

Men in the City II © Wriedemann & Berg Film GmbH & Co. KG 2011



**NEW FILMS FROM
GERMANY | AUSTRIA | SWITZERLAND**

JANUARY 20-26, 2012

WWW.FILMNEU.ORG

**LANDMARK'S E STREET CINEMA
555 11TH ST. NW | METRO: METRO CENTER**



Westwind © credofilm 2011

The occasion of preparing a 20th anniversary edition of Film|Neu led inevitably to thoughts of the changes to the German-language film industries of Germany, Austria and Switzerland over the last two decades.

Sidestepping the more technical and business-oriented answers, two simple, interrelated facts emerged that can explain their successes: funding support and diverse stories.

Germany, Austria and Switzerland stand behind their filmmakers as they do all their artists: with open minds and open wallets. As for diverse stories, a read through these plot descriptions yields, side by side, movies about relationships, experiments in narrative genre cinema, German history, Swiss folklore and Austrian social awareness.

Seen from another angle, the program certainly took on the air of an anniversary during its preparation, with new films from old friends and past festival participants sharing the spotlight with exciting new film-making voices.

And that, in the end, is what Film|Neu is all about: exploring the evolution of filmmaking, discovering new talent and enjoying a glimpse of these worlds from the comforts of the Landmark Theatre.

Thank you, the Washington audiences, for the support that made and continues to make the program possible. And for those of you who have been on this trip from the beginning, as well as those just discovering the program, happy anniversary and best wishes for the future.

–Eddie Cockrell

Eddie Cockrell is an independent film critic and consulting programmer who was born in Washington, D.C. and currently lives in Sydney, Australia.

OVERVIEW

Friday, January 20	7 and 9:30 pm	Westwind
Saturday, January 21	11:30 am	Stopped on Track (Halt auf freier Strecke)
Saturday, January 21	1:30 pm	If Not Us, Who (Wer wenn nicht wir)
Saturday, January 21	4 and 11:15 pm	Cracks in the Shell (Die Unsichtbare)
Saturday, January 21	6:30 pm	Bastard
Saturday, January 21	9:15 pm	Sleeping Sickness (Schlafkrankheit)
Sunday, January 22	11:30 am	Dreileben Part 1: Beats Being Dead (Dreileben–Etwas besseres als den Tod)
Sunday, January 22	1:30 pm	Dreileben Part 2: Don't Follow Me Around (Dreileben–Komm mir nicht nach)
Sunday, January 22	3:30 pm	Dreileben Part 3: One Minute of Darkness (Dreileben–Eine Minute Dunkel)
Sunday, January 22	5:30 pm	Bastard
Sunday, January 22	8 pm	Stopped on Track (Halt auf freier Strecke)
Sunday, January 22	10 pm	Sleeping Sickness (Schlafkrankheit)
Monday, January 23	6:30 pm	Joschka & Mr. Fischer (Joschka und Herr Fischer)
Monday, January 23	9 pm	If Not Us, Who (Wer wenn nicht wir)
Tuesday, January 24	7 and 9:15 pm	Black Brown White
Wednesday, January 25	6:30 and 9:15 pm	Sennentuntschi: Curse of the Alps
Thursday, January 26	7 and 9:15 pm	Men in the City II (Männerherzen... und die ganz ganz große Liebe)

TICKETS | INFORMATION

Tickets: \$11, \$9 for Students and Friends of the Goethe-Institut, \$8 for Seniors

Tickets can be purchased at the theater or in advance through Moviefone at 202-333-FILM (Code #781) or www.moviefone.com

Opening Night 7 pm Screening followed by "Berliner Party" with DJ at Goethe-Institut: \$25

Closing Night Screening and Reception: \$15

Featuring complimentary beer from Gordon Biersch, German wine, and food provided by the Embassy of Switzerland, Old Europe Restaurant, Cafe Mozart, Heidelberg Pastry Shoppe, Whole Foods Market, German Gourmet, and the Swiss Bakery and Pastry Shop

For information call 202-452-7672 or visit www.landmarktheatres.com



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Westwind © Gredofilm 2011

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OPENING

EAST COAST PREMIERE

Friday, January 20, 7 and 9:30 pm

Westwind

Discussion with actor Franz Dinda follows the first screening.

Germany, 2011, color, 90 mins., German with English subtitles
Director: Robert Thalheim
Cast: Friederike Becht, Luise Heyer, Franz Dinda, Volker Bruch
Sales: Beta Cinema

In 1988, a year before the fall of the Berlin Wall, inseparable 17-year-old twins Doreen and Isabel Zimmermann (Friederike Becht, Luise Heyer) travel from their East German town of Saxony to Hungary's Lake Balaton to train for an upcoming rowing competition. When they miss a connecting bus and impetuously accept a ride from West German teen Arne (Franz Dinda) and his mates, the resulting attraction between Doreen and Arne threatens the girls' family bond and competitive status. Among the most felicitous of contemporary German filmmakers, Robert Thalheim's typically low-key, non-sensationalist approach to the material, combined with impeccable yet unforced period production design and the inclusion of such 1980s musical memories as Depeche Mode's Never Let Me Down Again, give the film a palpable veracity without catering to a more sentimental nostalgia for the era.

“The film is staged with an enchanting delicacy and sensitivity, totally unpretentiously, without any contrived or tear-jerking ‘Wall’ emotionalism – which is precisely why it’s so gripping.”

(TZ)



© Goethe-Institut

Robert Thalheim

(b: 1974, Berlin, Germany) publishes the cultural periodical *Platzki*, has written a book on Polish director Andrzej Wajda and directs his own work for the theater. His films include *Netto* (2005) and *And Along Come Tourists* (2007), the latter of which was featured in Film|Neu 2008.

CLOSING

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

Thursday, January 26, 7 and 9:15 pm

Men in the City II

(Männerherzen... und die ganz ganz große Liebe)

Germany, 2011, color, 112 mins., German with English subtitles
Director/Screenplay: Simon Verhoeven
Cast: Til Schweiger, Florian David Fitz, Najda Uhl, Christian Ulmen, Justus von Dohnányi, Wotan Wilke Möhring, Maxim Mehmet
Sales: BETA Cinema

In 2009, the genial ensemble romantic comedy *Men in the City*—literally, “men’s hearts” in German—drew over a million admissions to a domestic box office enamored by the genre at least since 1995 and Talk of the Town. The story of six men and their interconnecting professional adventures and love lives, it was only the second film by actor-turned-director Simon Verhoeven. In his much-anticipated and equally breezy sequel, each man sees retreats and advances: Jerome (Til Schweiger) has returned to his parents in the provinces seeking direction, pop star Bruce (Justus von Dohnányi) is looking for an internet hit with his new song “The Really, Really Big Love” and so on. The film’s instant success late in a banner year for local films proves that German comedy is here to stay.

“Simon Verhoeven lands a winner with satire and empathy”

(SZ)



© Alan Ovraska

Simon Verhoeven

(b: 1972, Munich, Germany) studied performing arts at New York’s Lee Strasberg Theater Institute, Film Music at Berklee College in Boston and film directing at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. He has scored and acted in numerous features, as well as directed shorts and music videos. His previous features include *100 Pro* (2001) and *Men in the City* (2009).



Stopped on Track © Rommel Film, Foto Andreas Dresen



If Not Us, Who © Goethe-Institut

Cracks in the Shell © Bavaria Film International

“The film stands out with sharp dialogue, all of it improvised, and an ace cast” (Variety)

WASHINGTON PREMIERE

Saturday, January 21, 11:30 am | Sunday, January 22, 8 pm

Stopped on Track (Halt auf freier Strecke)

Among the most well-represented filmmakers in the two-decade history of Film|Neu, DDR-born Andreas Dresen’s early, hand-held dramas (*Night Shapes*, *The Policewoman*, *Grill Point*) have been supplanted by supple, novelistic stories of unified Germans making their ways in an uncertain world (*Willenbrock*, *Summer in Berlin*, *Cloud 9*). As the blunt but brave *Stopped on Track* opens, middle-aged Frank Lange (Milan Peschel), accompanied by wife Simone (Dresen regular Steffi Kühnert), is being told by a doctor his brain tumor is inoperable. Given only months to live, Frank begins confiding in his smartphone, even as the patience and resolve of his loving wife and two children are tested. Dresen shared the Un Certain Regard prize (with Kim Ki-duk for *Arirang*) at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.

Germany, 2011, color, 110 mins., German with subtitles
Director/Screenplay: Andreas Dresen, Cooky Ziesche
Cast: Milan Peschel, Steffi Kühnert, Talisa Lilli Lemke, Mika Nilson Seidel, Ursula Werner
Sales: The Match Factory



© Rommel Film

Andreas Dresen
 (b. 1963, Gera, Germany) apprenticed at the DEFA Studios in the former German Democratic Republic and studied filmmaking at Potsdam’s Konrad Wolf academy of Film & Television. His acclaimed filmography includes *Silent Country* (1992), *The Policewoman* (2000), *Grill Point* (2001), *Willenbrock* (2004), *Summer in Berlin* (2005), *Cloud 9* (2008) and *Whisky with Vodka* (2009).

EAST COAST PREMIERE

Saturday, January 21, 1:30 pm | Monday, January 23, 9 pm

If Not Us, Who (Wer wenn nicht wir)

After taking a back seat to more notorious 1970s Red Army Faction figures in such recent German features as Christopher Roth’s *Baader* and Uli Edel’s *The Baader Meinhof Complex*, radical left firebrand Gudrun Ensslin—who predated Ulrike Meinhof as Andreas Baader’s partner in Marxist revolutionary crime—comes to the fore in this propulsive drama from acclaimed documentarian turned feature director Andres Veiel. Brought indelibly to life in a transformative performance by relative newcomer Lena Lauzemis, Ensslin moves from innocent to radical via her combustible and bohemian relationship with writer Bernward Vesper (August Diehl) and life-changing fling with Baader (Alexander Fehling). Winner of the Alfred Bauer Award at the Berlin International Film Festival and the German Film Awards’ Film Award in Bronze, *If Not Us, Who* expands the scope of big-screen drama from this chaotic period in German history.

Germany, 2011, color, 126 minutes, German with English subtitles
Director/Screenplay: Andres Veiel
Cast: Michael Wittenborn, Lena Lauzemis, Alexander Fehling, Maria-Victoria Dragus, Thomas Thieme, Susanne Lothar, August Diehl
Sales: The Match Factory



© Goethe-Institut

Andres Veiel’s
 (b. 1959, Stuttgart, Germany) award-winning feature-length documentaries include *A Winternight’s Dream* (1992), *Balagan* (1993), *The Survivor*, the acclaimed *Black Box Germany* (2001) and *Addicted to Acting* (2004).



WASHINGTON PREMIERE

Saturday, January 21, 4 and 11:15 pm

Cracks in the Shell (Die Unsichtbare)

Germany, 2011, color, 113 mins., German and Danish with English subtitles

Director: Christian Schwochow
Cast: Stine Fischer Christensen, Ulrich Noethen, Anna Maria Muehe
Sales: Bavaria Film International

Recently returned to Germany after being raised by her father in Denmark, timid Fine (Stine Fischer Christensen) enrolls in drama school to escape the demands of life with her mother and mentally challenged sister. Improbably selected by the notoriously demanding director Kaspar Friedmann (Ulrich Noethen) for an extroverted star turn, the actress begins to grow into her character. Cut from similar dramatic cloth as Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan*, *Cracks in the Shell* finds its voice and power in Christensen's performance which earned her acting awards at the Karlovy Vary and Hamptons festivals, its resonance underscoring the rich irony of the film's original German title: *The Invisible Person*.

US PREMIERE

Saturday, January 21, 6:30 pm | Sunday, January 22, 5:30 pm

Bastard

Discussion with director Carsten Unger and producer Reza Bahar follows both screenings.

Germany, 2011, color, 126 mins., German with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Carsten Unger
Producer: Reza Bahar, Nicole Ringhut
Cast: Martina Gedeck, Markus Krojer, Antonia Lingemann, Hanns Zischler
Sales: Gifted Films

As a viral video makes chillingly clear, a nine-year-old boy is being held against his will in a cavernous concrete basement. Criminal psychologist Claudia Meinert (Martina Gedeck) makes inquiries, finding inconsistencies in his parents' stories. Soon the trail leads to the boy's school and 13-year-old Leon (Markus Krojer), an adopted bad seed of monstrous proportions whose link to, and interest in, the affected families is far from clear. When Leon's needy, malicious classmate Mathilda (Antonia Lingemann) stumbles on new information, the stakes are raised enormously. *Bastard* is a supremely confident and profoundly disconcerting feature film debut by 33-year-old Carsten Unger, who has made a confrontational, thought-provoking thriller in the vein of Roman Polanski and Michael Haneke that won recognition at the Hof festival for Lars Petersen's beautiful widescreen cinematography.

WASHINGTON PREMIERE

Saturday, January 21, 9:15 pm | Sunday, January 22, 10 pm

Sleeping Sickness (Schlafkrankheit)

Germany, 2011, color, 92 mins., French, German and Dutch with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Ulrich Köhler
Cast: Jenny Schily, Hippolyte Girardot, Sava Lolov, Maria Elise Miller, Francis Noukiatchom, Ali Mvondo Roland
Sales: The Match Factory

In the onscreen world of 42-year-old writer-director Ulrich Köhler, characters act enigmatically: an AWOL soldier invites recapture (*Bungalow*), while a doctor leaves her husband and daughter for no apparent reason (*Windows on Monday*). In his ambitious and much-anticipated third film, *Sleeping Sickness*, Köhler tells the provocative story of Dutch-born doctor Ebbo (Pierre Bokma), who is apparently so dedicated to his work in Africa that he refuses to accompany his loving wife and daughter back home to Europe. Years later, Parisian-born Congolese physician Alex (Jean-Christopher Folly) discovers Ebbo in Cameroon. Bold in structure and unerring in execution, the film, which won Köhler the Silver Berlin Bear for Best Director at the 2011 Berlin International Film Festival, resonates with thought-provoking open-endedness.



© Bavaria Film International

Christian Schwochow

(b. 1978, Bergen, Germany) was involved with radio plays and publishing from an early age and worked as an author, speaker and reporter. His graduation film from Baden-Württemberg Film Academy was *November Child* (*Novemberkind*, 2007).



© Gifted Films

Carsten Unger

(b. 1978, Gütersloh, Germany) worked as a trainee at Vogelsänger Studios, studied at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy from 2001-2007 and attended The Hollywood Perspective masterclass at UCLA. *Bastard* is his feature debut.



© Goethe-Institut

Ulrich Köhler

(b. 1969, Marburg, Germany) studied fine art in France, returning to Hamburg for philosophy and visual communications coursework. His feature films include *Bungalow* (2002) and *Windows on Monday* (2006).



“One of the most talked-about world-premieres at this year’s Berlin International Film Festival”
(The Hollywood Reporter)

WASHINGTON PREMIERE

Sunday, January 22, 11:30 am

Dreileben Part 1: Beats Being Dead (Dreileben—Etwas besseres als den Tod)

Germany, 2011, color, 88 mins., German, English and Bosnian with English subtitles

Director/Screenplay: Christian Petzold

Cast: Jacob Matschenz, Luna Zimic Mijovic, Vijessna Ferkic, Rainer Bock

Sales: Bavaria Film International

Though *Dreileben* is conceived as an experiment in linked narrative, each film can be enjoyed independently of the others; nevertheless, as with Kieslowski’s Three Colors trilogy of *Blue*, *White* and *Red*, their interlocking structures and overlapping character references reward sequential—and attentive—viewing.

In the thick Thuringian woods surrounding a picture postcard German town, sex offender and convicted murderer Frank Molesch (Stefan Kurt) eludes the authorities. Meanwhile, rudderless hospital orderly Johannes (Jacob Matschenz) initiates a hesitant relationship with unhappy Bosnian chambermaid Ana (Luna Zimic Miljovic). So absorbed are they in the intricate minutiae of love that the manhunt swirling around them goes entirely unnoticed. This is consistent with director Christian Petzold’s overarching interest in the delicate balance between life and death, and the resulting sense of foreboding and dread is Hitchcockian in its cumulative intensity.

Sunday, January 22, 1:30 pm

Dreileben Part 2: Don’t Follow Me Around (Dreileben—Komm mir nicht nach)

Germany, 2011, color, 89 mins., German with English subtitles

Director: Dominik Graf

Cast: Jeanette Hain, Susanne Wolff, Misel Maticevic, Lisa Kreuzer, Rudiger Vogler, Jacob Matschenz, Luna Zimic Mijovic

Sales: Bavaria Film International

Dreileben began in the summer of 2006, when the three directors initiated a lively email exchange encompassing film aesthetics, genre conventions, and the Berlin School of auteur filmmaking to which their work is linked. Of the men, Dominik Graf has the most experience in television, and wrote persuasively of *Dreileben*’s deliberate subversion of traditional mainstream storytelling: “Whether voluntarily or involuntarily, in commentary on that mainstream—I find and have always found this to be extremely creative.”

As Frank Molesch (Stefan Kurt) continues to elude capture, police psychologist Johanna (Jeanette Hain) is summoned to assist. As she grapples with clues that suggest possible police malfeasance, she simultaneously discovers the old friend with whom she’s staying dated the same man at the same time when they first met. The Rubik’s Cube continues to confound.



© Bavaria Film International

Christian Petzold

(b. 1960, Hilden, Germany) is amongst the leading lights of contemporary German cinema. He graduated in 1994 from the German Film & Television Academy (dffg). His films, a number of which have been featured in Film|Neu include *Cuba Libre* (1995), *The State I Am In* (2000), *Wolfsburg* (2002), *Ghosts* (2005), *Yella* (2007) and *Jerichow*, which screened at Film|Neu 2009.



© Bavaria Film International

Dominik Graf

(b. 1952, Munich, Germany) received the Bavarian Film Prize for his debut feature *Der kostbare Gast* (1979), which was his graduation film at Munich’s University of Television & Film. Since then he has made more than 50 films for cinema and television, and teaches directing at the international film school in Köln.



Sunday, January 22, 3:30 pm

Dreileben Part 3: One Minute of Darkness (Dreileben—Eine Minute Dunkel)

Germany, 2011, color,
89 mins., German with
English subtitles

Director:

Christoph Hochhäusler

Cast: Stefan Kurt,
Eberhard Kirchberg,
Imogen Kogge,
Timo Jacobs

Sales: Bavaria Film
International

Since it was director Christoph Hochhäusler who documented the email exchanges that lead to the creation of *Dreileben* in his film magazine *Revolver*, it seems only fitting that the climactic and most genre-specific episode in the trilogy should fall to him.

Once more the narrative focus has shifted, and is now squarely on sex murderer Frank Molesch (Stefan Kurt) and the circumstances that led to his fugitive ordeal. Though the now-vulnerable police continue to close in, it takes the determination of a detective on sick leave, Marcus Kreil (Eberhard Kirchberg), to energize the pursuit. On the heels of sold-out theatrical engagements at festivals in Berlin, Toronto, Vancouver, New York and Paris, *Dreileben* comes to Washington for a single consecutive showing of each part. Book early for this exciting and original collaborative film project.

EAST COAST PREMIERE

Monday, January 23, 6:30 pm

Joschka & Mr. Fischer (Joschka und Herr Fischer)

Germany/Switzerland,
2011, color and black
and white, 138 minutes,
German with English
subtitles

Director/Screenplay:

Pepe Danquart

Cast: Joschka Fischer,
Hans Koschnick,
Katharina Thalbach,
Peter Grohmann

Sales: Quintefilm

The eventful, controversial and polarizing story of now-retired but once immensely popular 63-year-old German politician Joseph Martin "Joschka" Fischer is, possibly, a story of Germany itself from the 1960s to today. Documentary filmmaker Pepe Danquart is known principally for his visceral, nimble non-fiction journeys in which athletes stretch the limits of physical endurance and social convention (his profile of mountaineers Alexander and Thomas Huber, *To the Limit*, screened at the 2007 Film|Neu). So it seems completely natural, and even inevitable, that Danquart would dive with obvious zest into a profile of Fischer that allows the politician free reign to reflect, with film clips and remembrances by colleagues, on a life that led him from Frankfurt taxi driver to left-wing radical to Green Party pioneer and beyond. Don't miss this single screening of a singular life.



© Bavaria Film International

Christoph Hochhäusler

(b: 1972, Munich, Germany) studied architecture in Berlin before studying directing at Munich's Film and Television School. He is the founder and publisher of the film magazine *Revolver*. His films include *This Very Moment (Milchwald)*, 2003), *Low Profile* (2005) and *The City Below* (2010).



© Filmladen Filmverleih

Pepe Danquart

(b: 1955, Singen, Germany) studied communications from 1975 to 1981. An Oscar winner for the acclaimed live-action short *Black Rider* (1993), his extensive filmography in both documentary and fiction filmmaking includes *Home Game* (2000), *Hell on Wheels* (2004), *C(r)ook* (2004) and *To the Limit* (2007).



Black Brown White © Allegro Film - Petro Domitenev

Sennentuntschi © Pascal Walder

US PREMIERE

Tuesday, January 24, 7 and 9:15 pm

Black Brown White

Reception with Austrian treats between the two screenings.

Austria, 2011, color, 106 mins., German, English, Spanish and French with English subtitles
Director: Erwin Wagenhofer
Cast: Fritz Karl, Clare Hope Ashitey, Theo Caleb Chapman, Wotan Wilke Möhring
Sales: Allegro Film

The easygoing and savvy Peter (Fritz Karl) is a Vienna-based long-haul trucker who runs an honest business but isn't above smuggling refugees for profit. Jackie (Clare-Hope Ashitey) is a strong-willed Ghanaian on her way to Geneva to confront the United Nations official with whom she has a son. Together, they navigate the tangled and often contradictory terrain of contemporary Europe. *Black Brown White* is the fiction debut of Erwin Wagenhofer, who came to international attention with the 2005 examination of the global food chain *We Feed the World*. His subsequent inquiry into the world's banking system, *Let's Make Money*, featured in Film|Neu 2010. As the title of this satisfying slice of contemporary social realism makes effortlessly clear, there are, in the complexities of modern society, shades of meaning and interpretation between absolutes.



Erwin Wagenhofer

(b. 1961, Amstetten, Austria) has established himself as a freelance author and director and teacher. His feature-length documentaries include the award winning *We Feed the World* (2005) and *Let's Make Money* (2008). *Black Brown White* is his first dramatic feature.

EAST COAST PREMIERE

Wednesday, January 25, 6:30 and 9:15 pm

Sennentuntschi: Curse of the Alps

Discussion with Carlos Leal follows the first screening. Reception with Swiss treats between the two screenings.

Switzerland, 2010, color, 110 mins., Swiss-German with English subtitles
Director: Michael Steiner
Cast: Roxanne Mesquida, Nicholas Ofczarek, Andrea Zogg, Carlos Leal, Joel Basman
Sales: Constantin Film Schweiz

In a remote mountain village in the spectacular Swiss Alps, the town's lone policeman, Sebastian Reusch (Nicolas Ofczarek), has things under control. But when the sudden and mysterious appearance in 1975 of a beautiful mute woman (Roxane Mesquida) coincides with the hanging death of a priest, the townspeople turn hostile. It is up to Reusch to discover if she's the living embodiment of a demonic tradition amongst lonely herdsmen. Part police procedural, part supernatural thriller and all white knuckle shocker, *Sennentuntschi* was shot by co-writer and director Michael Steiner in 2008, but the loss of funding prior to post-production delayed completion until 2010—when it opened the Zurich Film Festival and was subsequently released by the Swiss branch of Disney to strong local interest. Steiner's skill with genre elements marks him a director to watch.



Courtesy Pascal Walder

Michael Steiner

(b. 1969, Hergiswil, Switzerland) studied ethnology, art history and film at the University of Zurich. He has worked as a journalist, press photographer and commercial director. His films include *My Name is Eugen* (2005), *Grounding: The Last Days of Swissair* (2006) and the TV series *Stunthero* (2010).

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