



**germany
austria
switzerland**

January 18-24
2008



austrian cultural forum ^{was}



schweizerische Botschaft
Cemeteriaden 2112
Suisseplatz 2112
Bernstrasse 2112

german
●●●
films

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

... a “compellingly good festival”

- Philip Kennicott, *Washington Post*

tickets

Location of all screenings:



555 11th Street NW
Washington, DC 20004
(Metro: Metro Center)
www.landmarktheatres.com

Tickets: \$9.50

\$7.75 for Students and Friends of the Goethe-Institut
\$6.75 for Seniors

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Co-presented by the **Goethe-Institut** in Washington,
the **Austrian Cultural Forum** and the **Embassy of Switzerland**.
With support from **german films**



opening / closing

Opening Night Screening and German Themed Reception: \$25

Reception with DJ will follow at the Goethe-Institut

Closing Night Screening and Asian Themed Reception: \$15

Reception will follow at the Goethe-Institut

Goethe-Institut Washington, 812 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
Tel: (202) 289-1200, www.goethe.de/washington


Do come along for the ride.

Get in touch with the best of new German language cinema - join us for Film | Neu, our 16th annual festival of the newest and most innovative in German-language film!

In keeping with the general trend of quality international art-house cinema, German-language films, whether they be from Germany, Austria, Switzerland or a combination of any of the three via international co-production, are now telling geopolitical stories that, more often than not, grapple with questions of national identity, regional allegiances, and the twin dragons of globalization, opportunity and danger. There's urban woe and rural caricatures: the former via the Graz of *All The Invisible Things*, the Asian playgrounds of *Hotel Very Welcome* and the Berlin of *Valerie*; and the latter by way of the sly social commentary to be found in *Grave Decisions*, *Late Bloomers* and *Schroeder's Wonderful World*. The program branches out to explore journeys of discovery in *And Along Come Tourists*, *One Who Sets Forth: Wim Wenders' Early Years*, *Runaway Horse* and *To The Limit*. In truth, the 16th edition of this festival of German-language film is perhaps the most globally conscious collection ever assembled. **Do come along for the ride.** —Eddie Cockrell

Eddie Cockrell is a film critic for the trade paper *Variety* who reviews from festivals in Budapest, Berlin, Karlovy Vary, Montreal and Toronto.

Runaway Horse ©Tale Muenchen Gruppe



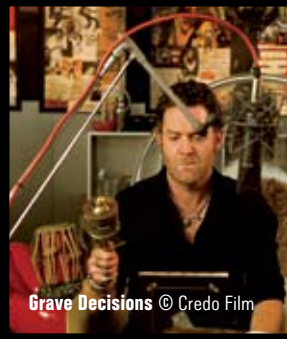
German cinema continues to distinguish itself by the number of strong new filmmakers it develops and the veteran ones it sustains.

— MoMA



Grave Decisions © Credo Film

OPENING GRAVE DECISIONS



Grave Decisions © Credo Film

OPENING

Friday, January 18, 7 pm

Friday, January 18, 9:30 pm

Grave Decisions

(Wer früher stirbt ist länger tot)

Germany, 2006, color, 104 minutes,
German with English subtitles

Director: Marcus Hausham Rosenmueller **Screenplay:** Marcus Hausham Rosenmueller, Christian Lerch **Producers:** Andreas Richter, Annie Brunner, Ursula Wörner **Cast:** Markus Krojer, Fritz Karl, Jürgen Tonkel, Jule Ronstedt, Saskia Vester **World Sales:** Beta Cinema

Special guest invited. Discussion moderated by Dave Nuttycombe (film producer, comedian and cultural commentator) follows the 7 pm screening.

"He's a very strange boy," his teacher, Mrs. Dorstreiter (Jule Ronstedt) says of 11-year-old Bavarian lad Sebastian Schneider (Markus Krojer). But she doesn't know the half of it: whether attempting to revive a deceased rabbit with jumper cables or spinning tales of lake-dwelling zombies to impress school crush Evi (Pia Lautenbacher), Sebastian is a handful for widower publican dad Lorenz (Fritz Karl). Discovering mom died during childbirth, Sebastian becomes determined to hook dad up—with uproarious results. This German box office smash, the directorial debut of subsequently prolific director Marcus Hausham Rosenmueller, is a piquant stew of rural mythology, Bavarian Catholicism and good old-fashioned vivid characterizations. It's so unrelentingly, blackly funny, to paraphrase one enthusiastic blogger, it becomes dazzling in its illumination. Lustily performed in the nearly impenetrable south German dialect, *Grave Decisions* (the original title means "the sooner you die, the longer you stay dead") is a grossly charming coming-of-age for all ages.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Marcus Hausham Rosenmueller (b. 1973, Tegernsee) studied at Munich's Academy of Television & Film. He has directed numerous short films, as well as the features *Heavyweights* (2007) and *Good Times* (2007). *Grave Decisions* was his feature film directing debut.

Valerie

Möller [...] shows a keen visual sense for the glittering urban isolation...

- Dennis Harvey, *Variety*

Saturday, January 19, 12 pm

Sunday, January 20, 7 pm

To the Limit (Am Limit)

Austria/Germany, 2007, color, 100 minutes,
German with English subtitles

Director: Pepe Danquart **Screenplay:** Pepe Danquart **Producers:** Erich Lackner, Mirjam Quinte, Kirsten Hager **With:** Alexander Huber, Thomas Huber, Dean S. Potter, Chongo, Andy Perkins **US Distributor:** First Run Features

German-born director Pepe Danquart, one of Europe's best-kept auteur secrets, specializes in sports documentaries in which athletes stretch the limits of physical endurance and social convention. For his newest film, Danquart profiles the complex sibling rivalry and unrivaled mountaineering accomplishments of Alexander and Thomas Huber; the former, cited by Reinhold Messner as "a master," teams up with the latter, a specialist in Himalayan climbs, to attempt a speed record ascent up the notorious Nose of Yosemite Valley's El Capitan peak. Yet the very drive that unites them—their father Thomas was a fast-ascent pioneer—also results in a dangerous friction. The third film in a trilogy on sport that began with the politically-charged Berlin ice hockey saga *Home Game* and continued with the probing Tour de France documentary *Hell On Wheels*, *To The Limit* again features spectacularly nimble cinematography and the tangible you-are-there feel that is a hallmark of Danquart's visceral oeuvre.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Pepe Danquart (b. 1955, Singen) studied communications from 1975 to 1981. An Oscar winner for the acclaimed live-action short *Black Rider*, his extensive filmography in both documentary and fiction filmmaking includes *Daedalus* (1991), *Playboys* (1998), the German Film Award-winning *Home Game* (2000), *Semana Santa* (2002), *Angel of Death* and *Hell On Wheels* (2004) and *C(r)ook* (2004).

Saturday, January 19, 2:15 pm

Sunday, January 20, 12 pm

Valerie

Germany, 2006, color, 80 minutes,
German with English subtitles

Director: Birgit Möller **Screenplay:** Ruth Rehmet, Ilja Haller, Milena Baisch, Birgit Moeller, Elke Sudmann **Producers:** Susann Schimk, Jörg Trentmann **Cast:** Agata Buzek, David Striesow, Gunbert Warns, Birgit Uenel, Anne Sarah Hartung **World Sales:** Credo Film

Only days before Christmas, in the glittering glass and steel canyon of Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, 29-year-old Polish fashion model Valerie Adamczyk

(32-year-old Polish fashion model-turned-actress Agata Buzek) is so broke her car's trapped in the hotel garage. An unlikely bond develops between the desperate model and shy parking attendant Andre (David Striesow), who has his own problems. "I never wanted to make a depressing film," insists debuting director Birgit Moeller. "Although it's a melodramatic topic, it makes me very happy when there is spontaneous laughing during the film." There's also a strong undercurrent of social criticism, with the cold and unforgiving hotels and shopping arcades of new Berlin suggesting that with urban progress comes emotional disengagement. Narratively confident and absorbing for it, the film's ace in the hole is Buzek's naturalistic, self-deprecating turn as the haughty swan who takes a dive but is smart enough to learn from it.

—*Eddie Cockrell*

Birgit Möller (b. 1972, Osnabrück) graduated from Berlin's German Film and Television Academy in 2006. She has worked extensively as a director of short films and commercials, and as a cinematographer. *Valerie* is her feature film directorial debut.

Saturday, January 19, 4:30 pm

Sunday, January 20, 2:15 pm

All The Invisible Things (Heile Welt)

Austria, 2007, color, 89 minutes,
High German with English subtitles

Director: Jakob M. Erwa **Screenplay:** Jakob M. Erwa **Producer:** Franz Novotny **Cast:** Michael Sauseng, Simon Moestl, Angelika Schneider, Tatjana Koschutnig, Erni Mangold **World Sales:** Beta Cinema

The sins of the mothers are visited on their sons in the distinctive feature debut *All The Invisible Things*. Truants Jolly (Michael Sauseng) and Bolz (Simon Moestl) engage in the kind of grim hijinks of contemporary urban latchkey kids everywhere. Mothers Gabi (Tatjana Koschutnig) and Karin (Birgit Doll) clearly care, though each, for different reasons, lacks the capacity to be strong in the face of rebellion. Young hooker Lara (Elisabeth Mueller)

Wim Wenders' Early Years

... a fascinating study of the German helmer during his creative peak.

- Leslie Felperin, *Variety*



Valerie © Credo Film



Along Come Tourists © Bavaria International



One Who Set Forth: Wim Wenders' Early Years © Goethe-Institut

To the Limit

... a visually breathtaking essay about daredevils hooked on the thrill of speed rock-climbing.

- Richard Kuipers, *Variety*



To the Limit © First Run Features



Runaway Horse © Tele München Gruppe

and the blind Frank (Martin Bretschneider) complete the sad circle. The story begins as a standard teen-in-trouble tale, a la Gus van Sant or Larry Clark. But stay with it: young writer-director Jakob M. Erwa has constructed an intriguing narrative that backtracks and overlaps on itself, linking each of the principles in a fateful chain. Winner of the Grand Prix as best Austrian film at the 2006 Diagonale festival, *All The Invisible Things* is clearly a first film, yet stands firmly as one of clarity and conviction.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Jakob M. Erwa (b. 1981, Graz) makes his feature-length directorial debut with *All The Invisible Things*.

Saturday, January 19, 6:45 pm
Sunday, January 20, 9 pm

Runaway Horse (Ein fliehendes Pferd)

Germany, 2007, color, 92 minutes,
German with English subtitles

Director: Rainer Kaufmann **Screenplay:** Kathrin Richter, Ralf Hertwig, from the novella by Martin Walser **Producers:** Paul Guenzler, Rikolt von Gagern **Cast:** Ulrich Noethen, Ulrich Tukur, Katja Riemann, Petra Schmidt-Schaller **World Sales:** Tele Muenchen Gruppe

Whilst on their 12th consecutive holiday at Germany's gorgeous Bodensee (aka Lake Constance), philosophy prof/amateur birdwatcher Helmut Halm (Ulrich Noethen) and his clenched wife Sabine (Katja Riemann) find their détente shattered by the arrival of Helmut's gregarious former school chum, Klaus (Ulrich Tukur) and his comely young companion, Pilates instructor Helene (Petra Schmidt-Schaller). What begins as a tense reunion between two very different men blossoms into funny games with intimacy as the prize. "They are seducing us," Sabine says, her incredulity tempered by relish, "we should be careful." The most exuberantly performed relationship seriocomic since Doris Doerrie's "Naked," this adaptation of Martin Walser's 1970s novella is a comic showcase for vets Noethen, last seen in as Himmler in the black comedy *Mein Führer*, and Tukur, the sinister Grubitz in *The Lives Of Others*. "You can't reason with a runaway horse," Klaus says at one point, and the same might be said for the conflicted yearnings of these odd couples.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Rainer Kaufmann (b. 1959, Frankfurt) graduated from Munich's Academy of Television and Film in 1990. A director for both film and television, his work for the cinema includes *Talk Of The Town* (1995), *The Pharmacist* (1997), *Long Hello And Short Goodbye* (1998), *Cold Is The Evening Breeze* (1999), *Auslug* (2001) and *Queen Of Cherries* (2004).

Saturday, January 19, 9 pm
Tuesday, January 22, 9:15 pm

One Who Set Forth: Wim Wenders' Early Years (Von einem der auszog: Wim Wenders' frühe Jahre)

Germany, 2007, color and black and white, 97 minutes,
German with English subtitles

Director: Marcel Wehn **Screenplay:** Marcel Wehn **Producers:** Sonia Otto, Karoline von Roques, Julia Kaczmarek **With** Wim Wenders, Donata Wenders, Bruno Ganz, Ruediger Vogler, Peter Handke, Robby Mueller, Lisa Kreuzer, Heinz Badewitz

Few contemporary German directors have had as eventful and globe-trotting a run as Wim Wenders, whose sizeable filmography's high points include visits to the America of *Paris, Texas* (1984), the Berlin of *Wings of Desire* (1987) and the Cuba of *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999). Much has been written about him, and his films clearly spring from personal passions: yet what kind of guy is he? What makes him tick? His films prior to 1977's *The American Friend*—after which he left Germany for Los Angeles—are little-seen in the west, rendering this skillful blend of talking-head collaborators with pristine clips from *Alice In The Cities* (1974), *Kings Of The Road* (1976) and others a refresher course for the cineaste and a primer for the novice. "I am my own history," says a character in *Kings*, and in *One Who Sets Forth* that line between creator and created is firmly drawn and thoroughly explored.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Marcel Wehn (b. 1977, Karlsruhe) segued from graphic design and copywriting to documentary films studies at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Film Academy. Featured at the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival, *One Who Sets Forth: Wim Wenders' Early Years* is his graduation film.

Sunday, January 20, 4:30 pm
Tuesday, January 22, 7 pm

Schroeder's Wonderful World (Schröder's Wunderbare Welt)

Germany, 2007, color, 114 minutes,
German, English, Polish, Czech with English subtitles
Director: Michael Schorr **Screenplay:** Michael Schorr
Producers: Jens Koerner, Thomas Riedel, Oliver Niemeier **Cast:** Peter Schneider, Karl-Fred Mueller, Gitta Schweighoefer, Stanislaw Jaskolka, Jürgen Prochnow **World Sales:** Filmkombinat

Naive young German entrepreneur Frank Schroeder (Peter Schneider) finally sells his "Magic Lagoon" theme park concept to gung-ho Russian-born American industrialist John Gregory (Jürgen Prochnow). Unfortunately, Frank has no idea how to go about building the thing, much less getting the fiercely nationalistic locals who dot the landscape of his future Silesian-set paradise to climb on board. These pivotal dignitaries include his own blustery dad, an elder Polish nuclear reactor executive, and a golf-mad Czech mayor. *Schultze Gets The Blues* writer-director Michael Schorr has created a narratively ambitious and broadly played satire that feels as if Preston Sturges was dropped into the ex-stripping wilderness that typifies Europe's old-guard industrial mindset and told to make affectionate fun of whomever he met. Aided and abetted by Tanja Trentmann's cartoonishly imaginative wide-screen cinematography and the presence of composer Bernd Begemann as a wandering minstrel who woefully sings of "No Luck in the East," *Schroeder's Wonderful World* is an irreverent sociopolitical frolic.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Michael Schorr (b. 1965, Landau) studied philosophy, music and film on his way to a 2000 directing degree from Potsdam-Babelsberg's Konrad Wolf Academy of Film & Television. His previous fiction feature was the acclaimed *Schultze Gets The Blues*.

Late Bloomers

Switzerland's official entry for the
foreign-language Oscar ... has turned traditional
box office wisdom on its head.

Scott Roxborough, Reuters



Schroeder's Wonderful World © Filmkombinat



All The Invisible Things © heileweltfilm.com



Late Bloomers © Telepol MmbH

Monday, January 21, 7 pm
Monday, January 21, 9 pm

Late Bloomers (Die Herbstzeitlosen)

Switzerland, 2006, color, 90 minutes
High German with English subtitles

Director: Bettina Oberli **Screenplay:** Sabine Pochhammer, Bettina Oberli **Producers:** Alfi Sinniger, Olivia Oeschger **Cast:** Stephanie Glaser, Annemarie Dueringer, Heidi Maria Gloessner, Monica Gubser, Hanspeter Mueller-Drossaart **World Sales:** Telepool

Reception with Swiss treats and wine tasting by Cork Wine Bar between the two screenings in the E Street lobby.

In the “determined underdog” tradition of *The Full Monty*, *Calendar Girls* and *Chocolat* comes this rich Swiss confection about realizing your dreams—no matter what they are, how long it takes or how much they may offend local sensibilities. Some nine months after her grocer husband’s gone through the big checkout, 80-year-old former seamstress Martha (Stephanie Glaser) decides to transform their modest shop in her picturesque Emmental Valley village into a saucy lingerie business called “Little Paris.” Needless to say, the new enterprise shocks both her circle of gal chums and obnoxiously pious minister son—all of whom, of course, have dirty laundry of their own. Switzerland’s official entry for this year’s foreign film Oscar sweepstakes, this immensely assured, finely calibrated feature film debut from director and co-scenarist Bettina Oberli is an across-the-board crowd-pleaser, a mellow yet wry reverie on small-town politics and family that wears its heart proudly on its, uh, garter.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Bettina Oberli (b. 1972, Interlaken) obtained her directing degree from film school in Zurich. Internships in Berlin, New York and elsewhere led to a series of commissioned films. *Late Bloomers* is her feature film directorial debut.

Wednesday, January 23, 7 pm
Wednesday, January 23, 9 pm

And Along Come Tourists (Am Ende kommen Touristen)

Germany, 2007, color, 85 minutes, German,
Polish and English with English subtitles

Director: Robert Thalheim **Screenplay:** Robert Thalheim **Producers:** Britta Knoeller, Hans-Christian Schmid **Cast:** Alexander Fehling, Ryszard Ronczewski, Barbara Wysocka, Piotr Rogucki, Rainer Sellien **World Sales:** Bavaria Film International

Discussion with Michal Galinski, production design, follows both screenings.

Forced to choose between army and civil service, young German Sven (Alexander Fehling) selects the latter and is posted—reluctantly—to the Polish city of Oswiecim, also known as Auschwitz. The only volunteer currently on-site, Sven’s put in charge of elderly survivor Stanislaw Krzeminski (Ryszard Ronczewski), who works mending suitcases in one museum exhibit. Sven is clearly uncomfortable in his surroundings and endures ridicule from Krzeminski, his cronies and Krzysztof (Piotr Rogucki), the brother of Polish tourguide Ania (Barbara Wysocka), from whom he rents a room. Gradually, a mild romance blossoms between the intern and the guide, as Sven adapts to the rhythm of life in an unlikely but necessary tourist attraction. The second feature from *Netto* director Robert Thalheim, *And Along Come Tourists* masks history’s volatility with a fragile story of friendship and trust, even as it gently cautions that while remembrance is a choice, change is a given.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Robert Thalheim (b. 1974, Berlin) has studied at numerous universities in Germany and the United States. He publishes the cultural periodical “Plotzki,”

has written a book on Polish director Andrzej Wajda and directs his own work for the theater. He made his feature film directorial debut with the acclaimed *Netto* (2005).

CLOSING

Thursday, January 24, 7 pm
Thursday, January 24, 9:15 pm

Hotel Very Welcome

Germany, 2007, color, 94 minutes,
English and German with English subtitles

Director: Sonja Heiss **Screenplay:** Sonja Heiss, Nikolai von Graevenitz **Producers:** Janine Jackowski, Maren Ade, Sonja Heiss **Cast:** Ricky Champ, Gareth Llewelyn, Eva Loebau, Chris O’Dowd, Svenja Steinfeld **World Sales:** Scalpel Films

Discussion with cast member Svenja Steinfeld and *Washington Post* film critic Desson Thomson after the 7 pm screening, followed by a closing reception at the Goethe-Institut.

Trapped in transit between Washington, D.C. and Shanghai after a missed flight, Svenja (Svenja Steinfeld) begins an odd relationship from her Bangkok hotel room with the disembodied call center voice attempting to rebook her flight. Meanwhile, rave-surfing mates Josh (Ricky Champ) and Adam (Gareth Llewelyn) bicker over money and girls as they wander Thailand. In India, laid-back Liam (Chris O’Dowd) tries mightily to escape his past. Finally, fragile Marion (Eva Loebau, star of *The Forest For The Trees*), eagerly partakes various self-help programs in the new age-y meditation center Happy Home, hoping to dull the pain of a disintegrating relationship. A crafty critique of anglo twentysomethings adrift in an Asia they mistakenly believe to be a cleansing pleasure palace, *Hotel Very Welcome* blends a loosey-goosey improvisational acting approach with co-scenarist Nikolai von Graevenitz’ documentary-like lensing to create an observational dramedy about restless souls escaping dashed dreams via that province of the young, the backpacker blues.—*Eddie Cockrell*

Sonja Heiss (b. 1976, Munich) studied at the HFF there from 1998 to 2001. She began as a commercial casting director in 1997, and began directing commercials herself in 2003. She lives in Berlin, and *Hotel Very Welcome* is her feature debut.

Hotel Very Welcome
Kept afloat by a bouncy soundtrack, likable performances and a docu-like feel for backpacker India and Thailand...

- Derek Elley, *Variety*



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