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Germans can do cinema

Katrin Hartmann

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MANILA – The least Dr. Ulrich Nowak, director of the Goethe-Institut Philippines, expected was this: every seat was taken at the SM Aura Premier Cinema on Tuesday night. The occasion was the opening of the [third German Film Week](#) hosted by the Goethe Institut.

The selection could prove to many that Germans can do cinema. The 10 chosen feature films show a broad range of topics. There is something for all ages and interests: love, action, history, family, friendship, and even contemporary political issues.

The opening night on Tuesday showed a very dark Moritz Bleibtreu. The German actor is internationally known for his work on “[Run Lola Run](#)” (1998). He also performs in “[Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door](#)” (1997). In “[Only God Can Judge Me](#)” (2017) or “Nur Gott kann mich richten”), there is no sparkly life shown on the streets of Germany’s business center.

In the film, Ricky (Moritz Bleibtreu) is a petty gangster who has just been released from prison and starts caring for his demented father. Somehow, he is dragged into a criminal swamp again. He reunites with his brother, Rafael, and partner-in-crime, Latif, for a last heist. However, their plan is jeopardized when Diana, a police officer with different intentions, shows up and a suspense-packed game of cat-and-mouse begins.

The most successful film from the selection might be “In the Fade” (2017) or “Aus dem Nichts”, which is showing on Friday (Nov. 9), 9:30 pm at the SM City North EDSA, and on Saturday, 9:30 pm at the SM Aura Premier. It is only the second time that you can listen to Diane Kruger’s German voice on screen. What a surprise because the famous actress, who has appeared in many Hollywood-productions, has only spoken German on screen in “Inglorious Basterds” (2009).



The closer she gets to her mother tongue on screen, the easier it gets to accept her as an authentic actress.

“In the Fade” tells the story of Katja (Diane Kruger) who lives in Hamburg, in the north of Germany. She is completely choked up when her husband Nuri and their son Rocco are killed in a terrorist bombing. Depressed, she takes drugs and attempts suicide. But she gets her hopes up as the police arrest the terrorists, André und Edda, a neo-Nazi couple. Following a nerve-wracking trial, the neo-Nazis are acquitted for lack of evidence. Katja is shattered, “but her desperation gives way to an urge for vigilante justice,” says the festival’s website.

In the Fade (Aus dem Nichts) – Trailer official (English) fro...

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Diane Kruger convinces as a torn soul on screen. She is a loving mother, a drug addict and a revenge-seeking victim. Fatih Akin, who earned international awards with films such as “[Head-On](#)” (2004) and “[The Edge of Heaven](#)” (2007), puts Kruger at the center of almost every scene – a chance for her to convey her fierce inner torment, playing tough and vulnerable at the same time. For this lively performance, Kruger picked up a best actress award at last year’s Cannes Film Festival.

The thriller touches upon an important contemporary theme in Europe – the refugee crisis. Akin himself was born in Germany to Turkish parents. The scandalous response to a string of German [xenophobic crimes of the National Socialist Underground \(NSU\)](#) murders inspired the 45-year-old director to finally realise “In the Fade”. The result is a dark picture of a society in which victims are criminalised and evil-doers are protected.

Not all of the movies selected draw a dark picture of German society. Romantics and family persons also get their money's worth in "Rock my Heart" (2017).

The selection combines easy-to-watch films with more reflective features. All of them have one thing in common: They give an insight into German society, art and language. So, Film ab! (And... Action!)

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written as part of the Goethe-Institut's Close-Up journalists' exchange program. More information can be found at www.goethe.de/nahaufnahme and at [#goethecloseup](https://twitter.com/goethecloseup)

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The German Film Week is a showcase of the latest and contemporary feature films to come out of German cinema. This year is the third edition hosted by the Goethe-Institut Philippines and their partners, SM Cinemas, the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP), St. Louis University, University of San Carlos, and Liceo de Cagayan University. Ten movies are shown until 11 November. A selection of five out of the ten feature films will be screened in the cities of Baguio, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro after the first week in Manila.

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute, promoting the study of the German language abroad, and encouraging international cultural exchange.

Programme and Promo

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/kul/sup/g18/screening-schedule.html>

Tickets to the 2018 German Film Week are priced at 100 Php for all films. All of the movies are subtitled in English.

This year, there will be an extra special Watch 'n Win raffle promo, in which everyone can participate. The quiz and the full mechanics can be found on the homepage of the [German Film week](#). The grand winner of the promo will win a 4-day trip to Berlin.

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