

For Immediate Release

**2023 GERMAN CURRENTS FILM FESTIVAL:  
FULL PROGRAM LINE-UP**

**The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual German Currents Film Festival  
will take place Oct. 13th –16th as an in-person event  
at the American Cinematheque (Los Feliz 3) and the Goethe-Institut  
and brings award-winning German film & premieres to Los Angeles**



Los Angeles, Sept 20, 2023 –

German Cinema is alive, groundbreaking, thought-provoking, and entertaining. From The Oscars to Berlinale and beyond, German Films are celebrated. German Currents, the 17<sup>th</sup> Festival of German Film is excited to bring a curated selection of award-winning films, US and LA premieres, and filmmakers from Germany to Los Angeles audiences this fall.

From Oct 13 through Oct 16, 2023, German Currents will take place at the American Cinematheque (Los Feliz 3 Theatres) and the Goethe-Institut space, rooted in the MacArthur Park neighborhood community. The Goethe-Institut, the German cultural center is a vibrant and a cutting-edge space for the arts. It is a vital center that connects people and builds a bridge between culture and communities through inclusive experiences, exhibits, concerts, screenings, and lively discussions.

Festival Director and Director of the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles,  
Mrs. Birgit Ostermeier says:

"As the new Director of the Goethe-Institut in LA, I am proud to present this year's edition of German Currents. More than just a series of film screenings, German Currents is a platform for cultural exchange, connecting German films and filmmakers with the greater Los Angeles community. In addition to an exciting selection of seven multi-award-winning films, representing a diverse cross-section of current German cinema, we will welcome two special festival guests: Actor Lena Urzendowsky, star of our opening night US premiere, FRANKY FIVE STAR, and director David Wnendt, who will present the US premiere of his film SONNE UND BETON. We are excited to host these talented filmmakers in Los Angeles and offer them the opportunity to get to know the American audience and vice versa. "



German Currents 2023 will open with the exclusive US premiere of director Birgit Möller's multi-award-winning festival favorite, **FRANKY FIVE STAR**, starring Lena Urzendowsky (Cocoon, Netflix's DARK, and HOW TO SELL DRUGS ONLINE (Fast)). Ms. Urzendowsky will be present for the screening. The Opening night event continues with the LA premiere of veteran German Filmmaker Fatih Akin's box office smash, **RHINEGOLD (RHEINGOLD)**. The festival weekend continues with the US premiere of David Wnendt's **SUN AND CONCRETE (SONNE UND BETON)**, adapted from Felix Lobrecht's best-selling novel. Wnendt will be present at the screening to discuss his film. Additional screenings include the US premiere of the popular short film showcase **NEXT GENERATION SHORT TIGER**, and the US premiere of Axel Ranisch's **ORPHEA IN LOVE**, and the LA premiere of the retro-futuristic **THE ORDINARIES**, directed by Sophie Linnenbaum. To complete their festival program, German Currents will bring back its popular family matinee with a screening of **MISSION ULJA**, directed by Barbara Kronenberg, winner of the German Film Award for Best Youth Film.

The festival takes place at the following locations

### Los Feliz 3

1822 N Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027

### Goethe-Institut Los Angeles

1901 West 7<sup>th</sup> St. Suite AB, Los Angeles, CA 90057

The screenings are free-of-charge, reservation required: [www.germancurrents.com](http://www.germancurrents.com)

For more information, please visit: [www.germancurrents.com](http://www.germancurrents.com)  
[www.facebook.com/germancurrents](https://www.facebook.com/germancurrents)

### 2023 FESTIVAL LINE-UP:

## Friday, October 13 @ the Los Feliz 3

7:00 PM Opening Night Remarks and Screening followed by discussion with Lena Urzendowsky of  
**US PREMIERE | IN-PERSON SCREENING @ LOS FELIZ 3**  
**FRANKY FIVE STAR**

*Dir. Birgit Möller. 2023, Germany/Finland, 114 min. DCP Projection. German and Finnish with English subtitles*

Introverted 20-something Franky (Urzendowsky) is unpredictable and erratic. Her best friend and roommate, Katja (Öz), knows about her changing moods, but Franky has never revealed her biggest secret. Deep in her head, she has an old-fashioned hotel that is inhabited by four odd but lovable characters: a strict concierge (Drassl), a seductive chambermaid (Killer), a bell boy (Hönig), and a child (Andresen). Whenever Franky is in an uncomfortable situation, one of the four personalities rides the elevator and takes control of her emotions. Too busy dealing with this inner chaos, Franky has never let herself fall in love. Things change when she meets Katja's new boyfriend, Hasi (Djavid). As Franky starts to fall for Hasi, her inner personalities take over, and things spiral out of control. Urzendowsky's outstanding performance as the quirky yet charming Franky offers an imaginative and refreshing take on coming-of-age and finding your true self, or more than one.



**Lena Urzendowsky**, born in 2000, can already boast an impressive acting career. She played the lead role in the coming-of-age movie *COCOON*, which celebrated its world premiere opening the Generation+ section at the Berlinale 2020. She was part of the ensemble in the Netflix hit-series *DARK* (2017/2019) the thriller series *THE DEFEATED* (2020), as well as in the Netflix crime series *HOW TO SELL DRUGS ONLINE (FAST)* (2020). In 2021 she was part of the ensemble of the Amazon Prime series *WE CHILDREN FROM BAHNHOF ZOO*, directed by Philipp Kadelbach. Whenever her acting career allows, Lena Urzendowsky is studying philosophy at Humboldt University in Berlin. In the summer of 2022, Lena studied at Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York.

**AWARDS:**

**Neiße Filmfestival 2023:** Audience Award, Feature. **Filmfest Bremen 2023:** Honorable Mention. **Max Ophüls Preis 2023:** Ecumenical Jury Award, Best Feature.

**10:00 PM Opening Night Screening of  
LA PREMIERE | IN-PERSON SCREENING @ LOS FELIZ 3  
RHINEGOLD | RHEINGOLD**

*Dir. Fatih Akin, 2022, Germany, Netherlands, Morocco, Mexico, 140 min. DCP Projection. German, Arabic, Kurdish, French, Dutch, Turkish with English Subtitles*

From the depths of an Iraqi prison to the top of the German charts, the rise of German gangster rapper and producer Giwar Hajabi, a.k.a. Xatar, is the stuff of legend. Born in 1981, during the Iranian Revolution, he fled as a child with his Kurdish parents via Iraq to Germany in the mid-1980s. In Bonn, he grows up in a housing project, where he must start from the bottom. As a teen, dreaming of fame and fortune in the music industry, Xatar slips into petty crime but quickly proves himself a major dealer. When a cocaine shipment goes missing, leaving him in debt to a drug cartel, a desperate Xatar plans a large-scale gold heist. As everything goes wrong and Xatar lands in prison, another door opens, thanks to his passion for music. Multi-award-winning veteran filmmaker Fatih Akin's adaptation of Xatar's autobiographical novel *Alles oder Nix (All or Nothing)* is gritty, raw, and executed with all the style, swagger, humor, and intelligence found in its subject. Emilio Sakraya's powerful performance as the adult Xatar helps to make the film Akin's biggest box office hit yet.

**AWARDS:**

**German Film Awards 2023** (Nominated) Best Feature. **Bavarian Film Awards 2023:** Best Film **FBW 2022:** Prädikat: besonders wertvoll

**Saturday, October 14th @ the GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES**

**1:15 PM Screening and Discussion with Filmmaker David Wnendt  
US PREMIERE | IN-PERSON SCREENING @ GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES  
SUN AND CONCRETE | SONNE UND BETON**

*Dir. David Wnendt, 2023, Germany, 107 min. Digital Projection. German/English with English Subtitles*

It is a record breaking hot summer in Berlin. For German teens Lukas (Arcos), Gino (Klein-Heßling) und Julius (Wiemer), life in the sprawling Gropiusstadt housing complex in Berlin's Neukölln district is rough, to say the least. The parks stink, are over-run with drug dealers, and broken bottles are everywhere. Here, you're either a gangster, or a victim. With stress at home, no cash, and no luck with girls, the three friends are certainly no gangsters. While ditching school one day to buy weed, the boys are caught between two rival dealer-gangs who leave Lukas severely beaten and demand the boys pay 500 Euros as

protection money. With no way to come up with the cash, Lukas' new classmate Sanchez (Maldonado-Morales) proposes a heist: simply break into the school, steal the brand-new computers and re-sell them. Problem solved...almost.

A German box office smash-hit, Wnendt's (Combat Girls, Wetlands) adaptation of German stand-up comedian and best-selling author Felix Lobrecht's novel SONNE UND BETON is a raw, often violent and street-slang-filled portrait of friendship on the rough streets of the city – this too, is Berlin!

**David Wnendt** was born in Gelsenkirchen, Germany and grew up in Islamabad, Miami, Brussels, Prague and Meckenheim. He studied at FAMU in Prague and at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf. In 2011, his graduation feature COMBAT GIRLS won prizes including Best Screenplay at the German Film Awards. His film adaptations of the bestsellers WETLANDS and LOOK WHO'S BACK were big hits; his international production THE SUNLIT NIGHT screened at Sundance in 2019. In 2018, he co-founded the Seven Elephants production company which produced UND MORGEN DIE GANZE WELT (2020) and SONNE UND BETON (2023). David Wnendt is a Villa Aurora Fellow (2012).

#### **AWARDS:**

**German Film Awards 2023:** (Nominated) – Best Feature, Editing, Sound, Screenplay

**Festival des deutschen Films 2023:** Best Film **Bavarian Film Awards 2023:** Best Cinematography, Best Screenplay **Goldener Spatz 2023:** Audience Award – Best Youth Film

3:45 PM Screening of

**US PREMIERE | IN-PERSON SCREENING @ GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES**

**NEXT GENERATION SHORT TIGER 2023 – Short Film Showcase**

*Germany, 2023, 81 min. Various Languages with English Subtitles*

Presented by German Films and the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the 13th edition of this beloved annual showcase presents the year's most remarkable new directors and outstanding student short films to international audiences and the film industry. The program combines young talents – the NEXT GENERATION of German Cinema – together with the best German shorts under 5 minutes – the winners of the FFA's SHORT TIGER Award 2023. The 9 short films for NEXT GENERATION SHORT TIGER 2023 were selected by an expert jury: director Sophie Linnenbaum (THE ORDINARIES), Katrin Kuchler (MDR unicato), and Dr. Christian Bräuer (Yorck Cinemas). They had to choose from 61 submissions from 13 film schools and 6 additional shorts (up to 15 min) made by independent producers preselected by a jury from the AG Kurzfilm. Representing Germany's diversity of forms, genres, and skillful filmmaking talent that international audiences have come to expect from German shorts, these deeply personal and universal stories confirm the notion that short film is an independent art form deserving of the big screen and the awareness of audiences worldwide.

#### **Program:**

**COLLAGE | KOLAJ** Gülce Besen (Animation, 2022, 8min.)

**FREE NIGHTS | FREIE NÄCHTE** Oliver Adam Kusio (Fiction, 2023, 15 min.)

**HUGE CHOICE** Oleksandra Krasavtseva (Animation, Experimental, 2022, 3 min.)

**IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE TODAY | MUSS JA NICHT SEIN, DASS ES HEUTE IST**

Sophia Groening (Fiction, 2022, 8 min.)

**KILLING BAGHEERA** Muschirf Shekh Zeyn (Fiction, 2022, 13 min.)

**LONG TIME NO TECHNO** Eugenia Bakurin (Experimental Found Footage, 2022, 4 min.)

**PRIMITIVE TIMES | UHRMENSCHEN** Hao Yu (Animation, 2023, 6 min.)

**SWIMMING LESSON | SCHWIMMSTUNDE** Lisa Hürtgen (Fiction, 2022, 10 min.)

**VOLVER AL SUR | RETURNING SOUTH** Sofía Ayala (Fiction, 2022, 15 min.)



5:15 PM Screening of

**US PREMIERE | IN-PERSON SCREENING @ GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES**

### **ORPHEA IN LOVE**

*Dir. Axel Ranisch, 2022, Germany, 107 min. German/English with English Subtitles*

Nele (Mesak) is a dreamer who escapes from her dreary everyday life into the soulful world of opera and music. Originally from a small town in Estonia, she scrapes by as a call center agent and cloakroom attendant at the State Opera in a big German city. When she meets the street dancer and pickpocket Kolya (Badalamenti), it is a fateful encounter for both of them- the meeting of soul mates. The pair quickly lose themselves in their own world filled with music and dance. As the two grow closer, Nele must confront the demons of her past and descend into the underworld to save their budding love. When talent scout Höllbach (Pinkowski) learns of Nele's enormous singing talent, he offers her the chance of a lifetime: a career as an opera singer. Axel Ranisch's endearing adaptation of Orpheus and Eurydice blends phantasy, kitsch, and realism, resulting in a cinematic opera pastiche between Puccini, Handel, and German pop singer Christian Steiffen.

#### **AWARDS:**

**Ahrenshooper Filmnächte – Förderpreis Award**

7:30 PM Screening of

**LA PREMIERE | IN-PERSON SCREENING @ GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES**

### **THE ORDINARIES**

*Dir. Sophie Linnenbaum, 2022, Germany, 124 min. German with English Subtitles*

The setting: a retro-futuristic world where life is like a film and society is divided into three classes- at the top are the "Main characters," in the middle are the "Supporting characters," and at the bottom are the "Outtakes." "Supporting character," Paula (Fina Sendel) is at the top of her class at the Main Character School, where she is preparing for the most critical test of her life: to become a "main character." The one thing holding Paula back is that she can't seem to present an emotional monologue with rousing music. In search of a solution, she finds herself in the underbelly of this cinematic world. On the fringes of the storyline and lost amongst the Outtakes, Paula learns that she may have more in common with them than she could have dreamed. Linnenbaum's multi-award-winning feature debut is a lavish, allegorical satire steeped in references to cinema history, intercut with musical numbers, and dressed in Hollywood Golden Age aesthetic that tells a strange adventure of self-discovery, classism, and conformity.

#### **AWARDS:**

**Bayerischer Filmpreis 2023:** New Director Award **Filmfestival Türkei Deutschland 2023:** Best Feature **IFF Schlingel 2022:** Goethe-Institut Children's & Youth Film Award **Exground Filmfest Wiesbaden 2022:** Das Brett - German Feature **FILMZ Mainz 2022:** Best Feature **Filmfest Braunschweig 2022:** KINEMA-Jury Prize, Heimspielpreis - Best Acting **FBW 2022:** Prädikat: besonders wertvoll **FIRST STEPS Awards 2022:** Best Feature **Filmkunstmesse Leipzig 2022:** Audience Award **Filmkunstfest MV 2022:** DEFA-Foundation Award **Filmfest München 2022:** Best Director, Best Production

**Sunday, October 15th @ GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES**

11:00 AM Screening of



## LA PREMIERE | FAMILY MATINEE @ GOETHE-INSTITUT LOS ANGELES

### MISSION ULJA FUNK

Dir. Barbara Kronenberg, 2021, Germany/Poland, 91 min. German/Polish/Russian with English Subtitles.

**This Film will also screen on Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup> (via invitation) at the Goethe-Institut as a special matinee screening for local school groups.**

Out in the endless expanses of space, the small asteroid VR-24-17-20 is speeding toward Earth. This event is neither dangerous nor extremely unusual. What is unusual is that VR-24-17-20 was discovered by 12-year-old aspiring astronomer Ulja Funk (Janinhoff). From her home in central Germany, Ulja has calculated the time and place of impact of VR 24-17-20. It will hit in less than four days in Pâtzschurk, Belarus. Failing to convince her family and the town of her remarkable discovery, Ulja takes matters into her own hands and recruits her 13-year-old classmate, Henk (Jonas Oeßel), for a road trip across Europe in a stolen hearse. The unlikely duo has 20 hours to cross Germany and Poland and reach the impact site, but Ulja's conservative grandmother and her church community are quickly on the path to catch up with them. What follows is an off-beat, fast-paced chase, with colorful stops along the way, where the town's hypocrites are exposed, and divided families, friends, and nations are reunited. Winner of the 2023 German Film Award for Best Children's Film, Writer-Director Barbara Kronenberg's debut feature is a wild, slightly unorthodox ride that is fun for the whole family.

#### **AWARDS:**

**German Film Award 2023:** Best Children's Film **FBW 2021: Prädikat:** besonders wertvoll

**Filmkunstmesse Leipzig 2021:** Gilde Filmpreis, Best Children's Film **Filmfest München 2021:** One-Future-Preis – Honorable Mention **Filmfest München - Kinderfilmfest 2021:** Kinder-Medien-Prize "Der weiße Elefant", Best New Actor **Deutsches Kinder Medien Festival Goldener Spatz 2021:** Goldener Spatz Award, Best feature Film

#### **About the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles:**

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. The institute promotes knowledge of the German-language abroad and fosters international cultural cooperation. The Goethe-Institut Los Angeles operates on a partnership basis. For individual projects, as for longer-term joint ventures, the Goethe-Institut connects with stakeholders in the cultural scene – institutions, organizations, companies, people in and from Southern California and Arizona, Germany, and other countries.

For more information, please visit: [www.goethe.de/losangeles](http://www.goethe.de/losangeles)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/goetheinstitut.losangeles](https://www.facebook.com/goetheinstitut.losangeles) ,

Twitter: @gi\_losangeles and Instagram @goetheinstitut\_losangeles

#### **About the American Cinematheque:**

The American Cinematheque is a non-profit cultural organization whose mission is to celebrate the experience of cinema as a moving art form; we create spaces where both the public and members of the film industry come together as a community with the common language and love of film. Since it began screening films to the public in 1985, the American Cinematheque has provided diverse film programming and live in-person discussions and events with thousands of filmmakers and luminaries, presenting both new and repertory cinema to Los Angeles.

For more information, visit [www.americancinematheque.com](http://www.americancinematheque.com)

For more information, images, film stills and interview requests:

White Bear PR, Thomas Mikusz, [thomas@whitebearpr.com](mailto:thomas@whitebearpr.com)



The German Currents Film Festival is produced by the [Goethe-Institut Los Angeles](#) and the [American Cinematheque](#) in kind cooperation with the [German Consulate General](#), and with the support of [The Friends of Goethe](#), [The Hollywood Foreign Press Association](#), [ELMA](#), and the [German Film Office](#)

