

REZA MEMARI
WRITER & DIRECTOR

SÖNKE ANDRESEN
WRITER

DASCHA DAUENHAUER
COMPOSER

LENA URZENDOWSKY
ACTOR

LUKAS NATHRATH
DIRECTOR, ACTOR & WRITER

ALISON KUHN
DIRECTOR, ACTOR & WRITER

WELKET BUNGUÉ
ACTOR



FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS

THE FILMMAKERS

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German Films, the national information and advisory centre for the promotion of German films abroad, has been presenting young outstanding German film talent to the international public since 2016 through the campaign FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS, and this platform has been developed over the years into one with a signal effect. Since 2021, the spotlight has also been directed to other professionals playing a significant role in the making of a film in addition to actors, directors and screenwriters, and this has proven to be an enriching step underscoring the diversity of filmmaking skills in Germany. This expansion of the selection seeks to show that films - more than any other art form - rely on the collaboration of many people in their complex creative processes.

A glance at the biographies of the FACES 2023 - seven literally sensational personalities to German cinema - is proof of how diverse and versatile the local filmmakers' talents are. The FACES 2023 have widely differing personal backgrounds and make wide use of the medium of film in very different ways. They already stand for the quality that German cinema and TV series are known for internationally, and their works are constantly being feted at festivals around the world. They have already made a lasting impact on the German film industry with their creativity, skill, professionalism, and their love and enthusiasm for filmmaking.

"Talent promotion is an important part of German Films' work that is gaining attention and relevance over the last years. German Films is not only about promoting and supporting German films, but also about spotlighting the professionals who make them," Managing Director Simone Baumann declares. "The focus of this year's FACE TO FACE WITH GERMAN FILMS campaign is on multifaceted talents representing the German film industry with the goal of a sustainable and diverse future. We are proud to be able to present seven talented filmmakers as ambassadors of our campaign this year. It is our aim to increase their visibility and to strengthen the promotion of their projects abroad. With their different biographies and professional backgrounds, they have the potential to cross borders and represent the creativity of film internationally," Baumann continues.

We are delighted to be able to present our FACES 2023: writer SÖNKE ANDRESEN, actor WELKET BUNGUÉ, composer DASCHA DAUENHAUER, director, actor and writer ALISON KUHN, writer and director REZA MEMARI, director, actor and writer LUKAS NATHRATH and actor LENA URZENDOWSKY.

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SÖNKE ANDRESEN

Born in Hamburg in 1977, Sönke Andresen initially studied Screenwriting at the German Institute for Literature in Leipzig before completing teacher training for German at the University of Utrecht. In 2007, he received a scholarship to attend the screenwriting lab Drehbuchwerkstatt in Munich and has since worked as a screenwriter for film and TV series. In addition, he writes plays for the theatre.

Andresen has collaborated on a regular basis with the director Axel Ranisch since the internationally multi-award-winning film *I FEEL LIKE DISCO* (2013). They also worked together on two *SCENE OF THE CRIME* episodes and the Grimme Award-winning TV film *FAMILIE LOTZMANN AUF DEN BARRIKADEN* (2019). In addition, Andresen has frequently been involved as a writer on various series such as the second season of *OTHER PARENTS* (2019), which earned him a nomination for the German Comedy Award in 2020.

2023 will see the German theatrical releases of the screen adaptation of Isabel Bogdan's novel *THE PEACOCK*, starring Lavinia Wilson, Jürgen Vogel and Tom Schilling, for which he wrote the screenplay together with Christoph Mathieu, as well as the opera film *ORPHEA IN LOVE*, which is another collaboration with Ranisch. They also worked together on adapting Ranisch's novel *NACKT ÜBER BERLIN* as a series to also be premiered this year.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2022 **ORPHEA IN LOVE** *feature, screenplay together with Axel Ranisch*
Director: Axel Ranisch
- 2022 **THE PEACOCK** *feature, screenplay together with Christoph Mathieu*
Director: Lutz Heineking jr.
- 2019 **OTHER PARENTS** *series, season 2 (head author in writers' room, author team Lutz Heineking, Ron Markus, Tatjana Scheel, Sebastian Züger), Showrunner: Lutz Heineking jr.*
- 2016 **TATORT: BABBELDASCH** *crime series*
Director: Axel Ranisch
- 2015 **OSTFRIESISCH FÜR ANFÄNGER** *feature*
Director: Gregory Kirchhoff
- 2013 **I FEEL DISCO** *feature, cooperation on screenplay*
Director: Axel Ranisch



WELKET BUNGUÉ

Welket Bungué is a Berlin based actor, born in Guinea-Bissau in 1988. His cross-cultural education, from Africa, Europe, and Brazil, made him into a cross-national, multitalented artist. Bungué is co-founder of the production company KUSSA (based in Paris) and he holds a degree in Acting Theatre (ESTC/Lisbon) and a post-graduate degree in Performance Arts (UniRio/Rio de Janeiro).

He has been a member of the Portuguese Film Academy since 2015, a member of the Deutsche Filmakademie since 2020, an associate member of the European Film Academy since 2021, and since 2021, his films have been included in the collection of the Arsenal-Institute for Film and Video Art (Berlin).

As an actor, he has participated in more than 40 films and series, amongst them Ivo Ferreira's historical drama *LETTERS FROM WAR* (2016) as well as Marcelo Caetano's highly acclaimed coming of age-drama *BODY ELECTRIC* (2017) and David Cronenberg's new film *CRIMES OF THE FUTURE* (2022). In 2020, Welket starred in *BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ* (Official Comp. Berlinale 2020), in which his performance earned him a Silver Bear nomination, a nomination as "Best Lead Actor" at the LOLA awards of the German Film Academy (Deutscher Filmpreis) and also the "Aluminium Horse" award for "Best Actor" at Stockholm International Film Festival.

He has a strong connection with the Berlinale: not only were *LETTERS FROM WAR* (2016), *JOAQUIM* (2017) and *BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ* (2020) celebrated at their world premieres in the official competition, in 2021 Bungué was invited to become a Berlinale Talent, where he presented the masterclass "In Contact: The Politics of Moving Bodies". In the same year, he debuted as a director at the Berlinale Forum Expanded with the world premiere of his short film *MUDANÇA*.

FILMOGRAPHY

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- 2022 **CRIMES OF THE FUTURE** *feature*
Director: David Cronenberg
- 2020 **BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ** *feature*
Director: Burhan Qurbani
- 2017 **JOAQUIM** *feature*
Director: Marcelo Gomes
- 2017 **BODY ELECTRIC** *feature*
Director: Marcelo Caetano
- 2016 **LETTERS FROM WAR** *feature*
Director: Ivo Ferreira



From an early age, music was the defining element in Dascha Dauenhauer's life. The Moscow-born composer began composing and playing the piano at the age of five and was taught in composition by Shatkovsky at the Moscow Music Conservatory. After her family moved to Berlin, Dauenhauer attended at the "Academy for exceptionally gifted children and young people" and was accepted as a young student at the "Hanns Eisler" Academy of Music in Berlin at the age of twelve. She also received composition lessons at the Julius Stern Institute. During this time, Dauenhauer was already composing her own pieces, her orchestra piece SINFONIETTA celebrated its world premiere at the Berlin Philharmonic in 2004. She graduated with a degree in music theory from the UDK Berlin and studied film music for a master's degree at the Film University Babelsberg.

She has been working as a film composer since 2015, collaborating on feature films as a composer and music producer. The film JIBRIL by Henrika Kull had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2018, just like BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ in 2020. EVOLUTION was selected for Cannes International Film Festival 2021. In 2018, she was nominated in three categories for the German Film Music Award and won in the category "Best short film" and "Newcomer". In 2020, she won the German Film Award as well as the European Film Award for her music for BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ. In 2022, she received the GEMA Music Authors' Prize in the category Composition Audiovisual Media and received the prestigious Best Music-Award for the Series SOULS at the Cannes International Series Festival. Most recently, Dauenhauer composed the music for the ZDF mini-series THE SWARM, which will be premiered in February 2023 at the Berlin International Film Festival, as well as the film GOLDA (starring Helen Mirren) directed by Guy Nattiv.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2023 **GOLDA** feature, Director: Guy Nattiv
2023 **THE SWARM** series, Directors: Barbara Eder, Philipp Stölzl, Luke Watson
2022 **SOULS** series, Director: Alex Eslam
2020 **DISPLACED** documentary, Director: Sharon Ryba-Kahn
2021 **BLOOD RED SKY** feature, Director: Peter Thorwarth
2021 **EVOLUTION** feature, Director: Kornél Mundruczó
2021 **BLISS** feature, Director: Henrika Kull
2021 **THE CASE YOU** feature, Director: Alison Kuhn
2020 **BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ** feature, Director: Burhan Qurbani



ALISON KUHN

Born in Saarbrücken in 1995, the German-Vietnamese director, actor and writer Alison Kuhn can only be described as a multi-talent. She graduated from Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2022.

She is successful in all her occupations. For instance, she published her first texts as early as 2016 and won the Federal Award for young poetry, IYRIX, in 2017. She immersed herself early on in Cologne's off-theatre scene and, from 2014 onwards, appeared as an actor in a wide variety of roles in television productions and short or feature films.

Alison Kuhn received many awards for her first feature-length documentary *THE CASE YOU* (2020); the film was screened at international festivals and received the German Documentary Film Prize for Art and Culture. *THE CASE YOU* was highly praised by critics because the director succeeds impressively in making the abuse of power and sexual exploitation both visible and comprehensible.

Alison Kuhn remained true to this theme in her short film *FLUFFY TALES* (2021), which deals once again with border crossings. *FLUFFY TALES* was nominated for the German Short Film Award and screened this year as part of the Next Generation Short Tiger Programme in Cannes.

2022 saw the making of Kuhn's latest medium-length feature *THE SWARMERS*, which recounts authoritarian structures and power imbalances in everyday school life. *THE SWARMERS* was nominated for the First Steps Award and has been screened at several Oscar®-qualifying film festivals.

In 2022, she also directed three episodes of the eighth season of *DRUCK*, a series produced for ZDF/funk. Currently, Alison Kuhn is busy preparing two feature-length films to be produced in 2023 and 2024, and she is also getting ready to shoot a mini-series that will air in 2023.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2022 **THE SWARMERS** *short*
 2022 **DRUCK SERIES** *series, season 8, episodes 1-3*
 2021 **FLUFFY TALES** *short*
 2020 **THE CASE YOU** *feature-length documentary*
 2020 **LA PREMIÈRE** *spot*
 2020 **NOW IS THE TIME** *short*
 2019 **SAISON DU CYGNE** *short*
 2018 **KATHARSIS** *short*



Reza Memari is a writer and director, and the co-CEO and co-founder of Telescope Animation. Born in Iran and raised in Bavaria, he studied Marketing Communications and worked for a major US video games publisher before entering the film industry as an editor. Memari's first animated feature film **RICHARD THE STORK** ("A STORK'S JOURNEY"), which he wrote, co-directed and edited, premiered at the 2017 Berlin International Film Festival. This heartfelt adventure about a sparrow who thinks he's a stork was commercially successful worldwide and received numerous awards, including the Bavarian Film Award. A feature film sequel, which he co-wrote, is currently in production.

In 2018, Memari co-founded the Berlin-based movie production company Telescope Animation with his long-time collaborator, the producer Maite Woköck. Two years later they launched Telescope Animation Studios in Hamburg, and most recently Telescope Game Studios in Brandenburg. With Telescope, Memari is forging a revolutionary approach to transmedia production by using the real-time rendering technology Unreal Engine to create animated feature films, series, AR/VR experiences and games that are woven into vast, interconnected story universes.

Memari's new project **THE LAST WHALE SINGER** is about a humpback whale who must save the oceans with his mystical song. This underwater story universe begins with an animated feature film and a game in 2026, followed by a television series in 2027. Reza Memari is a passionate animation filmmaker. For him, animation is not merely a genre for kids, as it tends to be misinterpreted, but a medium for diverse stories that captivate and inspire everyone.

FILMOGRAPHY

CURRENT PROJECTS

- In pre-production:* **THE LAST WHALE SINGER** *feature, author & director*
In development: **THE LAST WHALE SINGER: RISE OF THE LEVIATHAN** (working title)
game, creator
In development: **THE LAST WHALE SINGER** (working title) *series, creator*
In development: **CHILDREN OF GAEA** (working title) *series, creator*
In production: **RICHARD THE STORK 2** (working title) *feature, co-author*

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- 2017 **RICHARD THE STORK (A STORK'S JOURNEY)** *feature, author & co-director*
Directors: Toby Genkel, Reza Memari
 2014 **OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE... (TWO BY TWO)** *feature, editor*
Directors: Toby Genkel, Sean McCormack



LUKAS NATHRATH

Lukas Nathrath studied film directing at the Hamburg Media School from 2016 to 2019. He was invited to the Next Generation Short Tiger program of German Films at the 2018 Festival de Cannes with his short film MORALE (MIT IM BUND). His string of success continued in 2019, as his graduation film KIPPA received the European Young CIVIS Media Prize and the Studio Hamburg Young Talent Award for Best Short Film. KIPPA received various other accolades and was screened at over 50 international film festivals.

Before film school, Nathrath studied North American Studies with a focus on film in his hometown Munich; he also attended a semester in acting at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Since being a teenager, he has appeared as an actor in various film and television productions.

In 2020, Lukas Nathrath was invited to the Filmmakers Residency Basel, and the following year, he was a participant at the esteemed screenwriting lab Drehbuchwerkstatt Munich. He also worked as 2nd-unit-director on high-end series projects in both 2021 and 2022.

In 2022, Nathrath's first feature film ONE LAST EVENING, shot in just seven days, won the top prize in the First Look section at the Locarno Film Festival. He directed and produced the film and co-wrote the screenplay with Sebastian Jakob Doppelbauer. The tragicomedy subsequently has its official world premiere in the Tiger Competition of the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2023 and will be screened in the main selection at the Filmfestival Max Ophüls Prize.

Lukas Nathrath is currently developing his next feature films, including an episodic tragicomedy and a dark comedic thriller.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2022 **ONE LAST EVENING** *feature*
 2019 **KIPPA** *short*
 2019 **KIPPA - DIE REPORTAGE** *short, Documentary about Antisemitism*
 2018 **MIT IM BUND** *short*
 2016 **EIN GLÜCKLICHER TAG** *short*



Lena Urzendowsky, born in 2000, can already boast an impressive acting career. She played the lead role in the coming-of-age movie *COCOON*, which celebrated its world premiere opening the Generation+ section at the Berlinale 2020. Alongside director Leonie Krippendorff, Urzendowsky was honoured with the Bavarian Film Prize and the internationally renowned Iris Prize for her acting performance. In the fairy tale adaptation, *THE SNOW QUEEN* (2014), she made her debut in front of the camera, followed by her first leading role in TV production *THE WHITE RABBIT* (2016) by Florian Schwarz. For her performance in this film, she was awarded the Grimme Prize, the Guenther Rohrbach Film Prize and the Guenther Strack Television Prize. In 2018, she played alongside Thomas Schmauser and German film icon Hannelore Elsner in the biopic *DER GROSSE RUDOLPH* by Alexander Adolph, again followed by a shower of awards.

She was part of the ensemble in the Netflix hit-series *DARK* (2017/2019) by Jantje Fries and Baran Bo Odar and the thriller series *THE DEFEATED* (2020), as well as in the Netflix crime series *HOW TO SELL DRUGS ONLINE (FAST)* (2020). And most notably, in 2021 she was part of the ensemble of the series remake by Amazon Prime of the 80s hit movie *WE CHILDREN FROM BAHNHOF ZOO*, directed by Philipp Kadelbach. Amongst last year's theatrical releases have been Oliver Kracht's graduation film *GERMANY YEAR ZERO* (2021) and the comedy *SWEET DISASTER* (2021). Furthermore, she took the lead in *FRANKY FIVE STAR* (2022), directed by Birgit Moeller, playing a complex character with multiple personalities. More upcoming titles for 2023 with Lena Urzendowsky are *JENSEITS DER BLAUEN GRENZE*, directed by Sarah Neumann, a novel adaptation and an escape story about a professional swimmer who crosses the Baltic Sea to escape the GDR. She is also part of the ensemble in Amazon Prime's series *LUDEN* by Laura Lackmann and Stefan Lukacs. Her latest works include the lead role in Michael Klier's *DAS SCHÖNSTE IST DER FLUSS* and a supporting role in Andreas Dresen's latest film *FROM HILDE, WITH LOVE*.

Whenever her acting career allows, Lena Urzendowsky is studying philosophy at Humboldt University in Berlin. In the summer of 2022, Lena studied at Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York.

FILMOGRAPHY

2022	FRANKY FIVE STAR <i>feature, Director: Birgit Moeller</i>
2021	LUDEN <i>series, Directors: Laura Lackmann, Stefan Lukacs</i>
2020	HOW TO SELL DRUGS ONLINE (FAST) <i>series, season 3, Director: Arne Feldhusen</i>
2019	COCOON <i>feature, Director: Leonie Krippendorff</i>
2018	DER GROSSE RUDOLPH <i>feature, Director: Alexander Adolph</i>
2017/2019	DARK S 1 + 3 <i>series, seasons 1 & 3, Showrunner: Jantje Fries & Baran bo Odar</i>

The pictures of the seven filmmakers which accompany the campaign were shot by renowned photographer Marcus Höhn.

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German Films Service + Marketing GmbH is the national information and advisory center for the promotion of German films worldwide and the official external representation for German films appointed by the federal government of Germany. The work of German Films focuses on increasing the level of awareness of German films abroad by providing information services as well as initiating PR and marketing measures in order to grant the highest possible visibility in international media.

German Films 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.

German Film's range of activities includes a close cooperation with all major international film festivals, the organization of umbrella stands for German sales companies and producers at international television and film markets, the staging of Festivals of German Films in selected international territories as well as the staging of industry screenings in key international territories. Providing advice and information for representatives of the international press, buyers from the fields of cinema, home entertainment, and television and consulting German filmmakers on international festivals is also part of German Films activities.

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PRESS CONTACT

LILIE2A PR

Jutta Heyn & Petra Schwuchow

Email: info@lilie2a-pr.de

Phone: + 49 (0)30 / 403 611 37 - 2 / - 3

CONTACT GERMAN FILMS

Eva-Maria Pellikan

Email: pellikan@german-films.de

Carmen Böhm

Email: boehm@german-films.de

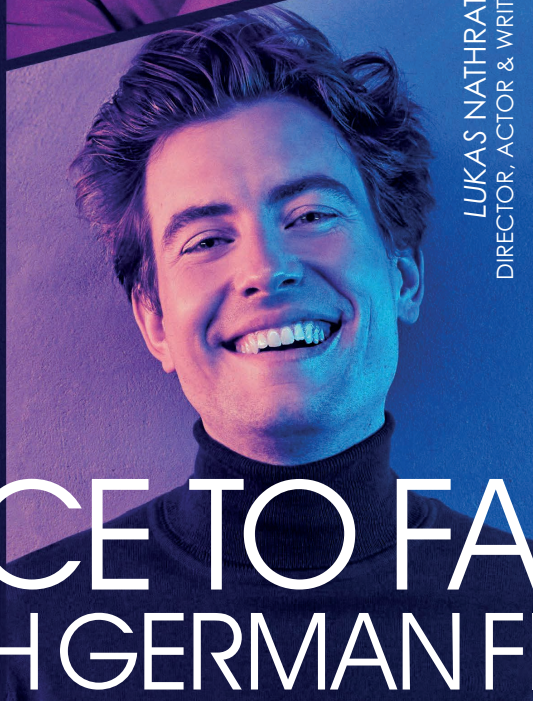
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