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Goethe-Institut Tokyo **Press Release**

Title:

Film Special: Goethe-Institut Tokyo Brings the Legacy of German Queer Cinema Pioneer Rosa von Praunheim to Tokyo

Tokyo, Japan – On 9 and 10 October 2026, the Goethe-Institut Tokyo will present a special film series dedicated to Rosa von Praunheim (1942-2025), one of the most influential figures in early German queer cinema and a pioneering voice in the international LGBTQ+ movement. Following his passing in 2025, the film special pays tribute to an artist whose provocative, uncompromising, and deeply political work transformed both cinema and public discourse.

Featuring four films spanning narrative fiction, documentary, camp aesthetics, and political filmmaking, the program offers Japanese audiences a rare opportunity to encounter the work of a filmmaker whose influence extends far beyond the screen. Two of the featured films, *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971) and *The Bed Sausage (Die Bettwurst)* (1971), will be **presented with Japanese subtitles for the first time**. The program also includes *Anita: Dances of Vice (Anita: Tänze des Lasters)* (1987), a vivid portrait of the notorious Berlin performer Anita Berber. First shown in Japan by Eurospace in the 1980s, the film now returns in a special 35mm screening using the very same print recently discovered in the cinema's archive and kindly lent for the film special, making this a rare chance to experience the film as audiences did decades ago.

A Key Figure in the History of Queer Cinema

Few filmmakers have shaped German queer cinema as profoundly as Rosa von Praunheim. His groundbreaking film *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971) became a catalyst for the modern gay rights movement in Germany and helped establish cinema as a powerful vehicle for visibility and social change. Working between underground culture, art and activism, Praunheim

Goethe-Institut Tokyo

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and his **unconventional, Low-Budget films** played a pivotal role in shaping Germany's rich tradition of queer filmmaking, whose influence continues to be felt today.

Contextualizing the Legacy of Rosa von Praunheim

Complementing the screenings, an accompanying program invites audiences to engage more deeply with Praunheim's work and its historical significance. Film and **cultural journalist Jan Künemund** will present an online lecture examining the production context, artistic strategies, and enduring impact of *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives*. In addition, **film scholar Tetsuya Shibutani** will provide introductions to the screenings, offering insights into the films' historical and cultural context. Together, these events help audiences understand the rather conventual film making style as well as position Rosa von Praunheim not only as a filmmaker, but as a cultural force whose work helped redefine the relationship between cinema, activism and public life.

About Rosa von Praunheim

Rosa von Praunheim (born Holger Mischwitzky, 1942-2025) was a German filmmaker, author, artist, and one of the most important LGBTQ activists in German-speaking Europe. His chosen name references the pink triangle ("Rosa Winkel") used to identify homosexual prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. Over a career spanning more than five decades, he directed over 150 films and became a central figure of both New German Cinema and queer counterculture. Through his work, he addressed issues including queer visibility, AIDS activism, historical repression, gender nonconformity, and aging. Provocative and often controversial, his artistic and political influence remains unparalleled in the history of German queer cinema.

Press Images:

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Program Overview

Name:	Rosa von Praunheim – Pioneer of Queer Cinema in Germany
Dates:	9-10 October 2026
Venue:	Goethe-Institut Tokyo, Hall 1F, 7-5-56 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052
Online Lecture:	<i>Creativity and the Spirit of Resistance</i> by Jan Künemund (9.10.2026, 18:00)
Screenings:	9.10.2026 19:00: <i>It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives</i> (1971) * 10.10.2026 14:00: <i>The Bed Sausage</i> (1971) * 16:00 <i>Underground and Emigrants</i> (1976) * 18:00 <i>Anita: Dances of Vice</i> (1987) *

*with introduction by Tetsuya Shibutani

Event Page: <https://www.goethe.de/ins/jp/en/kul/eui/filmspezial-rvp.html>

Tickets: <https://rosavonpraunheim.peatix.com/>

Quotes Rosa von Praunheim

„Liebe ist ein Zivilisationsschaden“ (loosely translated: „Love is a civilisational damage“)

Movies



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It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Situation in Which He Lives

West Germany, 1971, 67 min., FSK 16, German with Japanese subtitles

Following the end of a relationship, Daniel navigates Berlin's gay subculture and encounters alternative visions of queer life and community. Combining fiction, documentary footage, and political critique, the film became one of the most influential works in the history of German queer cinema and a key catalyst for LGBTQ activism in Germany.

Director: Rosa von Praunheim

Cast: Bernd Feuerhelm, Beryt Bohlen, Ernst Kuchling, and others



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The Bed Sausage

West Germany, 1971, 81 min., Color, FSK 16, German with Japanese subtitles

Luzi, a secretary, and Dietmar, a young factory worker, build a life together shaped by their dreams of domestic happiness. Their everyday idyll is shattered when Dietmar's former criminal associates reappear, threatening their future. Praunheim's cult classic is considered one of the earliest and most distinctive examples of camp aesthetics in German cinema, using humor, exaggeration, and parody to challenge social norms.

Director: Rosa von Praunheim

Cast: Luzi Kryn, Dietmar Kracht, Steven Adamczewski, and others



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Underground and Emigrants

West Germany, 1976, 80 min., Color, German with Japanese subtitles

In this documentary, Rosa von Praunheim explores New York's vibrant underground scene, meeting artists including Andy Warhol, William S. Burroughs, and Robert Wilson. Combining portraits of the city's avant-garde with stories of German-speaking exiles, the film reflects on creativity, migration, and cultural freedom.

Director: Rosa von Praunheim

Screening courtesy: Underground Cinema Film Festival.



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Anita: Dances of Vice

West Germany, 1987, 87 min., FSK 16, German with Japanese subtitles

Set in 1920s Berlin, Anita: Dances of Vice pays tribute to legendary dancer Anita Berber, a symbol of the Weimar era's artistic and sexual freedoms. Framed by the fantasies of a psychiatric patient who believes herself to be Berber, the film blends vivid imagery with expressionist-inspired spectacle.

Director: Rosa von Praunheim

Cast: Lotti Huber, Ina Blum, Mikael Honesseu, Rosa von Praunheim, and others

Screening courtesy: Eurospace



The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global presence. It is dedicated to promoting the study of the German language abroad, fostering international cultural cooperation, and conveying a comprehensive image of Germany. For 75 years, it has provided access to the German language and culture while building lasting trust in Germany through dialogue and partnerships with civil society in its host countries. The Goethe-Institut receives institutional support from the German Federal Foreign Office, while remaining legally independent and non-partisan. It operates under its own responsibility and generates around one-third of its budget through revenue from language courses and examinations. Today, the Goethe-Institut maintains 154 institutes in 100 countries worldwide, including 12 institutes in Germany.

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