

News Release: GERMAN FILM OFFICE LAUNCHES NEW EDITION OF KINO! GERMANY NOW! DISCOVER NEW TALENT PROGRAM



April 1-June 30, 2023

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New York, 02/27/2023 The German Film Office is pleased to announce the second edition of its **KINO! Germany Now!** film program. From April through June 2023, theaters and festivals across the United States are invited to present a curated selection of new films from Germany to in-person audiences. The program includes five striking examples of the dazzling talent that continues to emerge from one of the world's great cinematic traditions.

Curated by SXSW film programmer **Jim Kolmar**, these titles are “idiosyncratic, visionary and inventive, striking a balance between the accessible and the conceptually challenging. It was a true pleasure to curate this selection of films for the **KINO! Germany Now** program. Taken together, the original, substantial pool of potential titles represents a significant berth of themes, influences, aesthetics and, most importantly, talent. Narrowing them down to five was a daunting task, but I believe the results represent a vibrant distillation of the energetic innovation that characterizes German film.”

In that spirit, **Nicolette Krebitz** returns with her latest film, ***AEIOU: A Quick Alphabet of Love***, a daring, life-affirming exploration of a complex relationship between an aging actress and her student, asking some difficult questions along the way.

Jöns Jönsson's *Axiom* is a curious study of an enigmatic, searching young man who wouldn't be out of place in a Patricia Highsmith novel. Eliding obvious narrative routes, the film grips like a thriller, and has a knack for conveying discomfort.

Kiss My Wounds, a second feature from **Hanna Doose**, investigates dark family secrets at a Black Forest reunion. Offering a unique spin on the classic chamber drama, the film is another example of subverted expectation, never quite unfurling the way one might expect.

Sophie Linnenbaum's canny exercise in offbeat sci-fi, *The Ordinaries*, employs the daring conceit of a future society rooted in a caste system, and the deep wounds it leaves in human interaction. Despite a surprising sense of humor and an air of wry fable, this is a film with a dark, provocative heart.

Rounding out the selection, **Vera Brückner's** *Sorry Comrade* is an eccentric documentary, a story of unconventional romance across political barriers, and through time. Though steeped in social and historical commentary, the film is fundamentally about love.

All films are preceded by a short film selected by the German Short Film Association:

AEIOU: A Quick Alphabet of Love by Jan Soldat's *Staging Death*

Axiom by Alison Kuhn's *Fluffy Tales*

Kiss My Wounds by Frédéric Jaeger's *The Deluge*

The Ordinaries by Jonatan Schwenk's *Zoon*

Sorry Comrade by Jonas Riemer's *The One Who Crossed the Sea*

From the beginning of April through the end of June 2023, the **KINO! Germany Now!** film program is available for in-person screenings in theaters, art house cinemas, regional and local film festivals, film societies, and other venues in the United States. We are pleased to offer special booking conditions for these films, both as a package and individually. For more information, please contact our partner **Kino Lorber**.

KINO! Germany Now! introduces up-and-coming and mid-career directors from Germany, each with their own filmmaking background and unique approach to their craft. The German Film Office offers promotional support to venues presenting the program and connects them with filmmakers for in-person and virtual Q&As.

KINO! Germany NOW! is presented by the German Film Office, an initiative of the Goethe-Institut and German Films, with support from the German Short Film Association.

ABOUT THE CURATOR



Jim Kolmar is an independent curator, and has programmed for South by Southwest Film Festival since 2008. He also programs for Trinidad & Tobago Film Festival, and was a founding committee member of Festival Internacional de Cine Tulum (FICTU). Jim was a guest curator for Portland International Film Festival 2021.

Jim has consulted and participated on numerous international festival juries, panels and committees including Adelaide Film Festival, Berlinale, Bogotá Audiovisual Market (BAM), FICCALI and Ventana Sur. For the last two years he has also mentored students for London Film School.

FILM PROGRAM

Narrative features:

AEIOU: A QUICK ALPHABET OF LOVE by Nicolette Krebitz

AXIOM by Jöns Jönsson

KISS MY WOUNDS by Hanna Doose

THE ORDINARIES by Sophie Linnenbaum

SORRY COMRADE by Vera Brückner

Short films:

FLUFFY TALES by Alison Kuhn

STAGING DEATH by Jan Soldat

THE DELUGE by Frédéric Jaeger

THE ONE WHO CROSSED THE SEA by Jonas Riemer

ZOON by Jonatan Schwenk

Booking:

Kino Lorber

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NARRATIVE FEATURES

AEIOU: A Quick Alphabet of Love

Fiction, drama, Germany/France, 2022, 105 min., German/English/French with English subtitles. Original title: *AEIOU – Das schnelle Alphabet der Liebe*. Director/screenwriter: Nicolette Krebitz. Cinematographer: Reinhold Vorschneider. Cast: Sophie Rois, Udo Kier, Milan Herms, Nicolas Bridet. German producers: Janine Jackowski, Jonas Dornbach, Maren Ade (Komplizen Film). Festivals: Berlinale 2022 (Competition), Warsaw 2022, Cork 2022, Edinburgh 2022, Adelaide 2022, Jerusalem 2022, Sydney 2022, Riga 2022, Philadelphia 2022

Nicolette Krebitz's latest film solidifies her burgeoning reputation as an investigator of the more idiosyncratic tendencies of human emotion. Subverting genre tropes at every opportunity, Krebitz's playful romance maintains an air of magical realism that never crosses the line into whimsy. Instead, the film employs an arsenal of formal tactics to tell the story of Anna, an aging actress and voice teacher who develops a curious bond with Adrian, one of her students.

The film deftly navigates some tricky terrain with a lightness of touch that makes the film a thrillingly open experience. *AEIOU: A Quick Alphabet of Love* presents us with an opportunity to reflect on the nature of our own connections, how we might nurture them and perhaps even find love and meaning in the process. – Jim Kolmar

Presented with Jan Soldat's *Staging Death*

Axiom

Fiction, drama, tragicomedy. Germany, 2021, 112 min., German/English with English/German subtitles. Director/screenwriter: Jöns Jönsson. Cinematographer: Johannes Louis. Cast: Moritz von Treuenfels, Ricarda Seifried, Thomas Schubert. Producers: Amir Hamz, Christian Springer, Fahri Yardim (Bon Voyage Films). Festivals: Berlinale 2022 (Encounters), Karlovy Vary 2022, Hong Kong 2022, AFI European Union Film Showcase Washington 2022. Awards: Best Actor Moritz von Treuenfels (Hong Kong 2022)

On the surface, Jöns Jönsson's *Axiom* seems straightforward enough—a portrait of Julius, a charismatic young museum attendant who is self-assured, assertive, and moves through his life relatively unchallenged and with no small amount of charm. But it soon becomes clear that Julius is rather more vulnerable than we first realized, and this plays out with something approaching amorality. Perhaps more accurately, it becomes increasingly difficult to locate his position on the moral spectrum.

It doesn't take long to understand that we're in the hands of a master storyteller. *Axiom* reveals a deep complexity over its leisurely runtime, mischievously toying with our callow expectations, built on rather unstable foundations. – Jim Kolmar

Presented with Alison Kuhn's *Fluffy Tales*

Kiss My Wounds

Fiction, drama, dramedy. Germany, 2022, 111 min., German with English subtitles. Original title: *Wann kommst du meine Wunden küssen?*. Director/screenwriter: Hanna Doose. Cinematographer: Markus Zucker. Cast: Bibiana Beglau, Gina Henkel, Katarina Schröter, Alexander Fehling, Godehard Giese, Jonas Smulders, Marc Hosemann. Producers: Dominik Utz, Martin Schwimmer (DOMAR Film), Marcos Kantis (Schiwago Film). Festivals: Munich 2022, Tallin Black Nights 2022. Awards: Audience Award (Munich 2022)

Kiss My Wounds centers on an extended family unit that includes friends and former lovers as they convene in the Black Forest under tragic circumstances. Fissures are soon exposed within that unit, many of which are torn open to reveal the raw neuroses within. This second feature by Hanna Doose is a near symphony of emotional repression, nested in an intricate work of great confidence and cinematic agility. We see this in the extraordinary, expansive images that open the film, leading the way to a more intimate chamber drama that would make Chekhov proud.

Kiss My Wounds is a film unafraid to tackle the silences, microaggressions, and misunderstandings that punctuate family dynamics, often with ribald humor, and always with care and precision. It brilliantly captures the awkward ways we relate to our loved ones, even when that love is subject to great pressure and dire consequences. – Jim Kolmar

Presented with Frédéric Jaeger's *The Deluge*

Sorry Comrade

Documentary hybrid, human interest, history, Germany/Romania, 2022, 94 min., German with English subtitles. Original title: *Sorry Genosse*. Director/screenwriter: Vera Brückner. Cinematographer: Felix Pflieger. German producers: Fabian Halbig, Florian Kamhuber (Nordpolaris). Cast: Karl-Heinz Stützel, Hedwig Stützel, Brigitte Ulrich, Lisa Rumpel, Lothar Thiel. Festivals: Berlinale 2022 (Perspektive Deutsches Kino)

The irreverent *Sorry Comrade* is a delightful, complex feature debut from Vera Brückner. The film is a documentary portrait of Karl-Heinz and Hedi, two lovers in the divided Germany of the 1970s, kept apart by the Iron Curtain. A plan for Hedi's escape from East Germany is hatched, and we soon find ourselves in thriller territory as their plan begins to unfold. Brückner's canny film moves quickly and cinematically, using first-person testimony, excerpts from private correspondence, and a rich trove of archival footage. Yet *Sorry Comrade* plays fast and loose with documentary conventions, deploying a wealth of aesthetic strategies, including some vibrant sets and reenactments that make no apology for their deliberate artifice. Abetted by a memorably jazzy score and a keen sense of humor, this confident, energetic film makes for a deeply satisfying experience that is both profound and delivered with a lightness of touch. – Jim Kolmar

Presented with Jonas Riemer's *The One Who Crossed the Sea*

The Ordinaries

Fiction, drama, Germany, 2022, 120 min., German with English subtitles. Director: Sophie Linnenbaum. Screenwriter: Sophie Linnenbaum, Michael Vetter Nathansky. Cinematographer: Valentin Selmke. Cast: Fine Sendel, Jule Böwe, Henning Peker, Noah Tinwa, Sira Faal. Producers: Laura Klippel, Britta Strampe (Bandenfilm). Festivals: Karlovy Vary 2022, Munich 2022, Zurich 2022, Tallinn Black Nights 2022, Dublin 2023, SXSW 2023. Awards: German Cinema New Talent Award for Best Director, Best Production (Munich 2022)

Sophie Linnenbaum's playful film, her fiction feature debut, is an extraordinary exercise in metanarrative and metaphor. It imagines a future cast(e) system that divides humans into different levels of characters, from background performers to leading roles, and the slippery spectrum that connects them.

Essentially a work of sci-fi, *The Ordinaries* is primarily a work of allegorical magic realism filtered through an unencumbered love for cinema—this is a film for people with celluloid in their blood. Impromptu dance routines give way to grim dystopia, through social realism, by way of absurdist comedy. It's a thrilling achievement, wildly inventive and fizzing with the potential of the moment. Don't be surprised if a talking dog makes an appearance. But the film's greatest strength is its sense of the profound amid the banal—what does it mean to feel like an outtake in the film of your own life? And can cinema help you find out? The Ordinaries may come close to answering those questions. – Jim Kolmar

Presented with Jonatan Schwenk's *Zoon*

SHORT FILMS

Fluffy Tales

Fiction short, Germany, 2021, 15 min., German with English subtitles. Director/screenwriter: Alison Kuhn. Cinematographer: Antonia Pepita Giesler. Cast: Alexandra Sagurna, Hyun Wanner, Nadine Dubois, Lorenz Krieger, Anne Thoemmes. Producers: Sarah Dreyer, Laura Zeuch. Festivals: Film Festival Max Ophüls Prize Saarbrücken 2022, Filmfest Dresden 2022, Warsaw Film Festival 2022, Poitiers Film Festival 2022

Model Ella is booked for the advertising campaign for a new brand of dog food. Because her animal colleague acts unprofessionally at the photo shoot, the photographer and the client decide that Ella should take on its role. Before she realizes what is happening, she finds herself on all fours, looking into the relentless flashlight.

Presented with Jöns Jönsson's *Axiom*

Staging Death

Experimental short, Germany, 2022, 8 min., English/German with English subtitles. Director/producer: Jan Soldat. Cast: Udo Kier. Festivals: Cannes 2022 (Director's Fortnight), Guanajuato 2022, Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival 2022, Indiecork 2022, Viennale 2022, exground Wiesbaden 2022

Udo Kier dies his way through film history. He screams, falls, lies, is cut into pieces, is shot, and commits suicide. Again and again, his empty gaze; again and again, his rigid body. In 54 years as an actor, Udo Kier appeared in more than 170 feature films, 120 series episodes, and 50 short films, and he tried to give an expression to dying and death more than 70 times. In *Staging Death*, these representations of death merge into a montage of the most diverse shots, film formats, special effects, and sound designs.

“Directors are now thinking increasingly strained about what new ways they can kill me. [...] At some point, somebody would have to make a montage of all my film deaths.” (Udo Kier, Subway Magazine #145, December 1999)

Presented with Nicolette Krebitz's *AEIOU: A Quick Alphabet of Love*

The Deluge

Fiction short, Germany, 2021, 13 min., German with English subtitles. Original title: *Ununterbrochen Reden*. Director: Frédéric Jaeger. Screenwriter/Editor/Producer: Frédéric Jaeger, Nino Klingler. Cinematographer: Nino Klingler. Cast: Christoph Bach, Jasper Engelhardt, Dilan GeZaza, Ela Cosen, Yankui Li, Keshi Thalla, Judith Wegner. Festivals: Hofer Filmtage 2021, Go Short Nijmegen 2022, Norwegian Film Festival Grimstad 2022, São Paulo Short Film Festival 2022

The tire is flat, and it's almost the rendezvous time: Martin and his daughter are meeting Mum at the playground. But she prefers to party with her friends by the river as if there were no pandemic. Soon, it will be summer in Berlin.

Presented with Hanna Doose's *Kiss My Wounds*

The One Who Crossed the Sea

Animated short, Germany, 2020, 11 min., German with English subtitles. Original title: *Der übers Meer wollte*. Director: Jonas Riemer. Screenwriter: Jonas Riemer, Lion Bischof. Cinematographer: Georg Meyer. Producers: Jonas Riemer, Johannes Schubert. Festivals: Dresden 2020, Clermont-Ferrand 2021, AFI Docs 2021, Bengaluru 2021, Encounters Bristol 2021, Animatou Geneva 2021, Curta Cinema Rio de Janeiro 2021, Brno Sixteen 2021

A refugee from East Germany crosses the Baltic Sea in a folding boat. Years later, he finds a new home in a burgeoning nationalist movement.

Presented with Vera Brückner's *Sorry Comrade*

Zoon

Animated short, Germany, 2022, 4 min., no dialogue. Director: Jonatan Schwenk. Screenwriter: Merlin Flügel, Jonatan Schwenk. Cinematographer: Jonatan Schwenk, Ferdinand Kowalke. Animation: Thalke Thyen, Max Mörtl, Anne Breymann, Marta Magnuska, Maria Teixeira, Jonatan Schwenk. Producer: Jonatan Schwenk. Selected festivals: Sundance 2022, Premiers Plans Angers 2022, Regard Saguey 2022, Go Short Nijmegen 2022, Filmfest Dresden 2022. Awards: NEF Animation Prize Angers 2022, Short Tiger 2022

In the dark swamps of a nocturnal forest, a group of gleaming axolotls is in heat, nuzzling and nibbling one another's limbs. Soon, a much larger, two-legged forest dweller encounters the lustful group and reaches down to gobble one of the small, shimmering creatures. His plump friends begin to partake as well, and a feast begins. While dawn is slowly breaking, a cheerful game begins higher up in the branches.

Presented with Sophie Linnenbaum's *The Ordinaries*

MORE INFORMATION

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The German Film Office is an initiative of the Goethe-Institut and German Films. Its mission is to promote films from Germany to New York and US audiences and to strengthen their presence in art house cinemas, cultural and educational institutions, and digital platforms. In collaboration with local partners, its programs give viewers the opportunity to engage with the entire history of German cinema in a variety of formats.
germanfilmoffice.us

German Films is the national information and advisory center for the international distribution of German films. Through information, PR, and marketing, German Films focuses on increasing the awareness of German films abroad and their visibility in the international media.
german-films.de

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute. With 157 institutes in 98 countries, we promote the study of German abroad, encourage international cultural exchange, and convey a contemporary image of Germany.
goethe.de/newyork

With a library of over 4,000 titles, Kino Lorber has been a leader in independent art house distribution for 35 years, releasing 30 films per year theatrically under its Kino Lorber, Kino Repertory and Alive Mind Cinema banners, garnering seven Academy Award® nominations in nine years. The company brings over 350 titles yearly to the home entertainment and educational markets through physical and digital media releases. With an expanding family of distributed labels, Kino Lorber handles ancillary media releases for Zeitgeist Films, Milestone Films, Cohen Media Group, Greenwich Entertainment, Artsploitation, Palisades Tartan, Menemsha Films, Raro Video, and others, placing physical titles through all wholesale, retail, and direct-to-consumer channels, as well as direct digital distribution through over 40 OTT services including all major TVOD and SVOD platforms. In 2019, the company launched its new art house digital channel Kino Now which features over 1300 titles from the Kino Lorber library. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kino Marquee initiative was launched pioneering "virtual cinema" releases of art house films with revenue shares that allow audiences to support almost 500 local independent theaters. Kino Lorber was honored with a Special Award from the New York Film Critics Circle for this effort. In 2021, the company launched Kino Cult, an AVOD channel specializing in new and rare, acclaimed genre films. In 2022, Kino Lorber acquired streamer MHz Choice, the leading North American destination for acclaimed international TV.
kinolorber.com

Image: *Kiss My Wounds* © Markus Zucker