwhile, centers on three characters in their mid-40s and the appearance of obsessions one had never imagined existed.”

While Schipper will be known to fans of Tykwer films from his appearances in Wintersleepers, Run Lola Run and The Princess and the Warrior, Drei will be the first time that the director is working with Austrian actress Sophie Rois (The Architect, Learning to Lie) and German actor Devid Striesow (Yella, The Counterfeiters).

“The casting of the three leads went really fast,” Arndt says. “We wanted to have authentic characters with the kind of biographies you often find in Berlin these days. And Berlin is the fourth lead – the film is being shot at over 100 locations around the capital.”

Meanwhile, there are many familiar names behind the camera as Tykwer has gathered his regular collaborators for this latest project: from DoP Frank Griebe and production designer Uli Hanisch through editor Mathilde Bonnefoy and sound designer Matthias Lempert to fellow composers Reinhold Heil and Johnny Klimek.

“Drei will hopefully become quite a relevant and possibly even stirring movie, a humorous and contradictory statement about the present, full of anger and melancholy, sense and nonsense,” Tykwer notes.

“Moreover, if there is a film that will show that Tom has a comic side, then this film is it,” concludes Arndt.

Fremd

Type of Project Documentary Cinema Genre Society
Production Company Hoermann Milhahn Filmproduktion/ Berlin Producer Max Milhahn Director Miriam Fassbender
Screenplay Miriam Fassbender Director of Photography Miriam Fassbender Editor Andrea Schoenherr Music by Romain Le Bras Format DV, color, 16:9, blow-up to 35 mm, 1:1.85, Dolby Stereo Shooting Language French Shooting in Mali, Algeria, Morocco, December 2006 – February 2009

Contact
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www.foreign-documentary.com

Fremd (“Foreign”) is Miriam Fassbender’s documentary film about migrants between Africa and Europe. It accompanies the young Malian, Mohammed, who is already making his third attempt to reach Europe. In so doing, it recreates the living conditions emigrants encounter on such a journey.

In Mali, a Nigerian woman, Hope, is trying to earn enough money with her small restaurant to avoid having to cross the Sahara desert for a third time.

In Algeria, a young Congolese man, Jerry, considers his options as to whether he should give up and return to his homeland or to make a last attempt to cross the water to Europe.

Meanwhile Mohammed’s latest attempt fails and he finds himself in Morocco. Like all the other protagonists in Fremd, he films with a small camera his life and experiences as an illegal.

“The departure points and destinations are of lesser importance,” says Fremd’s writer, director and cinematographer Miriam Fassbender. “It’s the actual locations where they live provisionally, the escape, the journey itself, which are important. It gives the film its structure.”

In so doing Fassbender gives the Malian, Mohammed, a structural function. “Through him, not only do we experience space and time,”
she explains, “but moreover he ensures for the connection between the individual protagonists.”

It is via these people that viewers gain insights into the film’s guiding theme: what is happening outside Europe? “These are individuals, each one wanting the same things from life that we do, and not some broad, mass storming of our continent,” Fassbender says.

The protagonists in *Fremd*, whilst individuals in their own right, reflect the 18 million people who are currently in migration, giving up one place to move to another. Fassbender was able to win her protagonists’ confidence due to her long and painstaking research, as well as *Fremd*’s long shooting period.

It is their flight, waiting in limbo and unexpected situations that determine the film’s rhythm, just as does the reality of the routes these refugees from poverty and oppression take. They and their living conditions stand for Africa’s transformation and the situation at Europe’s gates.

“IT is my intention that the viewers will get to know these people as people, not as statistics,” Fassbender explains. “And that which is ‘foreign’ becomes, through this knowledge, less so.

**Fruehlings Erwachen**

*Type of Project* TV Movie  
*Genre* Coming-of-Age Story, Drama, Theater  
*Production Company* teamWorx Television & Film/Potsdam, for ZDFtheaterkanal/Mainz  
*Producers* Christian Rohde, Jean-Young Kwak  
*Commissioning Editors* Wolfgang Bergmann, Meike Klingenberg  
*Director* Nuran David Calis  
*Screenplay* Nuran David Calis, adapted from the play by Frank Wedekind  
*Director of Photography* Bjoern Knechtel  
*Editor* Simon Blasi  
*Music by* Vivan Bhatti  
*Production Design* Susanne Abel  
*Principal Cast* Wilson Gonzalez Ochsenknecht, Constanze Waechter, Justus von Dohnányi, Leon A.J. Pfannenmueller, Judith Rosmair, Leo van Kann, Fridolin Sandmeyer, Kais Setti  
*Casting* Nina Haun  
*Format* RED CAM (HD), color, 1:1.78, Stereo  
*Shooting Language* German  
*Shooting in* Berlin, July – August 2009

This summer saw producer Christian Rohde of teamWorx and ZDFtheaterkanal’s Wolfgang Bergmann collaborating for the fourth time on adapting one of Germany’s theater classics after Uwe Janson’s three films based on Bertolt Brecht’s *Baal* (2003), Frank Wedekind’s *Lulu* (2005) and Goethe’s *Werther* (2008).

The idea of bringing Wedekind’s *Spring Awakening (Fruehlings Erwachen)* to the screen came after Rohde was contacted by Nuran David Calis’ agent who recommended that he see the young writer-director’s staging of Wedekind’s play at the Schauspiel theater in Hanover.

“This production has been very successful and is now touring throughout Germany,” says Rohde, pointing out that the performance he attended “was packed with young people who were all following the play very attentively.”

Rohde and the commissioning editor Meike Klingenberg didn’t need much convincing that Calis would be the right man to adapt the play for the ZDFtheaterkanal. A graduate of the Otto Falkenberg School in Munich, Calis had worked at theaters in Munich, Zurich, Hamburg and Berlin, produced music videos for hip hop bands, and has become one of the most talked about directors and writers for
stage and screen. This year saw him staging Romeo and Juliet at the Maxim Gorki Theater with pupils from the Ruetli School in the Berlin suburb of Neukoelln.

“The first love of one’s life, problems with one’s parents, problems with school. There isn’t any story about young people that is as timeless as the story about Wendla, Melchior and Moritz in Spring Awakening by Frank Wedekind,” Calis says. “Wedekind’s story is over 100 years old – but does it still function today? With this film, I want to prove how deeply this story is still grounded in our modern times – I want to show how much this ‘classic’ has to do with today’s reality for young people and how it can give us information about dealing with our youth, their dreams and nightmares, their chances and their failures.”

“Our approach here was to create a realistic world in the present day, so that it would be accessible to as many young people as possible,” Rohde adds. “We didn’t want to have an artificial world like on the stage.”

Moreover, this latest collaboration with the ZDFtheaterkanal was quite different from the previous ones in the way the casting was undertaken. “Wilson Gonzalez Ochsenknecht was cast as Melchior because he is interested in moving into more serious roles and we knew that this would be a very popular casting with the younger viewers,” he explains. “But all the other young male parts were cast with actors from the Academy for Performing Art Baden-Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg such as Leon A.J. Pfannenmueller, Leo van Kann, Kais Setti and Benjamin Wesener.”

“It was like a group experience for them because many of them lived together during the shoot in Berlin and went out on the town together each evening. That made it easier for them to then function as a group of friends in front of the camera,” Rohde recalls. “One of the young actresses we cast – Constanze Waechter – is a real talent to follow: she has just started drama school and we have already made the TV movie Jetzt sind wir dran for SAT.1 with her too.”

The action was, however, not located in a specific German city. “That was very important for us because the universal aspect of the story would have changed if we had said that the film is set in Berlin or in Munich,” Rohde says.

The first love of one’s life, problems with one’s parents, problems with school. There isn’t any story about young people that is as timeless as the story about Wendla, Melchior and Moritz in Spring Awakening by Frank Wedekind,” Calis says. “Wedekind’s story is over 100 years old – but does it still function today? With this film, I want to prove how deeply this story is still grounded in our modern times – I want to show how much this ‘classic’ has to do with today’s reality for young people and how it can give us information about dealing with our youth, their dreams and nightmares, their chances and their failures.”

“The film shows an extract from the life of the young passionate Goethe before he became a successful writer, scientist and dramatist,” producer Christoph Mueller explains. “This is the time before he wrote Werther when he was still unknown, but very young, sexy and dynamic. At the age of 23, he had his greatest unrequited love affair and this led to the most biographical of all of his works, The Sufferings of Young Werther.”

Alexander Fehling, known to cinema audiences for his roles in Buddenbrooks and Storm, is cast as the young Goethe who is sent by his father (Henry Huebchen) to a sleepy little town to mend his ways after failing his law exams. At first, he tries to do his best at the Supreme Court and even convinces his superior Kestner (played by
Moritz Bleibtreu. But then Lotte Buff (newcomer Miriam Stein) enters his life and nothing is the same as before as they fall in love with one another. However, Johann is unaware that Lotte is in fact already engaged to Kestner …

“We want to get rid of that dust that is always there whenever people speak about Goethe,” Mueller says. “Our approach is therefore modern, but classical at the same time.”

He also stresses that the exclamation mark in the film’s title is part and parcel of the production’s take on the young Goethe and his times: “The title says it all,” he states.

However, this doesn’t mean that the production has cut corners in recreating the film’s setting in the 18th century. For instance, great attention has been paid to details of authenticity in the costumes and the sets as well as the language used by the actors.

“You can’t shoot in the original locations in Wetzlar any more because everything is so modern, but we found many places in Thuringia and Saxony that were perfect alternatives,” Mueller continues, adding that Goethe! is not intending to join the ranks of a long line of worthy costume dramas. “It is hopefully more in the tradition of films like Shakespeare in Love, Amadeus or Pride and Prejudice. We want to show more of the raw, dirty unvarnished side of life in the 18th century.”

Meanwhile, the 6.5 million Euro production was also an opportunity for Mueller to work at long last with director Philipp Stoelzl who was recently in the cinemas with the mountaineering drama North Face. “I’m absolutely sure that he’s the perfect man for this project with his background as a director of music videos, films, opera and theater,” Mueller argues. “There’s just the right mix.”

Moreover, Goethe! reunites Stoelzl with two of his collaborators from North Face who won German Film Awards for their work on that film: DoP Kolja Brandt and production designer Udo Kramer.

The film is set to be the first of a planned cooperation between Senator Entertainment and the German outpost of Warner Bros., Warner Bros. Pictures Germany. The US major also serves as a co-producer and is likely to release the film in German cinemas in autumn 2010.

Hexe Lilli – Die Reise nach Mandolan

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Family Entertainment Production Companies blue eyes Fiction/Munich, TRIXTER Productions/Munich, in co-production with DOR Film/Vienna, Steinweg Emotion Pictures/Barcelona, Buena Vista International Film Production/Munich, Babelsberg Film/Potsdam
With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Bayerischer Bankenfonds, Oesterreichisches Filminstitut, ORF, Filmfonds Wien, Generalitat de Catalunya – Institut Catala de les Industries Culturals, Ministerio de Cultura, Instituto de la Cinematografia y de las Artes Audiovisuales, Audiovisual S.G.R., Eurimages
Producers Corinna Mehner, Martin Husmann, Michael Coldewey
Director Harald Sicheritz
Screenplay Achim von Borries, Bettine von Borries
Director of Photography Thomas Kiennast
Editor Alex Dittner
Music by Klaus Badelt, Ian Honeyman
Production Design Christoph Kanter
Principal Cast Alina Freund, Michael Mittermeier (as the voice of Hektor), Pilar Bardem, Michael Mendl, Anja Kling, Juergen Tarrach, Ercan Durmaz, Tanay Chheda, Lars Rudolph
Casting Emrah Ertem
Format Super 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby SRD
Shooting Language German
Shooting in Potsdam, Babelsberg in August & September, India in October 2009

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Hot on the heels of the fantastic success Hexe Lilli – Der Drache und das magische Buch (ca. 1.5 million in viewers in the German-speaking territories and now more than 2 million across the rest of Europe), Hexe Lilli – Die Reise nach Mandolan sees everybody’s favorite little witch and her unique CGI animated dragon Hektor adventuring this time in the faraway, mystical Orient.

There is a curse on the kingdom of Mandolan and the Grand Vizier Gullman (Juergen Tarrach, here making his Lilli debut) calls on Lilli (Alina Freund) in desperation. She should use her magic spells to ensure that he can finally ascend the throne and rule. But barely have Lilli and her loyal companion, the ever-hungry dragon Hektor, landed when they discover that Gullman is playing a dishonest game. He has
had the rightful king Nandi imprisoned by the shady magician Abrasch (Ercan Durmaz).

Fortunately Lilli has her magic and also the clever streetboy and fastest rikshaw driver in town Musa (Tanay Chheda, from Slumdog Millionaire) on her side. They and Hektor are then off on an adventurous journey that takes them in rickety tuktuk (motorized three-wheeled taxis) and on the back of powerful elephants to the gates of the Forbidden City.

Lilli now needs all her courage to free Nandi and get him back to Mandolan to prevent Guliman from usurping the throne. And then there’s Hektor, who has fallen passionately in love with the enchanting bottle genie Suki. But what are these mysterious purple spots on his small green body which are causing not only him problems …?

Like the first Hexe Lilli film, Hexe Lilli – Die Reise nach Mandolan is based on the popular children’s book series by the well-known author named KNISTER, who has sold more than 17 million copies. The script is by the brother and sister team of Achim and Bettine von Borries (Mullewapp – Das grosse Kinoabenteuer der Freunde). Director is Harald Sicheritz (Poppitz, Hinterholz 8). Making a welcome return are Alina Freund as Lilli, Anja Kling as her mother, Pilar Bardem as the old superwitch Surulunda and Michael Mittermeier, who not only lends Hektor his unmistakable voice once again, but this time also contributes as author to his dialogue.

High-quality family entertainment as it should be, Hexe Lilli – Die Reise nach Mandolan will be distributed locally by none other than Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures Germany with a planned start date of January 27th 2011.

We actually started working on the idea for Im Alter von Ellen (“At Ellen’s Age”) during the editing of The Unpolished,” says director Pia Marais about her second feature film which went before the camera this summer.

“The Unpolished was a story which was focused on a teenager trying to make sense out of life, and for me and [co-screenwriter] Horst Markgraf, we both had a feeling that we wanted to tell a more mature story now,” she recalls. “But the two films are both related to one another in a way because they are about a character looking for a meaning or sense to life. In the case of the new film, it is the flight attendant Ellen who embarks on a quite peculiar adventure to find a meaning to her life.”

“In a crisis, she decides to disappear from her life and separates from her long-standing partner. Over the course of the following days, she tries to continue working, but is unable to. She then disembarks from a plane in Frankfurt and, by chance, meets up with a group of animal rights activists who become a kind of shelter and surrogate family for her.”
When looking for the right person to play Ellen, Marais had originally concentrated her search on Germany, but then cast her net further to look for a foreign actress who could also speak German. “I knew Jeanne Balibar from Olivier Assayas’ film Late August Early September, but didn’t know she spoke German,” Marais explains. “We then met her for a casting and even by the way she opened the door, I knew straightaway, that’s Ellen. She gives her character a certain fragility, but also an immense strength. I also wanted to work with Georg Friedrich again after The Unpolished: he was such a gift, but here he is playing a completely different kind of character.”

For Cologne-based Pandora Film, it is their second collaboration with Marais who was born in Johannesburg and grew up in South Africa, Spain and Sweden before studying in London, Amsterdam, Duesseldorf, and at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin.

“Through Pia’s background, she has lived in so many different countries and has a very unconventional view of Germany,” producer Claudia Steffen says. “This story is a very German one, but we really like having a new take on our nation’s soul. Her collaboration with Horst Markgraf is also a very close one—they develop scenes together and he is present during the editing. They complement one another perfectly and she dares to tell big stories.”

“Originally, the film was planned as a German-French co-production and we had great support from Elzevir Film, Pandora’s regular French partner on several films,” Steffen continues. “Despite having ARTE on board, a co-production did not materialize. To our disappointment, there was no bilateral funding for the film, but the film of course is still a German-French collaboration with Balibar in the lead and Helene Louvart as DoP, among others.”

“There were also various logistical challenges in this film,” she adds. “We have lots of actors, locations and there are all sorts of animals in the film. And filming at an airport or in airplanes is the most difficult thing one could imagine since the tightening of security from 2001.”

After shooting in North Rhine-Westphalia and Frankfurt from mid-July to the end of August, the production travelled to Durban for five days of filming at the end of September. Jeremy Nathan’s production outfit DV8 – the planned co-producer of Marais’ third feature Layla Fouie which will be set completely in South Africa – acted as the local service producer.

Im Haus meines Vaters sind viele Wohnungen

Type of Project Documentary Cinema Production Company busse & halberschmidt Filmproduktion/Duesseldorf, in co-production with T&C Film/Zurich With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, BKM, ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel, MEDIA, Zuercher Filmstiftung, Schweizer Fernsehen SSR SRG Producer Marcelo Busse Co-Producer Marcel Hoehn Commissioning Editor Lucas Schmidt Director Hajo Schomerus Screenplay Hajo Schomerus Director of Photography Hajo Schomerus Editor Daniela Grosch With Father Samuel Aghoyan, Pater Robert Jauch, Abuna Efraim Elorashalmy Format HDCam, color, cs, blow-up to 35 mm, Dolby Digital Shooting Languages English, German, Hebrew, Greek, Armenian Shooting in Jerusalem, April – July 2008, March 2009

Contact busse & halberschmidt Filmproduktion oHG Kastrasse 14a · 40221 Duesseldorf/Germany phone +49-2 11-8 62 85 98 · fax +49-2 11-31 12 08 04 email: info@bussehalberschmidt.de www.bussehalberschmidt.de

A visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre within the walled Old City of Jerusalem during work on a documentary on the Red Cross left its mark on filmmaker Hajo Schomerus who returned to the place said to be the site of Jesus’s death and resurrection for Im Haus meines Vaters sind viele Wohnungen (“In My Father’s House Are Many Mansions”), his first feature-length documentary as a director.

“Fascinated by the complexity and richness of the place, the holiest place to most of Christianity, I went on a journey to get to know the people that live in the church, live with it and live for it,” Schomerus recalls. “Exploring everyday life in this extraordinary place—with all its troughs and peaks—and observing the emotional rollercoaster that accompanies all events in the church, led me inevitably to the question of what faith is.”

“I found myself curious about what drives these unusual housemates,” he adds. “The search often filled me with respect and awe, but at times also left me bewildered and amused.”
“Hajo’s film is the opposite of a film like Philip Groening’s Into Great Silence,” says producer Marcelo Busse who studied with Schomerus at Dortmund’s University of Applied Sciences and produced his award-winning short Me, Myself and the Universe, which was also in German Films’ own NEXT GENERATION program in 2004.

“While Groening’s film was about meditation, with silence and a kind of emptiness or vacuum at the fore, here we have quite the opposite. The church is an incredibly lively place, where six different communities share the same religion but do not get along with each other,” Busse explains. “One asks how you can find the necessary quiet to practice your religion in a place that is full of tourists and religious communities in constant conflict with one another. There is a choreography played out here that nobody understands.”

According to Busse, funding for the project was relatively easy to put together “because people soon became enthusiastic about the subject matter.” Backing for the film – which was conceived from the outset as a theatrical documentary – came from, among others, Filmstiftung NRW, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), public broadcaster ZDF’s Das kleine Fernsehspiel unit, while 20% of the budget came from Swiss producer Marcel Hoehn of T&C Film (in return, busse & halberschmidt Filmproduktion are partners on T&C Film’s documentary about the disgraced ex-journalist Tom Kummer by Miklos Gimes).

“Getting shooting permits was complicated because we had to get permission from each of the six denominations in the church,” Busse recalls. “Over time, they got to know Hajo and us, but we still had to ask each group if we could shoot in a particular part the next day. We made it clear that we weren’t looking for a scandal or spectacular images. All too often in the past, current affairs film teams had come to the church to get footage of incidents between the different groups, so the monks were rather fearful of the media. But we were able to build up a feeling of trust.”

As Schomerus points out, “the physical division of the church building is, at the same time, both tragic and incongruous. And it manifests a human predicament: there is the Christian vision of a world united – coupled with the desire to be good and pious – and the contradicting, yet very human and strong desire to be first in line.”

Jud Suess – Film ohne Gewissen

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Melodrama
Production Companies Clasart Film- und Fernsehproduktion/Munich, Tele Muenchen/Munich, in co-production with Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion/Vienna With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA) Producers Frank Novotny, Markus Zimmer Director Oskar Roehler Screenplay Klaus Richter Director of Photography Carl F. Koschnick Editor Bettina Boehler Music by Martin Todsharow Production Design Isidor Wimmer Principal Cast Tobias Moretti, Martina Gedeck, Moritz Bleibtreu, Justus von Dohnányi, Armin Rohde, Robert Stadlober, Paula Kalenberg Casting Anja Dihrberg Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital Shooting Language German Shooting in Cologne, Munich, Vienna, June – August 2009

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Jud Suess – Film ohne Gewissen ("Film Without Conscience") is Oskar Roehler’s examination of how German artists became involved in, tangled up and finally trapped and brought down by the Third Reich’s most notorious anti-Semitic film. It is less a ‘making of’ and more an unmaking of, especially of the man, Ferdinand Marian, who played the titular role.

It is 1939 and actor Ferdinand Marian scents his great career break. At first he hesitates and finally, personally persuaded by none less than Joseph Goebbels, he accepts the title role. Too late, he recognizes he is trapped in a perfectly planned propaganda film of the highest artistic quality as realized by director Veit Harlan. The film premieres at the German-Italian Film Week in Venice in 1940 and is seen by at least 20 million viewers across Europe.

“The story of the film’s making, and what I intend to capture here,” Oskar Roehler says, “is the dramatic story of the eroticism that power exercises, also of human ambition and personal vanity, and the fate of its central protagonists.”
Once again Roehler has assembled a top notch cast, including stalwart regulars Tobias Moretti (as Marian), Martina Gedeck (as his wife, Anna) and Moritz Bleibtreu, here playing one of history’s ultimate sleazebags. Nazi eminence gris, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. They are more than ably supported by Armin Rohde, Justus von Dohnányi (as Veit Harlan) and Paula Kalenberg (as leading lady of the time, Kristina Soederbaum). The script is by Comedian Harmonists author Klaus Richter.

Clasart Film- und Fernsehproduktion, part of Dr. Herbert Kloiber’s Tele Muenchen Gruppe, is still on very much of a roll of late, as is its sister company, distributor Concorde Film.

Clasart and Concorde managing director, and here one of this film’s producers, Markus Zimmer, explains how and why: “We pay the closest attention to the core elements since we produce character and story driven films. That means script, cast and director. Since a film stands or falls on any of these ‘legs’, they have to be as strong as possible to mutually support the whole edifice. But we never forget that a film is nothing without an audience, either. Oskar’s ability to attract such great talent and to hold an audience’s attention, as can this most able cast, is well proven. It all promises to make it a fascinating, insightful and, above all, very entertaining film.”

Die kommenden Tage

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Company Badlands Film/Berlin, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, Degeto/Frankfurt, ARTE/Strasbourg, in collaboration with UFA Cinema/Potsdam With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), HessenInvestFilm, Cine Tirol, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producers Katrin Schloesser, Lars Kraume, Frank Doehmann, Matthias Glasner, Juergen Vogel Director Lars Kraume Screenplay Lars Kraume Director of Photography Sonja Rom Editor Barbara Gies Music by Maas and Kaiser Production Design Irina Kromayer Principal Cast Bernadette Heerwagen, Daniel Bruehl, Johanna Wokalek, August Diehl, Susanne Lothar, Ernst Stoetzner, Mehdi Nebbou Casting Nessie Nesslauer Format 35 mm, color, cs, Dolby Shooting Language German Shooting in Frankfurt am Main, Wuppertal, Duesseldorf, Cologne, Berlin, Tyrol, August – October 2009

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The seeds for Lars Kraume’s latest feature film Die kommenden Tage (“The Days to Come”) were sown three years ago upon the birth of his first son. “At the time, Lars reflected on how his son would be living in 18 years time, in what kind of a world this child would then become an adult,” recalls producer Frank Doehmann who joined Kraume, Matthias Glasner and Juergen Vogel as a partner in their production house Badlands Film at the beginning of 2009.

Kraume began researching the subject in 2006 and then spent most of 2007 and 2008 writing the screenplay for what has now become Badlands Film’s second feature production after Glasner’s This Is Love which premiered in competition at San Sebastian in September.

“The world economic events of the past months confirm me in my desire to realize Die kommenden Tage because I think that we have a long period of instability ahead of us,” Kraume explains. “The major crises like the ‘Peak Oil’ and the resulting war for resources, the climate change and the ensuing problems of drinking water provision, the global population explosion and the increase in social conflicts will bring our society into even direr straits in the near future than the bursting of the American property bubble. Die kommenden Tage should confront the audience with the question as to which world do we actually want to live in in the future.”

The film’s action focuses on the passage of a middle-class family in Berlin from the present to a thoroughly realistic, near future, a time of instability and big changes. Laura Kuper (Bernadette Heerwagen) must decide at the end of her studies between her desire for children and Hans (Daniel Bruehl), the great love of her life. Her sister Cecilia (Johanna Wokalek), meanwhile, is driven by her unrequited love for Konstantin (August Diehl) into the blackest depths of a newly emerging terrorism, and Philip, the youngest member of the family, sets off into a hopeless war for the last oilfields in Asia …

“While the story begins in 2010/11 in the near future and we are approaching 2025 towards the end of the film, this should not be regarded as a science fiction film,” Doehmann stresses. “We move only very slowly into another world and have been very careful with the changes we show. We sat together with architects to come up with ideas on the changes to the architecture and will have this created using CGI effects.”

In the impressive cast lineup, which also includes Susanne Lothar and Ernst Stoetzner as the parents, Bernadette Heerwagen is in fact the only person who had worked with Kraume before – in his 2004 Tatort episode Wo ist Max Graevert?

Daniel Bruehl and August Diehl, meanwhile, got a first taste of working with Kraume when they joined Heerwagen to appear in a 7-minute black-and-white ‘mood trailer’ Badlands produced to give potential financiers a visualization of the proposed atmosphere for the film.
Principal photography for the 49-day shoot began towards the end of August in Frankfurt, before moving to North Rhine-Westphalia in September, Berlin in October and wrapping in Austria’s Tyrolean Alps at the end of October.

Indeed, the architecture of Frankfurt’s city center proved to be just what Kraume was looking for to depict the near future. “It is the likes of which one doesn’t see anywhere else in Germany and we were spoiled for choice with suitable locations in North Rhine-Westphalia to stand in for parts of Berlin,” Doehmanns says. “We found villas in Wuppertal that were just right as a home for the family in the film.”

Meanwhile, he felt no concern about Kraume overdoing things by juggling the different roles as director, screenwriter and producer on the 6.5 million Euro project. “One can’t expect him to be thinking like a producer during the shoot even though that will naturally be at the back of his mind,” Doehmann explains.

“He is now 100% the director during the shoot,” he continues. “In any case, things are made much easier by the relationship of personal trust which has been built up between us over the years. We have worked in the past on TV projects together and I had collaborated with Matthias Glasner on *Der freie Wille*. So we are on the same wavelength and complement one another.”

“Rock It”

**Type of Project** Feature Film Cinema

**Genre** Musical

**Production Company** SamFilm/Munich

With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Bayerischer Bankenfonds, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Producers** Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton, Ewa Karlstroem

**Director** Mike Marzuk

**Screenplay** Sebastian Wehlings, Peer Klehmet

**Director of Photography** Bernhard Jasper

**Editor** Tobias Haas

**Music by** Tobias Kuhn, Sebastian Wehlings

**Production Design** Manfred Doering

**Principal Cast** Emilia Schuele, Daniel Axt, Maria Ehrich, Vivien Wulf, Constantin Hochkeppel, Jan Wannenmacher, Ben Muenchow, Farina Flebbe, Lucas Reiber, Rick Okon, Remo Schulze, Petra Nadolny, Markus Maria Profitlich, Heio von Stetten, Katja Keller, Max Herbrechter, Oliver Korritke, Dieter Landuris

**Production Company** SamFilm/Munich

With backing from FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Bayerischer Bankenfonds, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

**Producers** Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton, Ewa Karlstroem

**Director** Mike Marzuk

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**Director of Photography** Bernhard Jasper

**Editor** Tobias Haas

**Music by** Tobias Kuhn, Sebastian Wehlings

**Production Design** Manfred Doering

**Principal Cast** Emilia Schuele, Daniel Axt, Maria Ehrich, Vivien Wulf, Constantin Hochkeppel, Jan Wannenmacher, Ben Muenchow, Farina Flebbe, Lucas Reiber, Rick Okon, Remo Schulze, Petra Nadolny, Markus Maria Profitlich, Heio von Stetten, Katja Keller, Max Herbrechter, Oliver Korritke, Dieter Landuris

**Casting** Stefany Pohlmann

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

**Shooting Language** German

**Shooting in** Bavaria, Austria, August – September 2009

**Contact**

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SamFilm, a company that has made its name and reputation on high quality children’s films, moves up an age group and changes genre with *Rock It*, a musical aimed squarely at teenagers.

Julia is 15, the daughter of a conductor and a gifted pianist. One day her dream comes true: she is accepted at the famous Amadeus music academy! But instead, as her parents hope, of concentrating on a piano career, she falls head over heels for hotshot Nick! He’s the lead singer of his band, Rock It, and wants to win the upcoming talent contest. First prize is a recording contract. Julia will do anything to play with him! When the keyboardist breaks his hand, Julia gets her chance: she disguises herself as Toni the rock chick and gets the gig! Julia’s over the moon with joy!

But Betty now throws a spanner in the works! She’s got wind of Julia’s secret identity, wants to play her graduation piece with her and fears Julia’s mind will be someplace else. One girl-against-girl intrigue later and Julia has failed to appear at the talent contest and Nick wants nothing more to do with her. Wrecked as only a teenage girl can be, Julia plays the graduation concert with Betty. Spying Nick in the audience, Julia breaks ranks and, to everyone’s fury, starts playing him a love song. Nick, touched in all the right places, joins her on stage.
Together, they move the audience which then joins in, the film ending with a thundering good song that brings down the house.

**Rock It** ticks every box on the romantic-musical-comedy-for-teenagers checklist: it’s lively, emotional, feel good, has great grooves, smooth dance moves and songs to get the audience moving.

Director **Mike Marzuk** not only directed **Summer** (more than one million admissions in Germany alone, also for SamFilm) but has a pedigree résumé when it comes to commercials and music videos: Adidas, Microsoft, Mercedes Benz, McDonalds, Sony, T-Mobile, Reamonn, Lou Bega, Bananafishbones, Die Happy, the list goes on and on.

As producer **Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton** says: “**Rock It** aims at an audience that is keen to be transported into a world that is new and different to the one they know from the cinema. This is the right film for people who like music and great emotion.”

And check out who has the German distribution rights! Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures Germany! If that isn’t a seal of confidence what is?

**Type of Project** Feature Film  
**Cinema Genre** Drama  
**Production Company** CINEMA for International Audiences/Cologne, in co-production with kLAPpboxILME/Berlin, schlicht und ergreifend film/Munich, Muenchner Filmwerkstatt/Munich, University of Television & Film/Munich  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Board (FFA), Foerderverein der HFF Muenchen  
**Producers** Martin Blankemeyer, Philipp Budweg, Jessica Krummacher  
**Director** Jessica Krummacher  
**Screenplay** Jessica Krummacher  
**Director of Photography** Bjoern Siepmann  
**Editor** Andre Bendocihi-Alves  
**Principal Cast** Marina Frenk, Natja Brunckhorst, Alissa Wilms, Cedric Koch, Benno Fflland, Fritz Fenne  
**Format** HD, color, 1:1.78, blow-up to 35 mm, Stereo  
**Shooting Language** German  
**Shooting in** Bochum, August – September 2009

**Contact**  
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Based on a true story, **Totem** is the tale of Ramona, a German girl hired as a nanny and general help by a family of six. The titular heroine has some unique characteristics: odd behavior, a strange way of speaking, a disgust for human bodies, meat, close proximity and food. Sometimes she can’t catch her breath. She is introverted, absent. But Ramona wants to work.

She gets to know the other members of the family: mother Claudia, father Wolfgang, 16-year-old Nicole, 5-year-old Juergen and the new-born twins. She works all hours of the day and deep into the night. She keeps the house spotless, takes care of the children, is treated like a slave and given only a bowl of leftovers before she is finally allowed to rest on her mattress on the floor.

Ramona does not care. One day she is invited to drink wine, the next she is slapped in the face by Claudia for no reason. She has very little free time, sometimes going for a walk with Juergen. Wolfgang and Claudia, two disturbed people, draw Ramona into their world as their plaything, their moods swinging wildly and unpredictably.

Ramona thinks of death. She wants to die, not as a tragic consequence but a certain longing. That is her hope.

“**Totem** is a tragedy,” says writer-director **Jessica Krummacher**. “It moves in a downwards direction: that interests me! It appears to be about nothing, and that’s what makes the world go round. The film is based on a true story: how can a person who decides to die be dead within three months?”

“In effect,” Krummacher continues, “Ramona was already dead. She knows she will die and that gives her drive. She has no more wishes. She has no more fears or prejudices. And who should condemn her?”

Having visited the scenes of the events, Krummacher openly admits, “I am sad to be standing here. It made me furious. Why can something like this happen? Who was Ramona? Who were this couple? Why is there no world thinkable without violence and yet it is the way it is?”

**Totem** is truly “cinema for international audiences”.

**g e r m a n f i l m s q u a r t e r l y**

4 · 2009
Unter Dir die Stadt

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Drama Production Company Heimatfilm/Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne, ARTE/Strasbourg With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, HessenInvestFilm, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF) Producer Bettina Brokemper Commissioning Editors Michael Andre, Birgit Kaemper Director Christoph Hochhaeusler Screenplay Christoph Hochhaeusler, Ulrich Peltzer Director of Photography Bernhard Keller Editor Stefan Stabenow Music by Benedikt Schiefer Production Design Tim Pannen Principal Cast Robert Hunger-Buehler, Nicolette Krebitz, Mark Waschke Casting Ulrike Mueller Format 35 mm, color, cs Shooting Language German Shooting in Frankfurt, Cologne, Bonn and Dusseldorf, August – September 2009

World Sales
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It was a case of ‘never change a winning team’ when producer Bettina Brokemper and director Christoph Hochhaeusler came together for his third feature Unter Dir die Stadt (“The City Below”) after collaborating on his last film Low Profile (Falscher Bekenner) which was premiered in Un Certain Regard in Cannes in 2005.

“Christoph had originally worked on another screenplay for a project we want to do entitled Lichtjahre, but then put this aside to begin writing Unter Dir die Stadt with novelist Ulrich Peltzer,” Brokemper recalls.

“The idea of setting the story in the world of banking in Frankfurt came long before the financial crisis,” she points out. “And then banks were suddenly on everyone’s lips. It is a world of extreme contrasts between the wheeling and dealing of executives on a skyscraper’s 27th floor to people down on the street selling their bodies for 10 Euros.”

Unter Dir die Stadt centers on the bank manager Roland Cordes who has fallen in love with Svenja, the wife of one of his employees. With each new rendez-vous, their secret affair assumes an increasingly existential character until the point when Cordes uses his power and influence to remove his rival by having the husband transferred to another post. However, Svenja is not prepared to accept Cordes’ manipulations …

As Hochhaeusler and Peltzer explain, this story about the use of power and its human price harks back to the Biblical story of King David who sent Uriah to the front in order to have Bathsheba for himself.

It didn’t take long for the decision for the part of Svenja to fall on Nicolette Krebitz who is known for acting roles in such films as Bandits, So schnell du kannst or Liebeslied as well as being a director in her own rights with Jeans and The Heart is a Dark Forest (Das Herz ist ein dunkler Wald). Meanwhile, the other two figures in the love triangle – the bank manager lover and the younger husband – were cast with Swiss actor Robert Hunger-Buehler, who appeared at the beginning of this year opposite Julia Jentsch in the late Peter Zadek’s staging of Major Barbara at Zurich’s Schauspielhaus, and Mark Waschke who starred as the title figure in Juraj Herz’s period drama Habermann earlier this year.

“Christoph pays particular attention to the ensemble’s composition and them functioning well together,” Brokemper says. “He is more interested in good actors than just going for ‘names’. What’s more, he is a very good observer and has an ear for authentic dialogue.”

Compared to Hochhaeusler’s last feature film, the financing for the new project was much more straightforward. This time round, Brokemper attracted broadcasters WDR and ARTE as co-producers, with funding from Filmstiftung NRW, HessenInvestFilm, and the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF). The Match Factory has taken on international sales and Piffl Medien will again serve as the theatrical distributor for Germany.

“Many of the team also worked on Low Profile such as his DoP Bernhard Keller, the editor Stefan Stabenow and composer Benedikt Schiefer,” Brokemper adds. “That makes things so much easier during a shoot because they all speak a common language.”

Meanwhile, the film’s makers are preparing something rather special for the opening credits: the Russian set photographer Gueorgui Pinkhassov, who worked on Andrei Tarkovsky’s Stalker and has been a member of the Magnum Photos agency since 1988, came to Frankfurt for a photo session ahead of principal photography to capture documentary-style images of the banks and the stock exchange’s trading floor.

MB
Vorstadtkrokodile 2

Type of Project Feature Film Cinema Genre Children’s Film, Family Entertainment Production Companies Westside Filmproduktion/Krefeld, Rat Pack Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Constantin Film Produktion/Munich With backing from Filmstiftung NRW, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), NRW Bank Producers Christian Becker, Lena Olbrich Co-Producer Martin Moszkowicz Director Christian Ditter Screenplay Neil Ennever, Christian Ditter, based on Max von der Gruen’s novel and figures

Director of Photography Christian Rein Editor Ueli Christen Music by Heiko Maile Production Design Eva Stiebler Principal Cast Nick Romeo Reimann, Fabian Halbig, Manuel Steitz, Leonie Tepe, Nora Tschirmer, Smudo, Maria Schrader, Dietmar Baer, Esther Schweins

Casting Daniela Tolkien, Franziska Schlattner Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85, Dolby Digital

Shooting Language German Shooting in Duisburg, Porta Westfalica, Dortmund, Hueckelhoven, Cologne, Solingen, June – September 2009

Contact
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Production was still underway on the first adaptation of Max von der Gruen’s popular novel Vorstadtkrokodile in summer 2008, yet producers Christian Becker and Lena Olbrich had already decided that the “Crocodiles” gang would return to the cinema screens for a second film.

“During the shoot, we had taken the characters in the film so much to our hearts that we really felt we should continue the gang’s story in a new adventure,” Olbrich recalls. “What’s more, the young actors came up to us during shooting with their own ideas of what could be included in a sequel. So, we let ourselves be inspired by their suggestions as well as input from screenwriters to develop a script.”

“The subsequently positive press reaction to the first film and the fact that the test screenings registered 99% recommendations convinced us that we were on the right track,” she adds.

The Crocodiles (Vorstadtkrokodile) was released by Constantin Film last April and has been seen by over 600,000 cinemagoers in Germany. It won the White Elephant Children’s Media Prize at Filmfest Munich in June and the second prize at the Giffoni Children’s Film Festival in Italy. Invitations have followed at festivals as far apart as Buenos Aires, Amsterdam, and London, and director Christian Ditter and Olbrich presented the film as part of the German Currents’ focus on films from North Rhine-Westphalia at Santa Monica’s Aero cinema at the end of September.

While the new film is also aimed at all children aged six and above, Olbrich agrees that the plot for Vorstadtkrokodile 2 is “a little older: the gang experiences all kinds of new things like first love and going to the disco – and they begin to learn what it means to become an adult.”

Ditter and the English screenwriter Neil Ennever wrote the screenplay based on the characters in Max von der Gruen’s novel, having previously worked together on the comedy short Grounded.

It’s the summer holidays and the Crocodiles gang has moved into their cool new headquarters in a former coal mine. Everything would be hunky-dory if it wasn’t for some mysterious goings-on at the factory of Olli and Maria’s parents. If the factory has to close and they have to move to another town, that would be the end of the gang for Kai, Hannes, Jorgo, Frank and Peter. There’s nothing for it: the gang will have to get to the bottom of the mystery – even if it means using the services of Kai’s irritating cousin Jenny who has come from Munich to “babysit” while his parents are on holiday …

“Apart from Jenny, the characters are all based on the original ones in Max von der Gruen’s book,” Ditter explains. “She comes from the big city and is rather a spoiled brat, quite different from the boys from the suburbs. As for the adults, more emphasis has been given this time around to Olli and Maria’s parents – with Esther Schweins and Dietmar Baer in the roles. And we have new baddies being played by Felix Klare and the twin brothers Roman and Raoul Brauner.”

For Crocodiles fans who can’t wait until the January 2010 release date in Germany, the producers have thought up all kinds of things to keep a buzz going on the forthcoming sequel. A dedicated homepage – www.vsk.film.de – features an online diary following the making of the second film, among other things, while a teaser trailer has appeared before each screening of Rat Pack’s other family film Vickie The Viking which was already seen by over 1.6 million cinemagoers in its first week of release in September.

In addition, a trailer was also being included on the German DVD release of The Crocodiles in October to get the growing fan base all keyed up for the sequel.

And, who knows, the adventure may continue even further: Westside and Rat Pack are already considering a third part and have begun developing a script for production possibly to roll next summer.
DOK Festival: 350 documentary and animated films from about 50 countries, four competitions, 64,500 € in awards, focus on Africa, 20th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution in Europe, Joris Ivens retrospective, workshops, master classes ...

DOK Industry: DOK Market, International DOK Leipzig Co-Production Meeting, DOK Summit panel discussions, Leipzig Forum on innovative non-fiction TV, Leipzig Screening of new German docs

Pitching of the Documentary Campus Masterschool organised by Documentary Campus e.V.

www.dok-leipzig.de
Momo leaves his cozy small home town to go to Darmstadt to start studying Business Mathematics, a subject he was always very good in at school. At first full of enthusiasm and confidence, he runs into a nerve-wracking situation trying to find a place to live, until he finally decides to share a three-room apartment with Bernd, a somewhat unfriendly Architecture student five years his senior. But out of their original “partnership of convenience” develops a “friendship for life”. Yet still, Momo has some initial difficulty acclimating himself to student life. Over the course of the next 13 semesters, Momo experiences all the highs and lows that student life has to offer. At first he is very studious and goes to all his lectures, hangs out with like-minded fellow students, and spends two semesters abroad in Australia. But when he returns, he realizes that he has chosen the wrong major and calling it off now seems to be too late. Finally, in his seventh semester, his greatest desire is fulfilled: after falling in love with Kerstin, he forgets all about the whole purpose of his studies. Ultimately, he leads himself to financial ruin with a completely oversized business idea. His youthful enthusiasm is soon replaced by deep depression and existential questions like: What do I really want? What am I doing here? And for how much longer …?

**Genre** Comedy, Coming-of-Age Story  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** Year of Production 2009  
**Director** Frieder Wittich  
**Screenplay** Frieder Wittich  
**Director of Photography** Christian Rein  
**Editor** Marty Schenk  
**Production Design** Tamo Kunz  
**Producer** Jakob Claussen  
**Production Company** Claussen + Woebke + Putz Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with HR/Frankfurt, ARTE/Strasbourg, Instinctive Film/Berlin  
**Principal Cast** Max Riemelt, Alexander Fehling, Claudia Eisinger  
**Casting** Suse Marquardt Besetzungsbüero  
**Length** 102 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Zurich 2009 (In Competition), Hof 2009  
**With backing from** German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), HessenInvestFilm, University of Television & Film Munich, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, German Federal Film Board (FFA)

A night in Buenos Aires. Young people between sunset and sunrise, in search of trash, love, justice, a future. Four life lines that will cross but won’t touch each other.

Nico sprays, under the cover of darkness, political graffiti against his anger at the corrupt government. His trademark is the spider, climbing over house walls and thus into Estér’s nightlife. Together with her mother and her little son, she uses the hours before garbage removal trying to turn other people’s waste into their living. Natalia is coming home from her webcam-stripping-job. She is dreaming of a man who loves her and of finally becoming the woman on the outside that she feels she already is. But right now she wants to go out, dance in a club and forget all about everything. The AMERIKA is also the place Ani, Hilde and Metch are heading for. Drunk with cocktails, styling and the thought of boys, the three girlfriends take off into the night.

Avenida Argentina explores four opposite worlds along the social striplines of today’s Argentina, between poor and rich, unschooled and studied, indigenous and European descent. An irritating snapshot of a society in crisis.

**Genre** Society Category Documentary Cinema **Year of Production** 2009 **Director** Lucia-Milena Bonse **Director of Photography** Nikolai von Graevenitz **Editor** Anja Pohl **Music by** Console **Producers** Maren Luethje, Florian Schneider, Andreas Hoerl **Production Company** Luethje & Schneider Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Fernsehen und Film Muenchen (HFF/M)/Munich **Length** 84 min **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 **Original Version** Spanish **Subtitled Versions** English, German **Sound Technology** Stereo **Festival Screenings** Munich 2009 **With backing from** FilmFernsehFonds Bayern

Lucia-Milena Bonse was born 1981 in Bielefeld. After longer stays abroad in Philadelphia/USA and Madrid/Spain, she enrolled at the Munich University of Television and Film in 2001 to study in the Film and Television Documentary department. Besides her first documentaries she also makes journalistic television features at home and abroad. From 2005-2006, she spent two semesters at the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires/Argentina. In 2006 she worked in script development and production at Goldkind Film/TV60 in Munich, and since 2008 she has been active as a commissioning editor for ZDF’s Das kleine Fernsehspiel. Avenida Argentina is her graduation film. Her other films include the documentaries: Die Muenchner Freiheit (short, 2002), Nahostkonflikt ganz nah (short, 2003), Koenigsblau (short, 2004), Bob Jones University (short, 2007), and Berlinale Taxi (2008).

**World Sales** (please contact)
Luethje & Schneider Filmproduktion GbR · Florian Schneider, Maren Luethje Bayerisches Filmzentrum · Bavariafilmplatz 7 · 82031 Munich/Germany phone +49-89-85 63 60 06 · fax +49-89-85 63 60 07 email: post@luethje-schneider.de · www.luethje-schneider.de
In this portrait, Gerda Lepke speaks for the first time about the story of her life, of the difficulties of becoming an accepted artist. We accompany her in her studio and her home in Gera and Dresden.

A documentary about the “Kafkaesque” life enclosed in her studio space and her mother’s small house and garden, with insight into the difficulties of a female painter who grew up in East Germany (GDR).

“A meeting and friendship that began in the mid 80s, led me into the ‘garden of the painter’. This gave me the closeness and made it possible for me to realize a portrait of a painter in her own words, as she speaks to herself. I received, in each phase of the film’s production, surprise new encounters with the work and life of the artist Gerda Lepke.” (Wolfgang Scholz)

Wolfgang Scholz was born in 1958 in Dresden and studied Fine Arts at the Dresden Academy of Arts. He made his first short in 1986 and has been featured as a painter in numerous exhibits. His films include: Body Building (documentary, 1988), Kohlenlothar (documentary, 1990), The Lithographer (documentary, 1992), Shadow Seeker (documentary feature, 1994), A Munich Cinema Legend (documentary, 1998), Lost Wings (1999), Landscapes of Love (multimedia installation, 2001), Distant Neighbours (documentary, 2003), Ser Viviente (multimedia installation, 2005), and The Image Inside (documentary, 2009).
After his father’s death, Rufus returns to the house, where he spent his early childhood. He and his girlfriend want to spend some days at the lake, but after their arrival, strange occurrences happen. Figures seem to sneak around the house, trying to get in.

Searching for traces of his childhood, memories come up in Rufus’ mind, leading him to the mysterious disappearance of his sister Sophie. In his visions, he realizes that she was put into an institute to be abused for clinical experiments. After her escape, she returned home, but her parents refused to let her in, being afraid of her violent behavior.

Chased by the director of the institute, she then was drowned by him in the lake. Since this crime, she is haunting the house, trying to get inside.

After a night of revelation, Rufus decides to change the past, and opens the door to let Sophie in. This action alters the circumstances that led to her death, giving her the chance to take revenge in order to return back to life.

**Genre** Psycho Thriller, Mystery  
**Category** Feature Film Cinema  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Christoph-Philipp Schneider  
**Screenplay** Christoph-Philipp Schneider  
**Director of Photography** Alexander Matthaei  
**Editor** Christoph-Philipp Schneider  
**Music by** Stefan Schulzki  
**Producer** Christoph-Philipp Schneider  
**Production Company** Omnison Filmproduktion/Augsburg  
**Principal Cast** Ronald Hansch, Ulrike Dostal, Christian Ammermueller, Elisabeth Schneider  
**Length** 78 min  
**Format** HD, color, 16:9  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Stereo

**Christoph-Philipp Schneider** was born in 1978 in Munich and studied Motion Design at the University of Augsburg, where he graduated in 2003 with *Farewell to Myself* (*Abschied vom Ich*, short). During his studies he also directed *Subjektion* (short, 2001), *Coda* (short, 2002), and co-directed *Circulum Nr. 1* (short, 2002). Since then he works as a freelance editor, cameraman and director, including animation and concept art. He worked in Rio de Janeiro, Paris, New York and Monte Carlo, producing commercials for TV, cinema, fairs and the Internet. *Remember* (2009) is his first feature film.
What would a man in Lederhosen do in Marzahn – a Berliner suburb? Herbert is looking for somebody. Somebody who would listen to his music and maybe even sing with him.

For many people, German folk music satisfies a longing that cannot be fulfilled anywhere else.

This film is about these people. About fervent fans, folk music show veterans, urban yodelers and one who headed out to sing to the city.

Janina Herhoffer was born in 1978 in Heidelberg. She studied Editing at the IFS International Film School in Cologne and the University of Film and Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam. Since 2000, she has been active as an editor and dramaturgical advisor for various feature and documentary productions. There Are Still Mountains Outside marks her debut as a director.
This is the story of 17-year-old Flo and his gang, the Rox. A story of great romance and hard choices. When his brother, the leader of the Rox, gets into trouble, Flo has to decide between the love of his life, or his flesh and blood. It’s a matter of life and death...

Far from the tourist attractions, where the capital of Berlin is dark and dangerous, is the home turf of the Rox. Always front and center in a crunch is Flo, whose cool older brother Chris is still the leader of the posse, even while he’s doing time. But Flo’s world gets turned upside down when he meets Sofie, his exact opposite: cosmopolitan, smart and from a good family. Despite all their differences, the two find themselves irresistibly drawn to each other, finally giving in head over heels to their feelings. But when Chris gets out of jail, things come to a head: Chris is in debt to big-time criminal Rico. In order to pay Rico back, Chris plans a heist with the Rox. But the job goes bad and Flo is forced to make a choice …

**Genre** Family Entertainment  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema** 
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Rainer Matsutani  
**Screenplay** Peer Klehmet, Sebastian Wehlings  
**Director of Photography** Clemens Messow  
**Editor** Marco ‘Pav’ D’Auria  
**Music by** Wolfram de Marco  
**Production Design** Carola Gauster  
**Producers** Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton, Ewa Karlstroem  
**Production Company** SamFilm/Munich  
**Principal Cast** Jimi Blue Ochsenknecht, Wilson Gonzalez Ochsenknecht, Emilia Schuele, Jannis Niewoechner, Michael Keseroglu, Michael-Kai Mueller, Sina Tkotsch, Christian Bluemel, Aaron Le, Marie-Lou Sellem  
**Casting** Uwe Buenker  
**Length** 90 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (MBB), FilmFernsehFonds Bayern (FFF), German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

France, 1563. Protestants and Catholics are fighting for land and power, invoking their religion as justification. At the head of the Protestants stands Henry of Navarre, leading his men against Paris, against the Catholics, and against his mother’s powerful rival, Catherine de Medici, Queen of France. Catherine de Medici offers Henry the hand of her daughter, Margot, as a sign of reconciliation but the wedding ends in a terrible bloodbath. Henry survives the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre but is kept prisoner in the Louvre, until he escapes after four long years. He will change religion five times in the course of his life, fighting and resorting to any tactics to climb his way to the throne. He eventually becomes a monarch who can genuinely claim to be one of the first true humanists.

Director Jo Baier turns the internationally successful novel by Heinrich Mann into a gripping feature full of historic greatness, dramatic hero’s fall and passion. The production value is impressive (Budget €18 million), superbly shot by cinematographer Gernot Roll (Nowhere in Africa) and transformed into high-class entertainment by editors Alexander Berner (The Baader Meinhof Complex, 10,000 BC, Perfume) and Claus Wehlisch.

**Genre** Adventure, Drama, History, Literature, Love Story
**Category** Feature Film Cinema
**Year of Production** 2009

**Director** Jo Baier  
**Screenplay** Jo Baier, Cooky Ziesche  
**Director of Photography** Gernot Roll  
**Editors** Alexander Berner, Claus Wehlisch  
**Music by** Hans Zimmer  
**Production Design** Klaus-Peter Platten  
**Music by** Christian Strang  
**Producer** Regina Ziegler  
**Production Company** Ziegler Film/Berlin

**Principal Cast**  
Julien Boisselier, Joachim Król, Roger Casamajor, Andreas Schmidt, Armelle Deutsch, Chloé Stefani

**Casting** Sabine Schroth

**Length** 152 min  
**Format** HD, color, cs  
**Original Version** French/German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Dubbed Versions** German, French  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD

With backing from German Federal Film Board (FFA), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Filmstiftung NRW, MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg, German Federal Film Fund (DIFF)

Jo Baier was born in 1949 in Munich and studied Drama, German and American Language Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich. He made more than 70 documentaries and TV features before turning to feature films and has been working as a director since 1979. A selection of his award-winning films includes: Rauhnacht (TV, 1984), Schiefweg (TV, 1987), Wildfeuer (1991), Hoelleisengretl (TV, 1994), The Store (Der Laden, TV 1998), Wambo (TV, 2001), Schwabenkinder (TV, 2002), Stauffenberg (TV, 2004), All Were Not Murderers (Nicht alle waren Moerder, TV, 2005), Valentin (TV, 2007), and Henry of Navarre (Henri 4, 2009).
Disappointed from life, 25-year-old Roger intends to commit suicide in his apartment. But at the last minute, he is hindered by the arrival of the young couple Chris and Lisa. As though fate had brought them together, they convince Roger to join them in a sure-fire plan: to rob a small, remote bank.

Everything goes as planned, but they didn’t reckon with the bank director and his family being there. In the heat of the moment, Chris knocks down the wife with his gun.

The original euphoria about their successful raid soon wanes when they hear of the woman’s death. From day to day, the dream of easy money and unconditional freedom turns into a nightmare – a direct journey into darkness which Roger, Lisa and Chris never before imagined.

Genre Drama, Thriller
Category Feature Film, Cinema
Year of Production 2009
Director Markus Welter
Screenplay Moritz Gerber
Director of Photography Pascal Rémond
Editor Cécile Welter
Music by Michael Sauter
Production Design Urs Beuter
Producers Simon Hesse, Philipp Steffens
Production Companies HesseGreutert Film/Zurich, greenskyfilms/Ludwigsburg, in co-production with Swiss Television SF/Zurich, SWR/Stuttgart, Teleclub Switzerland/Zurich, Praesens-Film/Zurich
Principal Cast Nils Althaus, Lena Doerrie, Stipe Erceg
Casting Corinna Glaus, Hanna Hansen
Length 86 min
Format 16 mm, color, cs
Original Version German/Swiss
Subtitled Version English
Dubbed Version German
Sound Technology Dolby SR
Festival Screenings Ophuels Festival Saarbruecken 2009, Zurich 2009
With backing from Zuercher Filmstiftung, MFG Baden-Wuerttemberg

Markus Welter was born in 1968 in Bonn. After his traineeship as a film and TV producer at an advertising agency, he has been working as a freelance editor and director of commercials with great international success. Spending three years in Los Angeles, he was a postgraduate student of Editing at the American Film Institute (AFI). Night Rush (Im Sog der Nacht, 2009) is his feature debut.
“Writer-director Michael Hoffman adapts Jay Parini’s novel into a thrilling comic-dramatic account of Leo Tolstoy’s final months. This Tolstoy, played with quiet authority by Christopher Plummer, has renounced writing fiction, built a school to educate peasants, and leads a movement whose guiding principles are abolishing private property, pacifism, and sexual chastity. His new secretary (the charming James McAvoy) becomes the comic man-in-the-middle between two formidable opponents scheming for control of his manuscripts and money. Chertkov (Paul Giamatti), a rigid true believer, wants to spread Tolstoyan doctrines around the world, a would-be Paul to the Master’s Jesus. And Sofya (Helen Mirren), Tolstoy’s wife of 48 years and the mother of his 13 children, proved her dedication by copying War and Peace six times ... by hand! Mirren’s hairpin turns between comedy and tragic humiliation make their marital squabbles into riveting cinema.”

(Larry Gross, Telluride)

Genre Romantic Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Director Michael Hoffman Screenplay Michael Hoffman, based on the novel The Last Station by Jay Parini Director of Photography Sebastian Edschmid Editor Patricia Rommel Production Design Patrizia von Brandenstein Producers Jens Meurer, Chris Curling, Bonnie Arnold Executive Producers Phil Robertson, Andrei Konchalovsky, Judy Tossell, Robbie Little Co-Producers Ewa Karlstroem, Andreas Ulmke-Smeaton Production Company Egoli Tossell Film GmbH/Halle, in co-production with SamFilm/Munich, in cooperation with The Production Center of Andrei Konchalovsky/Moscow Principal Cast Helen Mirren, Christopher Plummer, Anne-Marie Duff, Paul Giamatti, Kerry Condon, John Sessions, Patrick Kennedy, and James McAvoy Length 112 min Format 35 mm, color, cs Original Version English Subtitled Version German Dubbed Version German Sound Technology Dolby SR Festival Screenings Telluride 2009, Rome 2009, AFI Fest 2009 With backing from Mitteldeutsche Medienföderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Board (FFA), German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

Berlin, 1989. Sascha is a young East German border guard; Franzi a lively young West German woman who’s just moved into a flat next to Sascha’s watchtower at the Berlin Wall. It takes only a slight mishap and a selfless act of chivalry – and the two fall in love. But soon the Stasi believes they are witnessing the start of a revolt – this is the time of mass protests and East Germans taking refuge in the West German embassy in Prague after all. Franzi and Sascha have to find their ways to stand up for their love and strive for the impossible – to bring down the wall …

Casting a perceptive look at the last days of the GDR, Beloved Berlin Wall is a lively screwball comedy set against the harsh historical facts, a tale of a love affair that becomes an act of civil courage. Written and directed by Peter Timm (Go Trabi Go, Rudy, the Racing Pig), the film stars Grimme Award-winner Felicitas Woll (Dresden), Maxim Mehmet (NVA) and Thomas Thieme (The Lives of Others) in the lead roles.

A bit of a Don Juan with his styled hair and single earring, Fikret (17) illegally sells roses in the traffic jam on the Bosphorus Bridge that links Asia and Europe. At the same time, he is striving for a regular job in old downtown Istanbul. Umut (28) drives a shared taxi crossing the Bosphorus Bridge every day. He is searching for a better apartment to rent in order to satisfy his wife, whose desires are beyond his earnings. The traffic policeman Murat (24), who is stationed on the bridge, feels alone amidst the solid lines of cars. Each night at home, he logs on to the Internet looking for dating opportunities. Unaware of each other, Fikret, Umut and Murat intersect in the rush hour every day with millions of others, coping with the straits of fulfilling their aspirations in the big city.

The story is based on the lives of the characters depicting themselves in the original locations.

**Genre** Drama  
**Category** Feature Film  
**Cinema Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Asli Oezge  
**Screenplay** Asli Oezge  
**Director of Photography** Emre Erkmen  
**Editors** Vessela Martschewski, Aylin Zoi Tinel, Christof Schertenleib  
**Producers** Fabian Massah, Asli Oezge  
**Co-Producers** Sevil Demirci, Mete Gumurhan  
**Production Company** Endorphine Production/Berlin, in co-production with Yeni Sinemacilik/Istanbul, Kaliber Film/Rotterdam  
**Principal Cast** Fikret Portakal, Murat Tokgoez, Umut Ilker, Cemile Ilker  
**Length** 87 min  
**Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** Turkish  
**Subtitled Versions** English, French, German  
**Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  
**Festival Screenings**  
**Awards** Best Film Istanbul 2009, Best Film Adana 2009  
**With backing from** Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, German Federal Film Fund (DFFF), Turkish Ministry of Culture, Rotterdam Media Fund  

Asli Oezge was born in 1975 in Istanbul. She graduated from the Marmara University Faculty of Fine Arts Film & TV in 1999, and immediately afterwards she made the short film **Capital C**, which won a string of awards from various festivals. Her feature debut followed in 2003 with **Little Bit of April**. Her next project, the documentary **Hesperos’ Apprentices**, competed in Antalya in 2005. She is currently working on her next feature **Asphyxia**, which received the Script Development Award at the Thessaloniki Film Festival’s Balkan Fund. With this project she was pre-selected for the Sundance Film Festival’s New Directors Award in 2007. Recently, the project was also selected for the Nipkow Program.
The awkward hero stumbles over a long forgotten piano. Music leads him from his run-down existence out into the city life. There he plays a last funeral march to all the dead-beat figures on the sidewalk.

Genre Animation, Short  
Year of Production 2009  
Director Gregor Dashuber  
Screenplay Gregor Dashuber  
Editor Martin Reimers  
Music by Marian Mentrup  
Producer Julie Lamarre  
Production Company Hochschule fuer Film und Fernsehen “Konrad Wolf”/Potsdam-Babelsberg  
Length 10 min  
Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
Original Version no dialogue

Sound Technology Dolby Digital

Festival Screenings 

Awards Minister of Fine Arts Promotion Prize for Best Short Film Dresden 2009

Gregor Dashuber was born in 1980 in Schongau. After internships at two graphic design agencies, he studied Animation at the University of Film and Television “Konrad Wolf” in Potsdam. Active as a freelance animator, illustrator and director, his films include: Lightmare (2003), The Tell Tale Heart (2006), So It Goes (2007), and Never Drive A Car When You’re Dead (2009).
A man meets a woman in a bar. They walk through the night without any reason. At dawn they separate again. A long take.

**Genre** Drama, Experimental, Music  
**Category** Short  
**Year of Production** 2009  
**Director** Jan Speckenbach  
**Screenplay** Jan Speckenbach  
**Director of Photography** Armin Dierolf  
**Music by** Daniel Freundlieb  
**Production Design** Ann Heine, Emanuel Schleiermacher, Brigitte Schloegel  
**Animation** Dirk Schulz  
**Producers** Hartmut Bitomsky, Sol Bondy  
**Production Company** Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (dffb)  
**Principal Cast** Johannes Kuehn, Filipina Henoch, Ninja Stangenberg, Michael Golab, David Arnsperger, Camilla Kalfass, Juliane Dreyer  
**Length** 12 min  
**Format** DigiBeta  
**Blow-up** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  
**Original Version** German  
**Subtitled Version** English  
**Sound Technology** Dolby Digital  
**Festival Screenings** Hof 2009

This is architecture for the 21st century. The series Up to the Sky presents three of the latest and outstanding skyscrapers. Three new towers in New York, Malmö and Barcelona that have set new standards in world architecture.

Never before have so many skyscrapers been built as in the first decade of the 21st century. Thanks to computer technology, today calculations and constructions have been made possible that were unthinkable some years ago. World-famous European architects like Norman Foster, Jean Nouvel and Santiago Calatrava know how to handle these new technologies. With their new buildings, the look of the skyscraper has changed forever. Their new towers have nothing in common with the rectangular high-rise building in Bauhaus design. Playful, sculptural and exciting – what used to be an abstract sculpture in a museum, today is rising up hundreds of meters into the sky.

Meet Sir Norman Foster, Santiago Calatrava and Jean Nouvel. And see the Hearst Tower in New York, the Turning Torso in Malmö and the Torre Agbar in Barcelona.
What will remain … when mankind has disappeared? What will be found, and what will it reveal about us? What will remain from modern technology, from art, from our social order? The answer: Not much, for a culture which has vanished cannot be fully explained. What do we leave behind, what do we keep for our successors? What do we do to be remembered, to not be forgotten, to remain significant in the long term? What do we save from our culture, our art, our technology? We bury time capsules with documents and objects to be found 100 or 1000 years later. We try to save our ideas on microfilm and secure them in an old mine. We collect seeds and deep freeze them to save them for the future. We build a clock to run for 10,000 years. We send messages with spacecrafts well beyond our solar system, so that they can disclose something about us when we, our civilization and the earth, are long gone. What will all this really say about us?

Genre Environment/Ecology, Society
Category Documentary
Cinema
Year of Production 2009
Director Knut Karger
Screenplay Knut Karger
Director of Photography Diana Weilepp
Editor Knut Karger
Producers Florian Schneider, Maren Luethje
Commissioning Editor Petra Felber
Production Company Luethje & Schneider Filmproduktion/Munich, in co-production with Hochschule fuer Fernsehen und Film Muenchen (HFF/M)/Munich, Andrea Wetzel Film/Munich, in cooperation with BR/Munich
Length 78 min
Format Super 16/DV Blow-up 35 mm, color, 1:1.85
Original Version English/German
Subtitled Version German/English
Sound Technology Stereo
Festival Screenings Hof 2009
With backing from FilmFernsehfonds Bayern, Bayerischer Rundfunk, German Federal Film Board (FFA), Kulturelle Filmfoerderung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Knut Karger was born in 1974 in Schwerin. He studied at the University of Television & Film in Munich and works in the organization of documentary film festivals. Active as a freelance director and editor, his films as a director include: Gaastdiep – A Sailors’ Film (2002), In Case of Emergency (2005), Fluechtend ueber Stock und Stein (2005), Onomatopoeia (2007), and What Will Remain … (2009).
In a small town in Eastern Germany three young outsiders become friends: Richy (16), who is teased at school, Tim (16), who has moved from the West with his parents and has difficulties getting used to his new life, and Marco (18), who has problems coping with his parents’ separation and the rejection he experiences from his father.

Richy admires the strong Marco and proves his interest in Marco’s obsessions – glass-moving séances, martial arts and satanic visions. Tim is fascinated by the supernatural as well. Together, the trio experiences a stormy and climactic period. They are convinced of their ability to influence their environment and their lives with newly gained “satanic powers”.

But the more the friendship of the three initiates grows, the more they are forced to experience conflicts between their worldview and the limits of concrete reality. And when a gentle love affair develops between Richy and a girl, Nicole, he must hide it from his friends. A fateful course is set, one that takes the friends to a tragic finale well beyond the attentions of the adult world.

Genre Drama Category Feature Film Cinema Year of Production 2009 Directors Antje Kruska, Judith Keil Screenplay Antje Kruska, Judith Keil Director of Photography Marcus Winterbauer Editor Inge Schneider Music by Beckmann, Cinesong Producer Joachim Ortmanns Co-Producer Martin Heisler Production Company Lichtblick Film & Fernsehproduktion, Cologne, in co-production with Lichtblick Media/Berlin Principal Cast Christian Bluemel, Vincent Krueger, Willi Gerk, Ceci Chuh Length 99 min Format 35 mm, color, 1:1.85 Original Version German Subtitled Version English Sound Technology Dolby SR Festival Screenings Hof 2009 With backing from BKM, Kuratorium junger deutscher Film, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Filminstiftung NRW

Antje Kruska and Judith Keil are award-winning documentary filmmakers. Together, they have directed: Ausfahrt Ost (documentary TV, 1999), Der Glanz von Berlin (documentary, 2001). Teuflische Spiele (documentary TV, 2002), Dancing with Myself (documentary, 2005), and the feature Wenn die Welt uns gehoert (2009).
Jakob and Manu have developed their own specific survival strategies. Without a permanent home or steady job, they live in a makeshift camp in the woods and use the municipal swimming pool when they need to shower. Always short on cash, they make a living as providers of human services. They notice what is missing in other people’s lives and make a living by satisfying others’ desires and giving them what they need or what they lack.

Manu takes care of old Mrs. Katz, who is grateful and pays for this service. Jakob is looking for a new “client”. At an airfield for glider planes, Jakob provokes an accident, which catches the pilot’s attention and awakens his sympathy. Martin, the pilot and a former manager, takes Jakob home and introduces him to his wife Claudia, who is initially not thrilled with the “visitor”. Little by little, Jakob succeeds in winning acceptance within the family. Jakob reminds Martin of his son Benjamin, who died a few years ago in an accident. Jakob makes himself available – in place of Benjamin. An open-ended offer, immediately terminable.

When Mrs. Katz suddenly dies, Manu is ready to move on, but Jakob decides to stay with Martin as he feels that the job is not yet finished for him. He increasingly feels at home and secure within the family. As Jakob takes on the role of the deceased son more and more and becomes estranged from Manu, she decides to pay Jakob and his new family a visit and win him back.

**Genre** Drama  **Category** Feature Film Cinema  **Year of Production** 2009  **Directors** Christian Becker, Oliver Schwabe  **Screenplay** Christian Becker, Oliver Schwabe  **Director of Photography** Oliver Schwabe  **Editor** Florian Miosge  **Music by** Aurelio Valle  **Production Design** Katja Schloemer  **Production Company** RheinFilm/ Cologne, in co-production with WDR/Cologne  **Principal Cast** Robert Stadlober, Sylvester Groth, Maja Schoene, Corinna Kirchhof  **Casting** Susanne Ritter  **Length** 87 min  **Format** 35 mm, color, 1:1.85  **Original Version** German  **Subtitled Versions** English, Italian  **Sound Technology** Dolby SRD  **Festival Screenings** Venice 2009, Hof 2009  **With backing from** Filmstiftung NRW


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german films quarterly 4 · 2009

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AT BERLIN in Competition

FEUERHERZ by Luigi Falorni

KIRSCHBLUETE – HANAMI by Doris Doerrie

PORTRAITS Leander Haussmann, Ute Wieland, Corazón International, Hannah Herzsprung

SPECIAL REPORT Silent Cinema

German Films

Quarterly 4 · 2008

AT THE BERLINALE EVERYONE ELSE (In Competition)
STORM (In Competition) GERMANY 09 (Out of Competition)

PORTRAITS Emily Atef, Hans Steinbichler, Flying Moon Film, Heike Makatsch

German Films

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German Films

Quarterly 2 · 2009

German Films

Quarterly 3 · 2009

AT LOCARNO
THE TWO HORSES OF GENGHIS KHAN by Byambasuren Davaa

AT MONTREAL
ALIAS by Jens Jucker
ANNE PERRY-INTERIORS by Dana Linkiewicz
CEASEFIRE by Lancelot van Houtte

AT VENICE
DESERT FLOWER by Sherry Hormann
SOUL KITCHEN by Fatih Akin

PORTRAITS
Almut Getto, Nina von Glasow, UFA Cinema, Alice Dwyer

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German films quarterly
**German Films: A Profile**

**German Films Service + Marketing** is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide. It was established in 1954 under the name Export-Union of German Cinema as the umbrella association for the Association of German Feature Film Producers, 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 Huemer (chairman), Peter Dinges, Antonio Exacoustos, Roman Paul, Ulrike Schauz, Michael Schmid-Ospach.

German Films itself has 14 **members of staff**:
- Christian Dorsch, managing director
- Mariette Rissenbeek, public relations/deputy managing director
- Petra Bader, office manager
- Julia Basler, project coordinator/documentary film
- Christin Czarnecki, trainee
- Christine Harrasser, managing director’s assistant/project coordinator
- Angela Hawkins, publications & website editor
- Barbie Heusinger, project coordinator/distribution support
- Nicole Kaufmann, project coordinator
- Michaela Kowal, accounts
- Kim Liebeck, PR assistant/festival coordinator
- Martin Scheuring, project coordinator/short film
- Konstanze Welz, project coordinator/television
- Stephanie Wimmer, project coordinator

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

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

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

**German Films’ range of activities includes:**
- Close cooperation with major international film festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Locarno, San Sebastian, Montreal, Karlovy Vary, Moscow, Nyon, Shanghai, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Sydney, Gothenburg, Warsaw, Thessaloniki, Rome, and Turin, among others
- Organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets (Berlin, Cannes, AFM Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Shanghai)
- Staging of the “German Premieres” industry screenings in New York and Rome
- Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press and buyers from the fields of cinema, video, and television
- Providing advice and information for German filmmakers and press on international festivals, conditions of participation, and German films being shown
- Organization of the annual NEXT GENERATION short film program, which presents a selection of shorts by students of German film schools and is premiered every year at Cannes
- Publication of informational literature about current German films and the German film industry (German Films Quarterly), as well as international market analyses and special festival brochures
- An Internet website (www.german-films.de) offering information about new German films, a film archive, as well as information and links to German and international film festivals and institutions
- Organization of the selection procedure for the German entry for the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film
- Collaboration with Deutsche Welle’s DW-TV KINO program which features the latest German film releases and international productions in Germany
- Organization of the “German Films Previews” geared toward arthouse distributors and buyers of German films
- Selective financial Distribution Support for the foreign releases of German films
- Organization with Unifrance of the annual German-French film meeting

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