

# BETA

Presents

miniseries

# GENERATION



# WAR

FIVE FRIENDS BESIEGED BY TWISTED  
IDEOLOGIES AND RAW VIOLENCE

BETA



# Generation War

Directed by  
**Philipp Kadelbach**

Starring  
**Volker Bruch, Tom Schilling, Katharina Schüttler, Ludwig Trepte, Miriam Stein**

Produced by  
**Nico Hofmann and Benjamin Benedict**

Producer  
a co-production of **TeamWorx** and **ZDF** in co-operation with **Beta Film** and **ZDF Enterprises**

Supported by  
**Film und Medienstiftung NRW, FFF Bayern, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung, Medienboard, Nordmedia and FFHS**

## **CONTACT INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

Beta Film, Dorothee Stoewahse

Tel: + 49 89 67 34 69 15

Cell: + 49 170 63 84 627

[Dorothee.Stoewahse@betafilm.com](mailto:Dorothee.Stoewahse@betafilm.com), [www.betafilm.com](http://www.betafilm.com)

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## CAST

Volker Bruch  
Tom Schilling  
Katharina Schüttler  
Ludwig Trepte  
Miriam Stein  
Christiane Paul  
Sylvester Groth  
Götz Schubert  
Mark Waschke  
Maxim Mehmet

Wilhelm  
Friedhelm  
Greta  
Viktor  
Charlotte  
Lilja  
Hiemer  
Dr. Jahn  
Dorn  
Hauptmann Feigl

## CREW

Director  
Script  
Photography  
Producer  
  
Executive Producer  
Editor  
Music  
Make-up Artist  
Costume  
Production Designer  
Line Producer

Philipp Kadelbach  
Stefan Kolditz  
David Slama  
Nico Hofmann  
Benjamin Benedict  
Sebastian Werninger  
Bernd Schlegel  
Fabian Römer  
Gerd Zeiss  
Wiebke Kratz  
Thomas Stammer  
Tim Greve

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Length: 3 x two hours / 6 x one hour  
Genre: Drama

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## PRESS NOTES

„The series has been hailed by critics as a „turning point“ in German television for examining the crimes of the Third Reich at an individual level".

*(Daily Telegraph UK)*

„A turning point in German television..."

*(Der Spiegel)*

„...rarely has such a programme triggered as much debate and interest"

*(The Economist)*

„Television doesn't get any stronger"

*(Irish Times)*

„tough, uncompromising – a grandiose anti-war film"

*(Berliner Zeitung)*

## SYNOPSIS

Berlin, 1941. Five friends eager to become heroes in an adventure that will change the face of Europe – and that will forever change them as well.

Level-headed, highly decorated officer Wilhelm is off to the eastern front with his younger brother Friedhelm, a sensitive dreamer more interested in literature than warfare. Deeply in love with Wilhelm is Charlotte, a young nurse who looks forward to serving in the Wehrmacht, also on the eastern front.

While Greta is a talented singer who longs to become another Marlene Dietrich her Jewish boyfriend Viktor still cannot convince his parents to leave Germany... Valor and courage come to the fore, but also betrayal – of values, beliefs, humanity. Friedhelm turns into a soulless killing machine... Wilhelm deserts his troops and is court-martialed... Charlotte's Nazi ideology crumbles when she betrays a Jewish nurse helping the German army... Greta obtains papers for Viktor's escape by selling herself to an SS colonel. They and millions of others wanted to be heroes; but none of them could imagine what the war would ultimately do to them and to the rest of the world...

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE – Philipp Kadelbach

### A Great and Complex Task

The film project Generation War fascinated me from the moment I read the complex and thought-provoking script by Stefan Kolditz. Five lives, five paths that begin together, diverge, then cross each other again. Something we've allegedly seen very often, on the big screen or on TV, but hopefully never before as is shown here. Very close to the characters, seen subjectively from the perspective of the five young people who belong to the generation of victims and perpetrators of that time. The individual approach resulting from this – the question as to whether one can allow an intimacy with the characters – was, for me, one of the central questions in the adaptation.

From a technical viewpoint, the project presented every imaginable challenge known in filmmaking. This was made even more difficult by our intention to not prescribe any physical limitations to the

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actors within the sets, thus repeatedly asking them to claim possession of the rooms and spaces as much as possible. We shot in different seasons, during the narrative's time span between 1941 and 1945, using motifs that changed daily and were sometimes very difficult to seize, as well as a great many extras needed to fulfill the claim of authenticity.

As director, I had the difficult task of relating the dramaturgical arcs of five very different characters stimulatingly and plausibly over four and a half hours of screen time. At the end, we had over 150 hours of film material, more than 50,000 blank cartridges and one year in the cutting room. We hope that the viewer will experience the film as honest and uncompromising, far from all pathos and kitsch.

My wish is that viewers let themselves be guided and entertained by the ambivalence of the figures. That they view the film as timeless and generation-spanning. In closing, I would like to quote my cameraman who said that it is a film "that simply has to be made." And he must know – he shot more than 120 films in his life so far.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTE – Stefan Kolditz**

### **The Other War. The Other Film**

It began in spring 2005 with the need for a last conversation. Or a first. With the mothers and fathers. The grandmothers and grandfathers. Even if they had already passed away, like my father, born in 1922, who was thrown into the war of the Germans, fresh from school, like millions of other young men. It was a war that had never been his, and in which he had to fight to the very end. It was a need to listen to what they replied. And of course, many did not reply. Out of shame, denial, unrepentance, even when they were asked. But perhaps the right moment has now come. The last, that much is certain.

Not a hagiography of some Nazi icon whose surface is gently scratched or who is given a new coat of paint. Instead, five people. Young. Just as every generation was young once, even if the next can no longer imagine that these people were once their mothers and fathers. Full of dreams and longings. Wilhelm. Friedhelm. Viktor. Greta. Charlotte. Five biographies in which the tranquilizing separation into perpetrators and victims, guilty and innocent, does not function. Five uncompromising paths. No heroic resistance fighters, no fanatic Nazis. The turning away from the ideological focus. The hands-on aspect of the factual. The salt of the earth. The backbone of every society which, without them, cannot do what it always does. And what they did, either out of conviction or against their will, as fanatics or cowards, in one of the most brutal wars fought by humankind and that has yet to let go of us even 70 years later.

Was this only their war? Are we ourselves really so different? Incorruptible? Is it possible to have a conversation with our mothers, our fathers, a generation that is much closer to us than we possibly suspect? Can the differences between two experiences really be discussed? Can a film about five very different young people bring this about? Without shameful judgments. Without false self-righteousness. Without moral superiority. I hope so. This was the reason why I worked on this for nearly eight years.

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## **PRODUCER'S NOTE – Nico Hofmann**

### **My most personal production and a long-cherished wish**

“Generation War” is a sensitive, critical homage to the generation of my parents, who were profoundly marked by the war. The idea for the film came about in 2006 during the production of “Dresden.” Author Stefan Kolditz, Heike Hempel and I wanted to make another film together, one that would foster a dialogue with our parents, who still had their entire lives before them at the outbreak of World War II.

We had already examined the “Third Reich” from many perspectives in, for example, “Stauffenberg,” “Dresden,” “Die Flucht” and “Rommel.” But never before had a German television production transposed into fiction the lives of young people in WWII in such a multi-faceted and pitch-perfect manner as Stefan Kolditz in his three-part script. After six years of collaboration with ZDF, director Philipp Kadelbach and an outstanding young cast gave birth to a film that, in its precision and radicalness, represents a logical continuation of the above-mentioned historical films. Philipp Kadelbach and cameraman David Slama succeeded in transferring the script into an uncompromising and drastic visual idiom, thus creating an unsparing, generation-crossing antiwar film.

The film ranks among the most elaborate and powerful productions made during teamWorx's 14-year history. Even though many of the films I made, whether as director or producer, have dealt with German themes and my own family history, “Generation War” is my most personal production and a long-cherished wish to relate the wartime experiences of my parents as precisely as possible and sketch the portrait of a generation. The narrative arc of the fictitious stories of five friends who lose themselves in the turmoil of the war ranges from 1941 to 1945. One of the characters, depicted by Volker Bruch, faithfully retraces my father's story and grapples with his moral transformation during the war.

I am very proud of this film yet also apprehensive as to whether the audience will be willing to invest its attention in this demanding topic for three episodes. “Generation War” is a project that's very dear to my heart and a great challenge as well.

## **PRODUCTION DESIGNER'S NOTE – Thomas Stammer**

### **141 Sets in Lithuania, Latvia and Germany**

It was important for us to make a film that gives the trauma of German history an emotional form that is credible down into the last details, yet powerful and emotional at the same time. In Generation War there seems to be a direct connection between a difficult and often unmanageable set and the palpably dense and intense atmosphere of the film.

This is very comforting to all who cursed us, yet also always supported us, when vehicles got stuck in snow and mud, when we shot in buildings on the verge of collapsing, when we ran up and down endlessly high staircases, worked in ice-cold basements, endured the narrow and dingy studio motifs and harrowing access to the locations. The memories of the efforts we undertook on 86 days of

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shooting in 141 sets in three countries have fortunately paled by now, even though we can still sense the intensity in the film's images.

There are many special features concerning the design of the motifs. The Ukrainian villages, for example. The entire external surfaces of the museum's village, on whose property we shot in Lithuania, were covered with a ten-centimeter thick coat of mud. Then we drove through the mud for hours with our track vehicles and trucks in order to recreate the original historical conditions there. After the shooting, one of my colleagues edited still photographs with a black-white filter. We were hardly able to tell the genuine historical photos apart from the set photos.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the scenes in the trenches made such a strong and truthful impact is that in Lithuania we, too, had to suffer under similar cold as the soldiers back then. We can still feel the icy wind on the plains of Lithuania, when we dug the trenches for our film at minus 30 degrees.

In the case of *Generation War*, the journey through five German states was a blessing after shooting in Lithuania and Latvia. Our heroes' paths led them through various nations, seasons, landscapes and very special places. We were able to search for our motifs from among the most ideal and contrasting characteristics of the seven states and countries. Upon taking a closer look, we must admit that this was a logistical and nerve-wracking nightmare; yet our lives as travelers also bound us, in a way, into the spirit of our story.

I am proud of each individual set that we produced for *Generation War*. No matter how demanding each individual motif was, what counts is solely the quality of the overall set design for all three film sections. The difficulties encountered in digging a swamp by hand in the middle of a forest, in taking up fighting positions and standing in water in below-freezing temperatures, in shoveling an excess of genuine snow or producing artificial snow for another scene, in accepting the hindrances posed by frog wanderings or snowed-in airports – all this fades away behind the satisfying results. The quality of the sets reveals itself in the unflagging credibility and emotional sincerity of the world of our heroes.

In *Generation War* our heroes experience the war not as a singular dramatic event or from the knowledge of hindsight, but as a steadily increasing and traumatic tightening of the net. This was also a central theme for the spatial design of the film. In the midst of a world thrown upside down, thrown into perplexing situations determined by others, which keep pushing us constantly towards bodily and atmospheric conditions. Oddly, this occurs in alternation with the vast landscapes of the East which, like the dimensions of this war, are unfathomable and ungraspable.

The development of these young people does not lead out into a free and open world, as would be possible today in a unified Europe. Instead, they are increasingly exploited and destroyed by the events to the same extent as their war material and the rooms through which they move. Ultimately, every place, including their homes, becomes a battlefield on which they lose themselves and perish. I have tried to transpose this development through the topography and materialness of the film: narrowness and fear, grime and violence which dig themselves into the dynamic of the story, framed by an endless horizon of landscapes in which it abates. The wastage and abuse of objects, places and human beings reflect the desperate inner condition of our heroes.

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## FILMOGRAPHIES

### CAST

#### **Volker Bruch**

*as Wilhelm*

2004	BAAL	Uwe Janson
2005	ROSE	Alain Gsponer
2006	LIFE ACTUALLY	Alain Gsponer
2007	BEST TIMES	Marcus H. Rosenmüller
2008	THE BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX	Uli Edel
	THE READER	Stephen Daldry
2009	THE MURDER FARM	Bettina Oberli
2010	YOUNG GOETHE IN LOVE	Philipp Stölzl
2011	WESTWIND	Robert Thalheim
2012	CONFESSION OF A CHILD OF THE CENTURY	Sylvie Verheyde
2013	GENERATION WAR	Philipp Kadelbach

#### **Tom Schilling**

*as Friedhelm*

1999	PARADISE MALL	Friedemann Fromm
2000	CRAZY	Hans-Christian Schmid
2002	HEART OVER HEAD	Michael Gutmann
2003	PLAY IT LOUD!	Benjamin Quabeck
2004	BEFORE THE FALL	Dennis Gansel
2006	JOY DIVISON	Reg Traviss
2007	PORNORAMA	Marc Rothemund
	TOUR EXCESS	Detlef Bothe
2008	THE BAADER MEINHOF COMPLEX	Uli Edel
2010	KEN FOLLETS EISFIEBER	Peter Keglevic
	LIFE IS TOO LONG	Dani Levy
2011	DAWN OF THE EVIL: RISE OF THE REICH	Urs Odermatt
2012	OH BOY	Jan Ole Gerster
2013	HOTEL ADLON – A FAMILY SAGA	Uli Edel
	GENERATION WAR	Philipp Kadelbach
	LUDWIG II	Peter Sehr
	WOYZECK	David Nuran Calis

#### **Katharina Schüttler**

*as Greta*

1993	DIE LOK	Gerd Haag
1995	SVENS GEHEIMNIS	Roland Suso Richter
1996	AUSGERASTET	Hanno Brühl

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1997	DER SCHREI DER LIEBE	Matti Geschonneck
1998	OUTRAGE	Claudia Prietzel
1999	THE WHITE SOUND	Hans Weingartner
2000	THE STATE I AM IN	Christian Petzold
2002	WEIHNACHTEN	Marc-Andreas Bochert
2003	SOPHIIIE!	Michael Hofmann
2004	DER BOXER UND DIE FRISEUSE	Hermine Huntgeburth
2005	TRUTH OR DARE	Arne Nolting
2006	DREI GRAD KÄLTER	Florian Hoffmeister
2009	GANZ NAH BEI DIR	Almut Getto
	MY WORDS, MY LIES – MY LOVE	Alain Gsponer
2010	THE TWO LIVES OF DANIEL SHORE	Michael Dreher
2011	WHAT A MAN	Matthias Schweighöfer
2012	OH BOY	Jan Ole Gerster
	THE GUARDIANS	Til Schweiger
2013	GENERATION WAR	Philipp Kadelbach

## Ludwig Trepte

*as Viktor*

2005	KOMBAT 16	Mirko Borscht
2006	TEENAGE WASTELAND	Eva Urthaler
2007	GOOD MORNING MR. GROTHE	Lars Kraume
2008	OUTTA CONTROL	Nicole Weegmann
2009	A PIECE OF ME	Christoph Röhl
2010	KREUTZER KOMMT	Richard Huber
2012	MY BIG FAT BALKAN WEDDING	Michael Rowitz
2013	GENERATION WAR	Philipp Kadelbach

## Miriam Stein

*as Charlotte*

1999	THE GIRL FROM FAR AWAY	Peter Reichenbach
2001	TOD DURCH ENTLASSUNG	Christian Kohlund
2004	ALLES WEGEN HULK	Peter Reichenbach
2007	LIEBE UND WAHN	Michael C. Huber
2008	JIMMIE	Tobias Ineichen
2010	YOUNG GOETHE IN LOVE	Philipp Stölzl
	NEUE VAHR SÜD	Hermine Huntgeburth
2012	THE FORSTER BOY	Markus Imboden
	OMAMAMAMIA	Tomy Wigand
2013	GENERATION WAR	Philipp Kadelbach

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## CREW

### Philipp Kadelbach

Director

1999	PLATONIC LOVE
2010	THE SECRET OF THE WHALES
2011	HINDENBURG
2013	GENERATION WAR

### Stefan Kolditz

Author

1988	DIE ENTFERNUNG ZWISCHEN DIR, MIR UND IHR	Michael Kann
1994	BURNING LIFE	Peter Welz
1995	MOBBING – DIE LIEBEN KOLLEGEN	Bernd Böhlich
1998	SCENT OF SEDUCTION	Bodo Fürneisen
1999	SNOW ON NEW YEAR'S EVE	Thorsten Schmidt
2001	12 PAST MIDNIGHT	Bernd Michael Lade
2002	AFTER THE ACCIDENT	Johannes Fabrick
2003	ZODIAC SIGN	Peter Patzak
2004	STRIPPED	Sigi Rothemund
2006	DRESDEN: THE INFERNO	Roland Suso Richter
2009	SCHATTEN DER GERECHTIGKEIT	Hans-Günther Bücking
2013	GENERATION WAR	Philipp Kadelbach

### Nico Hofmann

Producer

1993	DURST	Martin Weinhart
2000	EINE HAND VOLL GLÜCK	Christiane Balthasar
2001	NO REGRETS	Benjamin Quabeck
	DANCE WITH THE DEVIL	Peter Keglevic
	THE TUNNEL	Roland Suso Richter
2002	EINE LIEBE IN AFRIKA	Xaver Schwarzenberger
2003	FAMILIENKREISE	Stefan Krohmer
2005	DRESDEN: THE INFERNO	Roland Suso Richter
	THE AIRLIFT	Dror Zahavi
2006	NOT ALL WERE MURDERERS	Jo Baier
2007	MARCH OF MILLIONS	Kai Wessel
2008	THE MIRACLE OF BERLIN	Roland Suso Richter
2009	DUTSCHKE	Stefan Krohmer
2010	UNTIL NOTHING REMAINS	Nikolas Stein von Kamienski
2011	HINDENBURG	Philipp Kadelbach
	SHE DESERVED IT	Thomas Stiller

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2012 ROMMEL  
2013 GENERATION WAR

Nikolas Stein von Kamienski  
Philipp Kadelbach

## **THE PRODUCER – teamWorx**

With more than 240 productions to its credit, teamWorx Television & Film GmbH numbers among the most important television producers in Germany and is a market leader throughout Europe in the field of event productions. The firm was founded in 1998 by Nico Hofmann, producer and chairman of the management, producer Ariane Krampe and Wolf Bauer, chairman of the management of UFA; Further managing directors and producers next to Nico Hofmann are Joachim Kosack and Markus Brunnemann. The production team also includes Sascha Schwingel, Benjamin Benedict, Jochen Laube and Steffi Ackermann.

Since its foundation, teamWorx has continuously expanded its product portfolio. It now comprises series and TV cycles next to high-quality TV movies and scripted programs with event character. Exemplary for the variety of teamWorx productions are TV movies such as “Enno,” “Operation Valkyrie,” “Bobby,” “Something to Remind Me,” “Familienkreise,” “The Miracle of Berlin,” “Mogadischu,” “Der Mann aus der Pfalz,” “Der Fall Jakob von Metzler” and “Rommel;” event miniseries such as “Dresden: The Inferno,” “March of Millions,” “Storm Tide,” “The Airlift” the adaptation of Uwe Tellkamp’s bestseller of the same name “The Tower;” the big-screen productions “Wolfsburg,” “Berlin: A Symphony of a Big City;” the multiple award-winning drama “The Day I Was Not Born” and “Cracks in the Shell ” by Christian Schwochow, as well as filmed stage works including “Lulu,” “Baal” and “Werther.” The successful TV cycles “Donna Leon,” “Spring “ and others supplement the portfolio.

## **BETA FILM – World Sales**

Founded in 1959, Beta Film GmbH is one of the world's leading international distributors of licenses rights for TV, HV and new media as well as theatrical rights (Beta Cinema) and is involved in international co-productions. Beta's one-of-a-kind program catalogue comprises over 15,000 hours or 4,000 titles in every available format and genre from top U.S. productions, international TV and theatrical hits, among them several Academy Award-winning feature films, and top-of-the-line European and German programs. Its subsidiary Kineos handles German-language Free-TV rights with a portfolio of 12.000 titles. Beta Film has been part of Jan Mojto's company group since 2004.

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