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# The Legacy of Rainer Werner Fassbinder

He spearheaded the New German Cinema Movement

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*By Rica Arevalo*



Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Hilmar Thate in *Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss* (1982)



From April 7 to 22, there will be a retrospective of avant-garde films by German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder at the Cinematheque Centre Manila, Kalaw St. Manila presented by the Film Development Council of the Philippines and the Goethe Institut.

The 37-year-old all-around actor, editor, playwright, and theatre director had made 39 films in his short lifespan brought about by his sudden death due to substance abuse.

He lived as a bisexual man and was open about it. His films tackled radical issues, social misfits, and unusual relationships that propelled him to be one of the leaders of the New German Cinema movement.

*Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) stars Brigitte Mira and El Hedi ben Salem who play a love struck couple who falls in love in a “wrong” way. Mira plays Emmi, a 60-year-old widow who marries a young, lonely Arab migrant worker, Ali. The nosy neighbors and family members are hostile against the May-December relationship. Ali is having a hard time adjusting to his newfound home and soon finds comfort with a much beautiful and younger woman who can cook his favorite dish. This film brought international fame to Fassbinder. Mira was lauded in her performance and was given a German Film Award. More importantly, it won the FIPRESCI Prize and Ecumenical Jury Prize at the 1974 Cannes Film Festival.

*Veronika Voss* (*Die Sehnsucht Der Veronika Voss*, 1981) is a black-and-white film about a retiring Nazi actress who meets a sports reporter who wants to help her rise above her drug dependency. Set in the 1950s, the film won the 1982 Toronto International Film Festival International Critics’ Award and the Golden Berlin Bear at the 1982 Berlin International Film Festival.

Erratic Veronika (Rosel Zech) wants to make a comeback in the movie world and has a romantic affair with Robert (Hilmar Thate). The sports reporter discovers that a neurologist gives opiates to Veronika so she can milk the actress' wealth. This is the last of Fassbinder's trilogy film after *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and *Lola*.

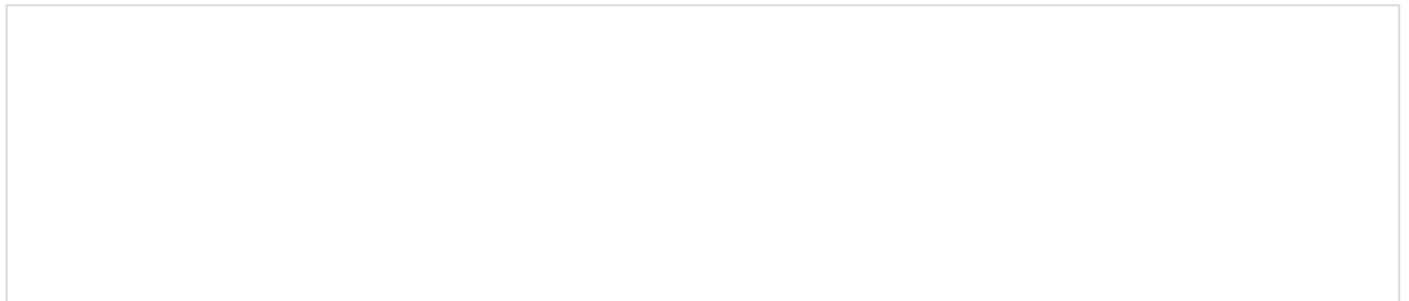
*Lili Marleen* (1981) is based on the life of Lale Andersen, a popular World War II singer. The forbidden love between a German singer and a Swiss Jewish composer is the center of the conflict in this Hitler-led regime. Robert (Giancarlo Giannini) helps refugees escape from the Nazis while composing music. Willie (Hanna Schygulla) sings the song he penned, *Lili Marleen* and becomes an instant hit with the German soldiers at the battle front. Their romance is at the crossroads.

Other films in the lineup are: *Fassbinder, Katzelmacher, The Merchant of Four Seasons, The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant, Martha, Fox and His Friends, Chinese Roulette, The Marriage of Maria Braun* and *Lola*. Screenings are free and open to the public. For more information about the Werner Fassbinder Retrospective, visit [bitly.com/FassbinderRetrospectiveManila](https://bitly.com/FassbinderRetrospectiveManila)

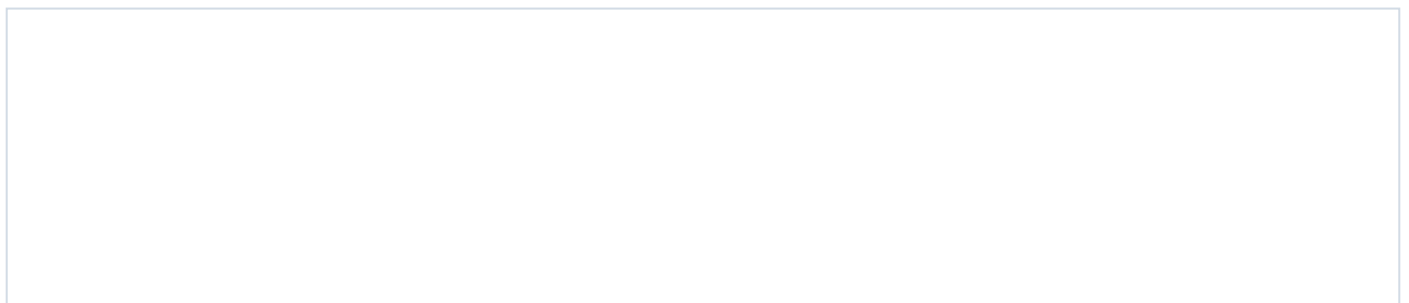
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