

70 YEARS OF GERMAN CINEMA - A SUCCESS STORY



1954
2024



FOREWORD

In 2024, it will be exactly 70 years since the founding of a film promotion organisation in Germany. The Export Union der Deutschen Filmindustrie was founded in Wiesbaden in 1954, and then underwent a restructuring and renaming as German Films Service + Marketing GmbH in 2004. German Films has successfully been supporting, promoting and accompanying German feature films and German filmmakers around the world for the past 70 years.

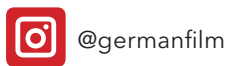
German cinema has left its mark and made an impression internationally in various ways for many decades. German Films wants to use the anniversary in 2024 to put a special focus on "70 years of German cinema abroad". A film programme entitled "70 Years of German Cinema – A Success Story" has been compiled as a retrospective to look back over seven decades. The programme was curated by Alfred Holighaus, a development executive and producer at REAL FILM in Berlin and NORDFILM in Kiel. He has extensive knowledge of German cinema thanks to his background working as the managing editor at the TIP city listings magazine as well as a dramaturg, producer and head of distribution at Senator Film and as a curator for the German and international programmes of the Berlinale. In addition, Holighaus was president of SPIO e.V., the German film industry's "umbrella" organisation, and managing director of the German Film Academy.

He selected a mixture of 14 feature films and documentaries, including East German feature films from the DEFA, for the film programme to offer a cross-section of the success story of German cinema, analysing the individual films and putting them all into context in a series of short essays. German Films completed the retrospective's line-up with a selection of short films from this period.

The aim of this film programme is to give German cinema abroad the special attention it so rightly deserves.

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Author	Alfred Holighaus
Editors	Fides Stark, Angela Sonntag
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SERENGETI DARF NICHT STERBEN SERENGETI SHALL NOT DIE

The plane looks like a zebra with wings. Michael Grzimek, the son of the famous zoologist and animal rights activist Bernhard Grzimek, had it built because they wanted to use it to complete a scientific assignment from the government of the East African state of Tanzania: they were to observe animal migration routes in the Serengeti National Park in order to be able to give a more precise demarcation of its boundaries.

The resulting documentary film, for whose idea and camerawork were Michael Grzimek was mainly responsible while the artistic concept was ultimately in the hands of Bernhard Grzimek, has a particular story to tell. It doesn't just have a scientific surprise to offer (the animals were migrating in a completely different way from what the scientists had predicted) because there was a personal tragedy: Michael Grzimek died in a fatal accident in the striped plane during the filming.

But they were able to obtain sensational footage of the landscape and animals before this happened. Bernhard Grzimek used his son's material to create an exciting anthology of images from the animal kingdom that were both fascinating and shocking. SERENGETI SHALL NOT DIE also became an impressive plea for nature conservation and animal welfare that was to set standards.

So it was perhaps not at all that surprising as it might seem nowadays that this film from 1959 should go on to win an Oscar for Best Documentary a year later - and then enjoy an international career.

However, there were difficulties in Germany with the Film Evaluation Board (FBW) who wanted to refuse to issue a certificate for the film due to the light clothing worn by the indigenous African population as well as the brutality of the animals' interactions with one another.

DIRECTOR Michael und Bernhard Grzimek **SCREENPLAY** Bernhard Grzimek **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Hermann Gimbel, Richard Graf, Michael Grzimek, Alan Root **EDITOR** Klaus Dudenhöfer **PRODUCTION** Asta Motion Pictures, Okapia-Film Productions **YEAR** 1959 **RUNTIME** 85 min **CAST** Bernhard Grzimek, Holger Hagen, Hermann Rockmann **AWARDS** Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in 1960 Animated Film DOK Leipzig 2023

RIGHTS Bavaria-Media International



© Kairos-Film Dr. Alexander Kluge

ABSCHIED VON GESTERN YESTERDAY GIRL

"We declare that our ambition is to create the new German feature film.

This new cinema needs new forms of freedom: from the conventions and habits of the established industry, from intervention by commercial partners, and finally freedom from the tutelage of other vested interests", so reads the legendary Oberhausen Manifesto signed by 27 young and not so young German filmmakers advocating a new aesthetic, new content and a new economy for German cinema in 1962. The group's militant motto: "The old film is dead. We believe in the new."

One of the most important authors and advocates of this manifesto was the filmmaker and lawyer Alexander Kluge, whose films from the outset more than lived up to his self-imposed ambitions. His first full-length feature film YESTERDAY GIRL, made three years after the manifesto, then made it clear what to expect from the self-proclaimed Young German Film.

Kluge recounts the story of the barely 30-year-old Jewish woman Anita G. (played by Alexandra Kluge, the director's sister), who has fled from Leipzig to West Germany during the years of the particularly chilly Cold War and has been trying in vain to gain a foothold. Instead, she encounters the personified ruthlessness of the justice system and the world of business and can only keep her head above water through private anarchism before finally giving up and seeking freedom in prison.

The life as a drifter and his protagonist's instability through no fault of her own give Kluge the opportunity to experiment with form and content while at the same time remaining very close to his subject matter. The unusual and very agile camera of this black-and-white film was operated by Thomas Mauch and Kluge's kindred spirit Edgar Reitz, a co-signatory of the Oberhausen Manifesto and 20 years later the creator of the groundbreaking HEIMAT trilogy.

This film saw Alexander Kluge taking the liberties he had demanded of himself and making a film that attracted worldwide attention for the cinema "Made in Germany". YESTERDAY'S GIRL won the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival and turned the festival on the Lido into a real hotspot for German cinema in subsequent years.

DIRECTOR Alexander Kluge **SCREENPLAY** Alexander Kluge **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Edgar Reitz **EDITOR** Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus
PRODUCTION Independent Film, Kairos-Film **YEAR** 1965/66 **RUNTIME** 88 min **CAST** Alexandra Kluge, Günter Mack, Eva Maria Meineke **FESTIVALS** Venice Film Festival 1966 (Competition) **AWARDS** Venice Film Festival 1966 - The Golden Lion

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© Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation Berlin

DIE EHE DER MARIA BRAUN

THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN

The 1970s were Rainer Werner Fassbinder's decade. As gifted as he was capricious, the wunderkind director from Munich initially attracted attention with his Action-Theater and later the antitheater at the end of the 1960s. He soon also started making films – often three or four a year – with his ensemble of actors, musicians, and set designers whom he made seemingly literally dependent on him for life. Fassbinder learnt filmmaking by watching films – he was particularly impressed by the great melodramas of the German-Danish Hollywood director Douglas Sirk – and just by making them. “Make many films so that my life can become a film,” is written on the memorial stone in his hometown of Bad Wörishofen. And there were over 40 of them when he died in 1982 at the age of just 37.

Fassbinder, who was able to portray German history of the 20th century so vividly, flamboyantly, biting, colourfully, painfully, lovingly, gaudily and critically like no other, enjoyed his biggest success in 1978: THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN with his favourite actress Hanna Schygulla took a very special and unprecedented look at the life of a German woman in West Germany after the Second World War. Maria's husband, who has been reported missing, suddenly turns up and finds his wife in the arms of a black American soldier. Maria kills the soldier but her husband takes the blame by going to prison. During this time, Maria isn't going out collecting rubble – she's making a career for herself. Using the resources of the system that will later be celebrated as the motor of the economic miracle.

Fassbinder isn't wanting to tell the story of a heroine, but rather presents the actions of a strong, yet vulnerable woman taking her fate into her own hands as a great historical and above all human melodrama (screenplay: Peter Märthesheimer) with stunning images (camera: Michael Ballhaus), exceptional costumes (Barbara Baum), unique production design (Norbert Scherer) and outstanding actors: Klaus Löwitsch, Ivan Desny, Gisela Uhlen, Günter Lamprecht, Gottfried John and, above all, Hanna Schygulla in the title role. She won the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the Berlinale in 1979.

Fassbinder ended what by definition was his most creative decade with this film after such masterpieces as THE MERCHANT OF FOUR SEASONS (1971), MARTHA (1973), ALI: FEAR EATS THE SOUL (1974) and IN A YEAR OF 13 MOONS (1978). The 80s then began, of course, with his passion project: BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ based on the novel by Alfred Döblin. The film genius Rainer Werner Fassbinder finally got to grips with the novel that had been such a part of his life in the form of a 14-part television series. And how!

DIRECTOR Rainer Werner Fassbinder **SCREENPLAY** Peter Märthesheimer, Pea Fröhlich, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's idea **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Michael Ballhaus **EDITORS** Rainer Werner Fassbinder (as Franz Walsch), Juliane Lorenz **PRODUCTION** Albatros, Trio Film, WDR **YEAR** 1978 **RUNTIME** 120 min **CAST** Hanna Schygulla, Klaus Löwitsch, Ivan Desny **AWARDS** Berlin International Film Festival 1979 (Competition)

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DER HIMMEL ÜBER BERLIN WINGS OF DESIRE

"I believe that places invent stories and ensure that they are told". Wim Wenders has given his work and his vision of cinema itself the right heading with this quote. His cinema is one of topography. His films are maps with emotions, in grand images and with a unique soundtrack. Sometimes they are taking us along the former border between the two Germanies, other times it's to Wuppertal, and then it's to Los Angeles, Tokyo or Texas.

During his journey of discovery through a long lost Berlin, he allowed himself the liberty of occasionally being transported away on the angels' wings from the rough ground of the (still) divided city that only appears in black and white.

In 1987, Wenders not only anticipated the opening of a brutal border that was deemed impossible at the time, yet became reality two years later. He paid tribute in the style of a poetic realism understood and loved around the world to a city that also used this border in a creative way in its western half. At the same time, he acknowledges the history of cinema in his characteristically cheeky way with the appearances of the theatre star and formerly exiled actor Curt Bois ("Casablanca") and Peter Falk as a representative of the New Hollywood movement.

Shot by the legendary French cinematographer Henri Alekan (ORPHEUS, ROMAN HOLIDAY, RED SUN), the film focuses on the guardian angels Cassiel and Damiel (Otto Sander and Bruno Ganz). The film provides some good arguments for wanting to do this. Like love, for example.

The love for love, the love for life, the love for a city that also always is and was a process, a place searching for itself, are the essence of the magic for a film that doesn't just speak about the love for cinema because it is itself still looking for shooting locations. Moving Pictures - the images really are in motion in Wim Wenders' films.

The director was recognised as the best in his field for this film at the Cannes Film Festival in 1987.

DIRECTOR Wim Wenders **SCREENPLAY** Wim Wenders, Peter Handke, Richard Reitinger **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Henri Alekan
EDITOR Peter Przygodda **PRODUCTION** Road Movies Filmproduktion GmbH, Argos Films S.A. **YEAR** 1987 **RUNTIME** 128 min
CAST Bruno Ganz, Solveig Dommartin, Otto Sander, Curt Bois, Peter Falk **FESTIVALS** Cannes International Film Festival 1987 (Competition) **AWARDS** Cannes International Film Festival 1987 - Golden Palm (Best Director); European Film Award 1988 (Best Director, Best Supporting Actor: Curt Bois)

RIGHTS Wim Wenders Stiftung, Argos Films



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LOLA RENNT RUN LOLA RUN

The race against time is a classic narrative element of cinema. The ticking clock. Director Tom Tykwer used this element to give an extra boost to another element that appeals to him in cinema - the "what if" scenario.

Manni is in real trouble. He has left the plastic bag containing the 100,000 Deutschmarks he was supposed to be handing over to a fence back in the underground train that he hadn't actually wanted to use in the first place. In desperation, he calls Lola, his girlfriend. She has 20 minutes to get the money and bring it to Manni.

So Lola has to start running. And go down the same route three times because the film uses this little gangster story moving at a fast pace and with all kinds of variations to show how chance and fate can be interconnected. Every little encounter has an effect like the butterfly flapping its wings in the chaos theory, and these effects are presented in the film with flash-forward sequences of still images.

And Lola's journey through the German capital becomes a breathtaking sightseeing tour away from familiar tourist clichés. The film is an exploration of emotions and experiences. Philosophy on the asphalt of the big city. And naturally also an expression of joy at the most impossible possibilities of cinematic storytelling.

The film also marked the beginning of different international careers for director Tom Tykwer and his lead actress Franka Potente. RUN LOLA RUN was particularly well received in the US

DIRECTOR Tom Tykwer **SCREENPLAY** Tom Tykwer **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Frank Griebe **EDITOR** Mathilde Bonnefoy **PRODUCTION** X-Filme Creative Pool GmbH **YEAR** 1998 **RUNTIME** 81 min **CAST** Franka Potente, Moritz Bleibtreu, Herbert Knaup **FESTIVALS** Venice Film Festival 1998 (Competition)

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GOODBYE, LENIN! GOODBYE, LENIN!

79 square metres of the GDR. That was and is the shortest tagline coined for a film that then broke all records in the German cinema in 2003: GOOD BYE LENIN! Based on the award-winning screenplay by Bernd Lichtenberg, director Wolfgang Becker tells a tragicomic story of a family from the time of German reunification when a lie becomes a lifesaver.

Christiane Kerner, whose husband left the GDR 20 years ago, witnesses her adult son Alex being beaten up and arrested by the People's Police at a Monday demonstration in October 1989. She suffers a heart attack and falls into a coma. When she wakes up months later, the world is a different place. And not just because her daughter Ariane has given up studying for her economics degree and is now working at a burger joint. The GDR is no more. The Berlin Wall is no more. Erich and Margot Honecker are no more. And the supermarkets are no longer stocking Mocca Fix coffee or Spreewald gherkins.

But Alex needs all of this to spare his mother who is as unstable as she is still loyal to the party line from having a shock that could kill her when she wakes up from her coma. He reverses the political changes at his mother's bedside - including the "Aktuelle Kamera" news programme and a folklore performance by Young Pioneers.

Wolfgang Becker succeeded in combining humour with humanism in this film. He takes a satirical look at a country that seems unable to cope with its own historical challenges and makes a son's love for his mother the central element of a story that is also about understanding.

That pleased almost seven million people in the German cinemas and was once again proof to the world after Helmut Dietl's SCHTONK! that German films don't have to go down to the cellar if they want to have a laugh.

DIRECTOR Wolfgang Becker **SCREENPLAY** Bernd Lichtenberg **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Martin Kukuła **EDITOR** Peter R. Adam
PRODUCTION X-Filme Creative Pool GmbH **YEAR** 2003 **RUNTIME** 121 min **CAST** Daniel Brühl, Katrin Saß, Chulpan Khamatova
FESTIVALS Berlin International Film Festival 2003 (Competition)

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DAS WEISSE BAND THE WHITE RIBBON

"I don't know, but if I remember correctly, it seemed strange to me at the time that the children in Klara's group didn't disperse after class as usual and for everyone to go home. Instead, they all headed off together towards the end of the village," says the narrator at the beginning of the "German children's story" whose protagonists are children, but has a focus on what they have later become as adults. A historical film in the future tense. A film that looks back with vision.

THE WHITE RIBBON is set in a Protestant village in northern Germany on the eve of the First World War. Germany is in a patriotic state of emergency. Even the good Lord seems to be on the side of the Kaiser and against England, France and Russia. In any case, his benevolent spirit is completely absent. And the priest is possessed by the Devil. Like all the dignitaries in this microcosm of inhumanity where the children are rehearsing the brutality and lack of empathy they need to support a system that was prepared to wage "total war" 20 years later.

Terrible things happen in this village. A perfidiously induced riding accident. The disfigurement of a child. The destruction of a garden. Nothing is safe. Nothing is protected. And the suspicion that those who are supposedly the most innocent of all are extremely guilty hovers over everything like an unbelievable and unacceptable threat.

With THE WHITE RIBBON, Michael Haneke, the Austrian filmmaker with the unerring as well as irresistible eye for the dark depths of the human psyche and cinema's expert in analysing evil with forensic clarity, has made a German film offering this country and the whole world an opportunity to perhaps not understand the twentieth century in its unpredictability, but at least be able to recognise it. That isn't the only reason why this "horror drama, free from horror images" (Der Spiegel) is the film of the decade.

And that's why it won the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 2009 and was nominated for an international Oscar in 2010.

DIRECTOR Michael Haneke **SCREENPLAY** Michael Haneke **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Christian Berger **EDITOR** Monika Willi **PRODUCTION** X-Filme Creative Pool GmbH **YEAR** 2009 **RUNTIME** 145 min **CAST** Christian Friedel, Ernst Jacobi, Leonie Benesch **FESTIVALS** Cannes International Film Festival 2009 (Competition) **AWARDS** Cannes International Film Festival 2009 - Palme d'or; nominated for an Academy Award in the category Best Foreign Language Film in 2010

RIGHTS Les Films du Losange



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DIE KONFERENZ DER TIERE ANIMALS UNITED

Erich Kästner made literary history in Germany before the National Socialists came to power. Written at the beginning of the 1930s, his children's books „Dot and Anton“, „The Flying Classroom“ and „Emil and the Detectives“, are still classics of children's literature. „Fabian - The Story of a Moralist“ from 1931 described the zeitgeist at the end of the Weimar Republic with an alert mind and a high degree of sensuality.

It was only four years after the end of the Second World War that Kästner, who had not left Germany as an ostracised writer and even wrote a screenplay under a pseudonym for the UFA, was able to write a children's book again. His venerated colleague Jella Lepman had inspired him to write the fable "The Animals' Conference". Kästner' tells the story of a peace conference convened and held by animals because the humans aren't capable of doing this.

In 1969 and thus exactly 20 years after the book's publication, the great German animator Curt Linda turned it into a remarkable and highly acclaimed animated film whose stand against militarism (which was very close to Kästner's own stance) was particularly well received at the time.

In 2010, the Munich-based producer and writer Reinhard Klooss revisited the story which is still particularly relevant today, and produced it for Constantin Film as the first fully computer-animated 3D film in Europe. He was supported in this venture by the animation director and CGI pioneer Holger Tappe.

The result is an entertaining, serious and humorous appeal against human stupidity. With some new and extremely original characters - the whales from the book and the first film version naturally are also there - and of a high technical standard.

The film was a great success in German and European cinemas and grossed over 50 million Dollars worldwide.

DIRECTOR Holger Trappe, Reinhard Klooss **SCREENPLAY** Oliver Huzly, Reinhard Klooss **EDITOR** Alexander Dittner **PRODUCTION** Constantin Film **YEAR** 2010 **RUNTIME** 93 min **CAST** Ralf Schmitz, Thomas Fritsch, Christoph Maria Herbst

RIGHTS Timeless Films



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TONI ERDMANN

TONI ERDMANN

The first scene in the film sets the tone. A courier rings the the front door bell. The man of the house opens the door, but doesn't think that the delivery is for him. He says that the parcel is for his dangerous brother who then appears a minute later instead of the man of the house. In a bizarre disguise. It's still, of course, the man of the house. The courier is confused. However, the audience knows what's what.

From now on, the music teacher Winfried Conradi (Peter Simonischek) can be expected to slip into the role of the dangerous brother who will later call himself TONI ERDMANN. This mimicry becomes almost existential when it proves to be a lifesaver for him and ultimately both of them as a way of rekindling Conradi's relationship with his estranged daughter.

Conradi's daughter Ines is working as an international management consultant and is not only geographically a long way away from her family. She lives a life that is also not free of its fair share of bizarre incidents (such as nudist misunderstandings in the chic penthouse above Bucharest) in an aloof and rather unworldly cosmopolitan business community.

The fictional character TONI ERDMANN bursts into this society in a relentless and yet loving way, without sparing his daughter any situation however embarrassing they may be. And Ines' confused colleagues make everything even worse by putting on a good face to the strange goings-on.

This is all told by the serious film with it daring to be funny as well as having a considerable emotional clout and just as high a level of originality and, finally, an international appeal that became immediately apparent at the highly acclaimed premiere when the film was shown in competition in Cannes in 2016. Standing ovations and guffaws of laughter in the packed Festival Palais, sales deals to all the major territories, German and international film awards, an Oscar nomination and the beginnings of a international career for the lead actress Sandra Hüller who is likely to be the world's most talked-about actress in 2024.

DIRECTOR Maren Ade **SCREENPLAY** Maren Ade **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Patrick Orth **EDITOR** Heike Parplies **PRODUCTION** Komplizen Film **YEAR** 2016 **RUNTIME** 162 min **CAST** Peter Simonischek, Sandra Hüller, Michael Wittenborn **FESTIVALS** Cannes International Film Festival 2016 (Competition) **AWARDS** Nominated for an Academy Award in the category Best Foreign Language Film in 2017

RIGHTS The Match Factory



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ICH BIN DEIN MENSCH I'M YOUR MAN

This film about artificial intelligence is actually about real emotions. Or what you might think they are. Or about the fact that artificial intelligence might possibly lead to real emotions. Based on the eponymous short story by Emma Braslavsky (it's no accident that it has the same name as Leonard Cohen's famous song "I'm Your Man"), director Maria Schrader and Jan Schomburg's screenplay for a near-future story obviously captured the mood of the times.

The story, which was originally planned as part of an innovative TV series, had already generated interest during its production from the film industry in Germany and beyond. The encounter between the successful scientist Alma (Maren Eggert) and the humanoid robot Tom (Dan Stevens) in Berlin's Pergamon Museum comes about because Alma needs money for her research and the experiment with Tom is well paid. But the experiment gets out of hand because the boundaries between the artificial and the real are constantly shifting in the daily life (whereas Tom is actually only programmed to fulfil Alma's supposed needs). And this happens in both directions. What is special here is that this emotionality is soon no longer a dramaturgical assertion. It has long since also reached the audience.

The film was subsequently screened in competition at the Berlinale in 2021. Maren Eggert won the Silver Bear for her portrayal of Alma, I'M YOUR MAN won four German Film Awards and was then selected as the German candidate for the Oscar race in Best International Feature Film category.

DIRECTOR Maria Schrader **SCREENPLAY** Jan Schomburg & Maria Schrader **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Benedict Neuenfels **EDITOR** Hansjörg Weißbrich **PRODUCTION** Letterbox Filmproduktion GmbH **YEAR** 2021 **RUNTIME** 102 min **CAST** Dan Stevens, Maren Eggert, Sandra Hüller **FESTIVALS** Berlin International Film Festival 2021 (Competition) **AWARDS** Silver Bear (Best Leading Performance: Maren Eggert)

RIGHTS Beta Cinema



© Reiner Bajjo

IM WESTEN NICHTS NEUES ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Director Edward Berger likes to point out that it was his daughter who encouraged him to make a new film version of the legendary novel by German writer Erich-Maria Remarque. She had become a real fan of the book after reading it at school. The first screen adaptation of the book published in 1929 was made in 1930 and directed by the Hollywood director Lewis Milestone who went on to win an Oscar as Best Director for his interpretation. So, the bar was set high for the new version which was literally crying out to be made. And with Edward Berger, an accomplished German director with international experience (he had previously directed the British series "Patrick Melrose" and the American series "Your Honor"), here was a filmmaker onboard who was seen as capable of giving even more momentum to what was already a strong story. As is well known, the action follows the experiences of a group of very young German patriots who, infected by the malevolent nationalistic spirit of the Kaiserzeit, enthusiastically go off to war, but soon realise that pride turns to dirt and human dignity doesn't have any place in the trenches.

The story centres on 17-year-old Paul Bäumer, who volunteers for military service with his friends in the penultimate year of the First World War. Berger cast the then unknown actor Felix Kammerer, who had little experience of acting in front of the camera, for this role and straightway came up trumps. Alongside such seasoned colleagues as Albrecht Schuch, David Striesow and Daniel Brühl, the lead actor succeeds in embodying the destruction of a young soul through the murderous automatism of war. And that's what mattered to Berger: "We're not allowed to tell any heroic stories here in Germany, it's always about grief, shame, guilt and terror. And, of course, there isn't anything to be proud of in these wars."

The big budget 2 ½ hour film was produced by Malte Grunert's company Amusement Park for Netflix and shot in the Czech Republic. And it was predominantly German filmmakers working in the departments behind the camera. It was thanks to the achievements of these colleagues as well as the film's distribution that the film became a global success after its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival. Those achievements in production design, music, sound design, editing, costume design and visual effects were then recognised both in the nominations and the final awards at the British Academy Film Awards, German Film Awards and the Oscars ceremony. The film made German film history when it was subsequently nominated in both the Best Film and Best International Feature Film categories at the Academy Awards and won a total of four Oscars.

DIRECTOR Edward Berger **SCREENPLAY** Edward Berger, Lesley Paterson, Ian Stokell **CINEMATOGRAPHY** James Friend **EDITOR** Sven Budelmann **PRODUCTION** Amusement Park **YEAR** 2023 **RUNTIME** 147 min **CAST** Felix Kammerer, Albrecht Schuch, Aaron Hilmer **AWARDS** 4 Academy Awards in 2024 (Best International Feature Film, Best Cinematography, Best Original Score, Best Production Design)

RIGHTS Netflix

SPUR DER STEINE TRACE OF STONES



© DEFA-Stiftung / Klaus Schwarz

DIRECTOR Frank Beyer **SCREENPLAY** Karl Georg Egel, Frank Beyer **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Günter Marczinkowsky **EDITOR** Hildegard Conrad-Nöller **PRODUCTION** DEFA-Studio **YEAR** 1966 **RUNTIME** 134 min **CAST** Manfred Krug, Krystyna Stypulkowska, Eberhard Esche **FESTIVALS** Berlin International Film Festival 1990 (Out of Competition)

RIGHTS Deutsche Kinemathek

JAKOB DER LÜGNER JACOB THE LIAR



© DEFA-Stiftung / Herbert Kroiss

DIRECTOR Frank Beyer **SCREENPLAY** Frank Beyer **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Günter Marczinkowsky **EDITOR** Rita Hiller **PRODUCTION** DEFA-Studio **YEAR** 1974 **RUNTIME** 101 min **CAST** Vlastimil Brodský, Erwin Geschonneck, Henry Hübchen **FESTIVALS** Berlin International Film Festival 1975 (Competition) **AWARDS** Berlin International Film Festival 1975 - Silver Bear (Best Actor: Vlastimil Brodský); only East German film to be nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards

RIGHTS Deutsche Kinemathek

SOLO SUNNY SOLO SUNNY



© DEFA-Stiftung / Dieter Lueck

DIRECTOR Konrad Wolf **SCREENPLAY** Konrad Wolf, Wolfgang Kohlhaase **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Eberhard Geick **EDITOR** Evelyn Carow **PRODUCTION** DEFA-Studio **YEAR** 1980 **RUNTIME** 104 min **CAST** Renate Krössner, Alexander Lang, Heide Kipp **FESTIVALS** Competition Berlin International Film Festival 1980 (Competition) **AWARDS** Berlin International Film Festival 1980 - Silver Bear (Best Actress: Renate Krössner)

RIGHTS Deutsche Kinemathek

DEFA - FILMS

1966: TRACE OF STONES

1977: JACOB THE LIAR

1980: SOLO SUNNY

German Films - and its predecessor, the Export Union des Deutschen Films - were established 70 years ago as an institution of the West German film industry. In the GDR, the Deutsche Film AG, DEFA for short, was a state-owned film company that had emerged from the ruins of the UFA and whose productions alternated between art and propaganda. Sometimes they were both, sometimes just propaganda and mostly art. Names such as Wolfgang Staudte, Kurt Maetzig, Konrad Wolf, Frank Beyer, Egon Günther, Heiner Carow, Wolfgang Kohlhaase, Iris Gusner or Ingrid Reschke stand for the great narrative and artistic tradition of a state institution which made great cinema possible - and sometimes got cold cold feet.

In 1965, Frank Beyer adapted Erik Neutsch's novel TRACE OF STONES with Manfred Krug in the lead role to create a unique kind of Western set on a major construction site in East Germany. The socialist brigade led by carpenter Hannes Balla in fact had more in common with the "Magnificent Seven" than with the dyed in the wool protagonists of a state whose heart and backbone they were actually supposed to be providing according to the system's ideology. Balla and his men use unconventional methods to solve the usual supply shortages and therefore come into open conflict with the party secretary who becomes embroiled in quite different kinds of conflicts during its lively and spirited narrative.

It wasn't that surprising that the film was well received on its premiere at the Workers' Festival in Potsdam in 1966. However, its run in GDR cinemas in July of the same year only lasted a few days. It was withdrawn "due to anti-socialist tendencies" - and didn't come back onto screens until the fall of communism in 1989. To this day, the film hasn't lost any of its spirit.

Things were different for Konrad Wolf's SOLO SUNNY which has the headstrong and captivating singer of the same name at its centre. Sunny, whose real name is Ingrid Sommer and was the career breakthrough for the stage actress Renate Krößner, has a major personal goal that's hindered by many small adversities of a personal, amorous and political nature. But the film uses warmth, charm and wit (the legendary screenplay was written by Wolfgang Kohlhaase) to speak about an unusual personality overcoming these adversities on a daily basis with ambition, courage and, above all, joie de vivre.

The film was shown in competition at the Berlinale in 1980. And Renate Krößner received the Silver Bear for her portrayal of SOLO SUNNY.

However, the greatest international success for a film produced by the DEFA studios in Potsdam-Babelsberg was achieved by the screen adaptation of a novel by Jurek Becker: JACOB THE LIAR which had Frank Beyer back in the director's chair in 1974. The film speaks once again about the power of the fantastic or, to put it simply, about lies as a source of comfort since Jakob's lies give hope in a Polish ghetto during the Second World War. Jakob, himself an inmate of the ghetto, invents new radio reports each day to make the liberation of the place by the Red Army seem close at hand. Jakob's lies save lives and create their own kind of reality which even manages to address the people's suffering in a moving and human way.

The film had a strange career. It was broadcast in black and white by the GDR's DFF television channel in December 1974, then had its theatrical premiere in its original ORWO colours in the GDR in the spring of 1975 before being screened as the first DEFA film in competition at the Berlinale in the summer of the same year where it won a Silver Bear for Vlastimil Brodsky who played the title character. Two years later, it then became the first and only DEFA film ever to be selected for an Oscar nomination to what was then still called the "Best Foreign Language Film" category.

BALANCE BALANCE



© Lauenstein & Lauenstein

Five characters standing on a platform try to keep balance.

CATEGORY Animated Short Film **DIRECTORS** Christoph Lauenstein, Wolfgang Lauenstein **SCREENPLAY** Christoph Lauenstein, Wolfgang Lauenstein **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Christoph Lauenstein, Wolfgang Lauenstein **EDITORS** Christoph Lauenstein, Wolfgang Lauenstein **PRODUCTION** Lauenstein & Lauenstein, Gesamthochschule Kassel, Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg **YEAR** 1989 **RUNTIME** 8 min **FESTIVALS** (selection) Annecy International Animation Film Festival 1989, ZINEBI Bilbao 1989, Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 1990, Ottawa International Animation Festival 1990, Hiroshima International Animation Festival 1990 **AWARDS** (selection) FIPRESCI Award Annecy 1989, Silver Mikeldi Animated Shorts ZINEBI Bilbao 1989, German Film Award 1989: Best Short Film (Silver), Special Mention of the Jury Clermont-Ferrand 1990, Academy Award® 1990 - Best Animated Short Film

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STAPLERFAHRER KLAUS - DER ERSTE ARBEITSTAG FORKLIFT DRIVER KLAUS - THE FIRST DAY ON THE JOB



© Trigon Film

Klaus has just passed his driving test for forklifts. But his first day on the job turns out to be the real challenge. Cruel but informative accidents happen. Only few survive the bloodshed.

An homage to industrial safety educational films.

CATEGORY Narrative Short Film **DIRECTORS** Jörg Wagner, Stefan Prehn **SCREENPLAY** Jörg Wagner, Stefan Prehn **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Matthias Lehmann **EDITOR** Andrea Stabenow **PRODUCER** Michael Sombetzki **PRODUCTION** Trigon Film, Hamburg **YEAR** 2001 **RUNTIME** 10 min **CAST** Konstantin Graudus, Douglas Welbat, Jürgen Koßel, Dieter Dost **FESTIVALS** (selection) Semaine de la Critique Cannes 2001, Worldwide Short Film Festival Toronto 2001, Cinema Jove Valencia 2001, Edinburg International Film Festival 2001, Sarajevo Film Festival 2001, Oldenburg International Film Festival 2001, International Film Festival Umea 2001, Sitges Film Festival 2001, Cork Film Festival 2001, Flanders Film Festival Ghent 2001, Uppsala Short Film Festival 2001, International Short Film Festival Winterthur 2001, Brief Encounters Bristol 2001, Filmets Badalona 2001, International Short Film Festival Clermont-Ferrand 2002, International Film Festival Rotterdam 2002, Minimalen Film Festival Trondheim 2002, Norwegian Short Film Festival Grimstad 2002, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2002, Flickerfest International Short Film Festival Sydney 2003, Fantasia Film Festival Montreal 2003 etc. **AWARDS** (selection) Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau Short Film Award 2002, Audience Award for Best Short Film Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Films, Jury Award & Audience Award Best Short Film San Sebastian Horror and Fantasy Film Festival 2001, Best Short Film Award Cinema Jove Valencia 2001, Jury Prize & Audience Prize Best Short Film Fantasia Film Festival Montreal 2003

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SIEBEN MAL AM TAG BEKLAGEN WIR UNSER LOS UND NACHTS STEHEN WIR AUF UM NICHT ZU TRÄUMEN SEVEN TIMES A DAY WE BEMOAN OUR LOT AND AT NIGHT WE GET UP TO AVOID DREAMING



© Susann Maria Hempel

A cinematic devotional book. Based on interviews with an unemployed sufferer (and his fellows), living in the East German countryside, who lost his memory in 1989 and woke up into several nightmares.

CATEGORY Experimental Short Film **DIRECTOR** Susann Maria Hempel **SCREENPLAY** Susann Maria Hempel **CINEMATOGRAPHY** Berta Valín Escofet **EDITOR** Susann Maria Hempel **PRODUCTION** Susann Maria Hempel **YEAR** 2014 **RUNTIME** 18 min **VOICE** Henning Kunze **FESTIVALS** (selection) Festival du Nouveau Cinéma Montreal 2014, International Short Film Festival Winterthur 2014, Riga International Film Festival 2ANNAS 2014, Bucharest Experimental Film Festival 2014, International Short Film Festival Clermont-Ferrand 2015, Tampere Film Festival 2015, IndieLisboa 2015, Odense Film Festival 2015, Encounters Bristol 2015, Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival 2015, Sapporo International Short Film Festival 2015, Uppsala International Short Film Festival 2015, IndieCork 2015, Molodist Kyiv 2015, L'Alternativa Barcelona 2015 **AWARDS** (selection) EMAF Media Arts Award of German Film Critics 2014, Special Mention Riga 2014, German Short Film Award 2014, Grand Prix Lab Competition Clermont-Ferrand 2015, Best Contemporary Experimental Short Sapporo 2015

RIGHTS Susann Maria Hempel

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