

Beta Cinema presents
a KOMPLIZEN FILM and WARNER BROS. FILM PRODUCTIONS GERMANY
co-produced by FRAKAS PRODUCTIONS

WHEN WILL IT BE AGAIN LIKE IT NEVER WAS BEFORE

Directed by SONJA HEISS

Based on the bestselling novel by JOACHIM MEYERHOFF

starring DEVID STRIESOW, LAURA TONKE, ARSSENI BULTMANN, CAMILLE LOUP MOLTZEN
CASPER VON BÜLOW, POLA GEIGER, AXEL MILBERG



Screenings at Berlinale 2023

Wed 15.02.	14:30	CinemaxX 10	Market Screening
Thu 16.02.	17:30	Virtual Cinema 1	Virtual Screening
Fri 17.02.	19:30	Urania	World Premiere
Sat 18.02.	10:50	CinemaxX 4	Market Screening
Sat 18.02.	11:30	Cubix 5	Press & Industry Screening
Sat 18.02.	15:30	Titania	Festival Screening
Sun 19.02.	15:00	Virtual Cinema 6	Virtual Screening
Sun 19.02.	15:45	Cubix 8	Festival Screening
Mon 20.02.	12:30	FaF	Festival Screening

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Wistfully moving, wryly funny, full of wacky stories and wonderful scenes: Joachim Meyerhoff's bestselling coming-of-age novel is a tale of tender romance and longing for departure and arrival.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Growing up on the grounds of one of Germany's largest psychiatric hospitals is somehow - different. For Joachim, the director's youngest son, the patients are like family. They are also much nicer to him than his two older brothers, who drive him into fits of rage. His mother, painting watercolors, longs for Italian summer nights instead of constant German rain, while his father secretly, but not discreetly enough, goes his own way. But while Joachim slowly grows up, his world, not only through the loss of his first love, gets more and more cracks...

Based on the autobiographical novel by Joachim Meyerhoff, this incredibly funny and moving film deals with how hard it is to be a family. It may not be a normal family, but who wants to be normal, anyway? A tale of growing up under unusual circumstances, featuring a fantastic cast, directed by Sonja Heiss, who helmed award-winning "Hedi Schneider is Stuck" and wrote the bestselling novel "Rimini". **Camille Loup Moltzen** plays young Joachim, **Arsseni Bultmann** 14-year-old Joachim and **Merlin Rose** plays Joachim as a young man. Star Devid Striesow is his psychiatrist father, while Laura Tonke, who won the German Film Prize for "Hedi Schneider is Stuck", plays his mother, a very unique woman. The quirky supporting cast consists of professional actors and lay actors with and without psychiatric conditions.

THE STORY

Childhood

A family spends an almost serene day at the beach: 7-year-old Joachim Meyerhoff (**Camille Loup Moltzen**), is romping around with his dog. On the drive home, his big brothers Philipp and Patrick give him a hard time. His brothers are so funny that even his parents (**Devid Striesow, Laura Tonke**) can hardly keep from laughing. Joachim has one of his famous temper tantrums. When they get home, the only thing that helps is the old shake, rattle & roll: His parents sit him on the washing machine, switch on the spin cycle and give him the old spin treatment.

The Meyerhoff family lives on the big estate of Hesterberg Clinic, the largest children's psychiatric clinic in the North German state of Schleswig-Holstein, which Joachim's father runs. The clinic is Joachim's playground, the patients are his friends and his refuge, when his brothers drive him crazy with their pranks again.

Whenever Josse, as they call him, can't sleep at night, he still crawls in bed with his parents. His father takes him on his arm and goes outside with him. The patients' cries calm the boy.

One day, Joachim finds a dead body behind a hedge, which he is very proud of. Finally, he has something on his brothers.

A patient named the bell ringer (**Andreas Merker**), a slightly scary-looking giant, is Joachim's best friend. His mother is (once again) suspicious when his father buys himself tight pink shirts. She spends her time painting Mediterranean-style watercolors. She dreams of Italy, where she still nurses a long-lost love. Every now and then, she speaks Italian on the phone, cooing in a sing-song like Gina Lollobrigida. Joachim does not approve.

His father celebrates his 40th birthday at home with his family and favorite patients, as usual. His mother would rather have a cocktail party with the Eckmanns and Henkels. Like normal people do, she says. As if the Henkels were normal, his father says.

Slightly lonely because his older brothers are cutting him out, Joachim wanders through the clinic: A huge playground for a child. He watches TV with the patients, has pudding in the kitchen, plays guessing games with the staff. One day he meets one of his father's patients, Marlene, who is his age – it's love at first sight. Marlene is very sad. She will later move in with them for a while.

As busy as his father is with the clinic, he still takes time to horse around with his boys, including secretly saying the housekeeper's name, Mrs. Fuck (**Lina Beckmann**), seven times in a row.

When the Governor (**Axel Milberg**) comes to visit he is greeted by a welcome chorus of patients and the Meyerhoff family, dressed up to the nines, because Doctor Meyerhoff wants the Governor to spring for a new swimming pool. But then a mentally handicapped boy named Rudi messes up his plans, aiming a toy gun at the Governor, and forcing his bodyguards to tackle him into the mud.

Teen Years

Joachim and his brother are swimming in the pool, which the Governor donated after all. Joachim's father bought a sailboat, his parents are studying for their sailing license. While his mother passes the test with flying colors, his father flunks the test. He has a hard time dealing with his failure, which is not part of his DNA.

Josse and his mother see how his father flirts with a bank teller. Marlene (**Pola Geiger**) is 14 now, and moves in with the Meyerhoffs for the time being after a suicide attempt. Their first tender romance unfolds, they kiss and make out tenderly. Joachim hides all the pills and razor blades in the household, just to be on the safe side. When Marlene's parents come to pick her up, Joachim falls into a deep funk.

Their dog gets old and dies. Joachim's fits of anger are still alive and well, however.

Joachim's relationship with his brother Philipp (**Casper von Bülow**) grows closer. They talk about being in love, while their father starts getting dressed up and going out in the evening frequently. Their mother wildly dances to "Felicita'" with Josse in their living room, with forced happiness, tinged with despair.

Josse confronts his father with his infidelity, who answers: "There are things you do, which are none of my business, and there are things I do, which are none of your business."

Over Christmas, his parents have a big fight when Joachim's dad gives his mom an electric knife for Christmas. His mom cuts everything she can get her hands on to pieces, and tells her husband to give the pieces to his mistress as a present. She has a nervous breakdown. Her sons stick up for their mom, comforting her.

Josse visits his buddy bell ringer in the dark clinic over the holidays. The next morning, his father tells him off-handedly that Marlene has committed suicide.

That evening, Joachim goes to his first big teenage party, but has a fit of anger and demolishes the place, landing in the psychiatric ward himself. Now, it's up to his dad to take care of him.

Joachim decides to spend a year in the USA as an exchange student.

In the US, he finds cool new friends and has a great time, until he gets a call from his father: His brother Philipp has died in a car crash.

Joachim flies home to be with his devastated parents.

Adult Age

Josse, now 25 (**Merlin Rose**), returns to the Director's Mansion to visit his ailing father, who is always surrounded by his patients now. His mother comes from Italy, where she moved after they split up. Again, they celebrate his birthday together. They call it his 80th birthday, because his father quit smoking on his 40th birthday, announcing he would start smoking again when he turns 80. But now he's running out of time, so they decide to celebrate his 80th birthday two decades early.

His patients want to know all the details, since they're part of the family, after all – a family brought together by a shared fate.

They all think about death in their very own way, causing it to lose its terror, listening to them.

Joachim watches his parents make up, hears his father thank his mother in Italian, from the bottom of his heart. Both are new to his father Apologies and Italian. But now he finally knows how to do both, in Josse's imagination, at least.

Now it's Joachim who turns out the lights at night. His parents lie in bed, embracing tightly. He heads for his brother's room, where the aquariums are empty and crusted with lime, and start to refill themselves, with a beautiful, fantastic underwater world, more beautiful than ever. Suddenly, the tanks are full of sharks and pink glowing axolotls, phosphorescent jellyfish and blowfish. Finally, it will again be like it never was.

PRODUCTION NOTES

WHEN WILL IT BE AGAIN LIKE IT NEVER WAS BEFORE

was shot in 44 days in Berlin, Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Schleswig-Holstein, plus three days in Canada.

How the project came together

It all started with a gift: Sonja Heiss got Joachim Meyerhoff's book as present. "Reading it in bed, I found myself laughing out loud. For a German novel, that's pretty rare. And it was just my kind of humor. That was the moment when I decided, this book should be a movie."

Sonja Heiss told producer Janine Jackowski about Joachim Meyerhoff's autobiographic novel. She devoured the book: "I've never read anything like it in German literature. Especially because the book

combines so many polar opposites, being incredibly sad and incredibly funny. Incredibly entertaining, but also very profound.” It wasn’t easy convincing the author to sell them the film rights, however. “It was a long process to convince Joachim Meyerhoff to trust us with his brainchild. We’re thrilled it worked out,” Jackowski says. They first met in Vienna, where Meyerhoff worked at the Burgtheater.

Working with Joachim Meyerhoff

Sonja Heiss wrote the screenplay together with Lars Hubrich. Meyerhoff read all the drafts and gave his feedback. He told the filmmakers about the asylum and the patients, and gave them advice and information above and beyond the book. He sent them photos of his parents and brothers from the era depicted in the book, to help them picture the family. All the family members, his mother and brothers, read the final screenplay draft and gave their seal of approval. “That was very important to us, because it’s their story, their lives, we are putting up on the big screen. It takes a lot of faith to turn your life story over to a bunch of strangers.”

Adapting a novel is a process of transformation. Sometimes it’s more important to hit the right tone than sticking slavishly to every little detail. Of course you have to leave things out, or maybe add a few bits for dramatic purposes. A tall order for an autobiographic story. “A dramatic feature film doesn’t have the ambition to depict reality one to one: It’s not a documentary. So we basically took the novel as our inspiration, but had to change a lot, too,” Jackowski said.

Devid Striesow knew he had to try out for the part, since he knows the writer, who is an actor as well. The two of them worked together at Hamburg’s Schauspielhaus. Meyerhoff lived nearby, they often rode to rehearsals together. “I was surprised he writes bestsellers like that,” Striesow said. He was spellbound by the screenplay Heiss wrote. “Dramatic feature film is a very different artform compared with a literary novel. You must accept that one follows from the other, but at the same time it needs to have a life of its own. I think Sonja did that very well.”

About the Story

“It’s a depiction of life in all its depth, breadth and glory. It’s a film about family, love and what keeps us together,” Jackowski sums up. “About loving your parents and siblings. It’s a portrait of a family, who love each other dearly, but don’t manage to stay together all the time. Of course it’s also a film about what makes life worth living and about death. About joy and sadness, the whole deal.”

For Sonja Heiss, it’s a coming-of-age story under very unusual circumstances, in a very unusual world. About how to make a family work, even if it doesn’t work. How to keep love alive, even if it means forgiving a lot.

The director kept coming back to the fundamental themes of the novel: “On the one hand, you have a wholesome family falling apart in a way, but not entirely, it turns out. You leave the film with a feeling of reassurance, regarding your own family, too. None of us gets it perfect. It’s also about the fact life isn’t easy, but pretty great, too.”

One central element is the unique place Joachim grows up in. In a mental institution, surrounded by mentally ill people, as well as handicapped people. Heiss: “It’s inspirational for him. They are his friends. he finds solace with them when he’s feeling down.”

The film tells the story of three decades of family history. For Striesow, it was also about the father’s fate, Professor Meyerhoff, which ends with illness. In crafting his role, he had to ask himself: How does a man with a story like that deal with people around him? What would a director of a mental institution be like at home? “I wanted to take a peek behind the scenes,” he says.

Casting Process

The biggest challenge was showing the characters over a period of three decades and in very different phases and stages of life. Three different actors had to be cast for the part of Joachim, two for his brothers and for Marlene. Only the parents remained consistent, with Devid Striesow and Laura Tonke. Their aging process was done in hair and make-up. “Finding actors that look similar, and also fulfill all the other requirements of the roles, is pretty much impossible,” Heiss says. “We had to work with aura and personality, to capture the nature of a character. It took a long time to reach that goal.” The extensive casting process paid off.

The director was enthused by her young talent: “Young Joachim, played by Camille, is an amazingly talented kid, with fantastic energy and also unusually profound. Arsseni Bultmann, who portrays Joachim Meyerhoff at age 14, is an incredible actor, who is completely in the moment, with intense presence, who is really moving. He plays the humor deadpan, doesn’t laugh at his own jokes – which will ruin any humor, if you ask me. Arsseni is a natural. He moves you just with a look.”

Two casters and an extra team for casting the lay actors handled the above-the-line talent. Jacqueline Rietz cast the kids and teens, Nina Haun handled the adult parts. Casting was done in the middle of the pandemic, which especially made it hard to find kids and handicapped actors. Schools, clubs, kids and teen drama clubs, where you would usually start looking, were all closed, but eventually they found their cast.

Fantastic Young Talent

“It’s unbelievable to see such talented young actors”, Jackowski says. “The actors who played the three brothers were a perfect fit. You read the novel and then the script, and of course you have a certain image in your head. What I see up on the screen is even better than what I imagined reading. Those three young men really blew us away.”

Joachim Meyerhoff is portrayed by three different actors at three different ages. Camille Loup Moltzen plays the part of 7-year-old Joachim, Arsseni Bultmann played 14-year-old Joachim and Merlin Rose played him at 25. Camille Loup had his mom read him the script. His favorite scene was with Lina Beckmann: “I laughed a lot.” He also really liked the scene in which Rudy aims a toy pistol at Governor Stoltenberg’s (Axel Milberg) bodyguards and they all land in the mud. Of the emotional scenes, Camille liked the screaming scenes the most.

Arsseni Bultmann, who plays teenage Joachim, liked the off-beat humor and the funny dialogue. He liked the washing machine trick, too. He recalls: “When I was a kid, I used to scream like crazy, too. Sometimes

for half an hour. The only thing that helped was to let me scream, or get a hug and calm down. We didn't know about the washing machine trick, I bet that would've helped..."

Casper von Bülow plays the part of Joachim's brother Philipp at 18. Reading the script, he mostly liked the funny parts: "I just had the feeling it all clicked. It's funny and tragic at once." Working with Sonja Heiss was very relaxed, he said: "Luckily, we had a lot of time on set. Sonja always kids around a bit first, then she lets you know in a very laid-back way, what she wants you to do. She always gets her point across right away. We had an uncomplicated relationship, very to the point. It's easy to talk to her. Sonja is a really experienced director."

Pola Geiger plays 14-year-old Marlene. "Marlene is really a very complex person, but a difficult one, too," she says about her role. "So I was a little scared of the challenge. She doesn't only suffer from depression, she's also just a really complicated person." She liked her character, finds her strong and brave, even if her life is complicated. "She wants to live, but she just isn't able to. The fact she's survived for this long and is still trying to be happy is a sign of how strong and brave she is."

Perfect Cast

"Casting was really a long process," says Janine Jackowski. The parents are perfectly cast with Devid Striesow and Laura Tonke, who have known the filmmakers for years. Laura Tonke acted the lead in Sonja Heiss' "Hedi Schneider is Stuck", for which she won the German Film Prize. "Mother and father have to work well together as a couple, and they just blew us away." The mother's role in the film is much larger than in the novel. Heiss: "Laura just brought the perfect mix. She can really capture that dry sense of humor. Every word of her dialogue is just spot-on. She just thinks like I do. Even the dramatic, emotional moments that are so key, just like the moments between humor and despair, where you don't know whether to laugh, or be horrified."

Joachim's father has to be an authority figure, as professor and clinic director with lots of patients under his care. He's also got a great sense of humor, is fun-loving and likes to goof around with his boys. Then again, there are moments, in which he is very egoistical and doesn't seem to care at all about what's going on around him. "Devid is an incredible actor," Heiss says. "It's a very broad palette he has to play on. And he hits the most subtle notes and nuances."

Joachim's buddy bell ringer is played by Andreas Merker. The part was a great challenge because his character has no dialogue. "They are way too few films with characters and scenes who don't talk, but just act. In a way it's the purest form of acting, without speech as a crutch. All you have is your physical body, presence, expression, sounds ... His biography is left pretty open, too. Where's he from? What kind of life did he lead before? It was pretty much left up to me. That's very exciting, when you can flesh out a character by yourself." Merker shaved his long hair to a buzz cut. That was how he pictured a gentle giant, like a guy he met in a self-defense course for handicapped care givers he teaches. For Merker, his bells symbolize the fact he lives in his own world. Merker talked to people who work with autistic people, and listened to their stories: "They have very clear rules, and don't like a lot of deviation from them. When he looks after the boy or takes him on his shoulders, it's not like he does it out of pity. He's just trying to right a situation that's out of whack." The same thing goes for the bells, Merker says: "It's okay as long as they're ringing. He only stops ringing when

something distracts him, when he's not focused or when he gets new information, that's more interesting than the orderly bell-ringing.”

The Lay Actors

For the filmmakers, it went without saying that special-needs actors would be part of the film. The casters went into the care homes and special needs shared living spaces, in various groups and institutions like the Thikwa Theater in Berlin-Kreuzberg, a drama workshop for handicapped people. “We had great encounters and experiences, that also influenced the script,” Heiss said. “We adopted a lot of what the cast had to contribute. I had to give them room instead of telling them what to say and how to act, to force them into characters that don't really fit them. So I had to give them the ability to flesh out their own parts.” A whole team of people was involved in casting the lay actors. Heiss: “I personally took part in casting, we tried out several scenes on camera, did improv and played around with it. I learned a lot. It teaches you a different perspective on life, which was incredibly enriching.”

The audiences can profit from that experience watching the film.

Jackowski really wanted to have as many speaking parts as possible played by actual special-needs talent. “That gave us a certain spontaneity, which was great, because it was really a different style of working. Sonja prepared very intensively. It's part of the story and the novel, so it had to be part of the film, too.”

Intense Preparations

“We did a whole bunch of research,” Jackowski says. “What was it like back then? What's it like today? What reforms did Joachim Meyerhoff's father launch? Sonja spent a lot of time with doctors, visited various clinics, spoke to psychiatrists, psychologists and their teams. We wanted to paint a realistic picture of the situation, the way it was and how it changed.” The film spans three decades, from the '70s and '80s to the 1990s, in a time when a lot happened in psychiatry. “Today's modern psychiatry really started in the 1970s,” the producer said. “Before that, asylums were mainly holding pens. So this was a huge process, of course. Professor Meyerhoff was one of the key figures, who started that process at Hesterberg Clinic.”

Humor and respect were key to shooting the film. “It was really important to us that the audience doesn't laugh at our characters, but with them,” Jackowski says. “There's a lot of off-beat situations, and it's OK to laugh at them. But it's really important to treat them all with the greatest possible respect.”

The Visuals

The visuals were very important to the director, so as not to just deliver tired clichés concerning the '70s, '80s and '90s. For instance, there was a no-orange rule for the 1970s. They didn't want everybody in bellbottoms and disco shirts. the design team could really go all-out: “It's a professor's home, so they have nice furniture. So we could use some of the design classics,” says Heiss. The colors already tell a lot of the story. They deliberately left out the typical '70s brown, orange or green color-coding, blue in the '80s. “Thanks to our great cameraman Manuel Dacosse, production designer Erwin Prib and costume designer Katrin

Unterberger and their teams, we created a very special visual world, in which you like to spend time, because it's beautiful and strange," says Sonja Heiss.

The producer was happy to continue her successful collaboration with production designer Erwin Prib that began on the series "Skylines". The location scouting, especially for the clinic and the family's house, was a lengthy process. The two main locations were nowhere near each other. The clinic grounds were shot in six different locations, the exteriors at three. The big challenge was making the different locations work together.

Songs and Score

Heiss is pleased they were able to use a few period hits, like "Eisbär", "T-Rex or TheThe" to open the film. "Sure, they're hits," she says, "But not ones that are overused." The catchy tune "Felicita" was used in a very special way. And then there's the unique score written by British composer Dickon Hinchliffe, who the director discovered on Maggie Gyllenhaal's feature film debut "The Lost Daughter", which he also scored. "It was fantastic working with him," Heiss says. Martin Hossbach served as music supervisor.

Dream Team: Director and Producer

Sonja Heiss and Janine Jackowski go back a long way. They both studied at Munich Film School, together with Maren Ade. Ade and Jackowski were studying Production, Heiss was in the Documentary Department. "We produced all her films, from the very first short," Jackowski says. "There's a lot of trust after such a long time. There are very few directors who have that special feeling for that kind of humor. Sonja works very intensely with the talent. She has incredibly good taste visually, as far as cinematography, costume design, set design, make-up. She has a great eye. She's a very talented director, and I'm continually amazed how many jobs a director has to be able to do, all at the same time. And she's not just directing the actors, she also wrote the screenplay. While directing, you have to make like 100 calls all at the same time, which Sonja can do better than anyone."

Special Challenges

"The shoot was just as wild and colorful as the film is," the director recalls. "I had fantastic actors, and working with the handicapped talent was a lot of fun, but it was pretty intense, too. I was shooting with kids, with whom you are only allowed to work a few hours a day, with a dog, and there were scenes with up to twelve people in the shot. There was sun and rain on the sail boat, even when it wasn't supposed to be. There were a lot of obstacles. Especially the different decades. We were jumping decades every day, completely unchronologically." It was worth the effort, the team agrees.

Everyone has their own Normal

What's in store for the audience?

A lot of laughs. Scenes the likes of which you've never seen before, especially with the handicapped actors. "That was very moving," Jackowski says. "What goes on emotionally is very intense. The film stays with you, you get something out of it, and even though it's a little sad in parts, you do leave the theater with a

smile and the feeling, it's all OK the way it is. It's a way of looking at life, that would be great to be able to keep.”

WHEN WILL IT BE AGAIN LIKE IT NEVER WAS BEFORE asks the question of what is actually normal? There's a scene in which the patients are visiting the Meyerhoffs. Joachim's mother asks her husband what he thinks about throwing a cocktail party, with normal guests like the Eckmanns, the Jakobs, the Henkels. “As if the Henkels were normal”, he answers. Of course, they aren't any more normal than these patients. For Sonja Heiss, it was a central theme of her film: There's no such thing as normal people, or not-normal ones. Everyone has their own normal.

“At the last birthday party, the patients talk about death. They're not scared, they don't take it seriously – that's something we can all learn from,” Heiss says.

Janine Jackowski hopes the audience “leaves the theater with a full heart, that they can laugh and cry, love the film and want to see it all over again.”

THE CAST

DEVID STRIESOW

Richard Meyerhoff

Devid Striesow was born 1973 on the island of Rügen in the former East Germany. After graduating from high school, he studied drama at the Ernst Busch Acting School in East Berlin, graduating in 1999 with a Diploma. Soon after, he had his feature film premiere 2000 in Rainer Kaufmann's "Cold is the Evening Breeze". Since then, he has become one of the most prolific German actors in film, TV and on stage. He shot films with top directors, displaying an incredible bandwidth in his acting. His films include Gregor Schnitzler's "What to do in Case of Fire" (2001), Hans-Christian Schmid's "Lichter" (2002), Ulrich Köhler's "Bungalow" (2002) and "Montag kommen die Fenster" (2006), Oliver Hirschbiegel's "The Downfall" (2004), Dennis Gansel's "Before the Fall" (2004), Christoph Hochhäusler's "I am Guilty" (2005), Dominik Graf's "The Red Cockatoo" (2006), Stefan Ruzowitzky's "The Counterfeiters" (2007), Andreas Kleinert's "Freischwimmer" (2007), Nicolette Krebitz's "The Heart is a Dark Forest" (2007), Christian Petzold's "Yella" (2007), Matthias Glasner's "This is Love" (2009), Margarethe von Trotta's „Vision – Aus dem Leben der Hildegard von Bingen“ (2009), Tom Tykwer's "3" (2010), Lars Jessen's "Fraktus" (2012), Burhan Qurbani's „We are Young, We are Strong" (2014), Julia von Heinz's "I'm Off Then" (2015), Micha Lewinsky's "A Decent Man" (2015), Franziska Meletzky's "Forwards Ever!" (2017), Jan Georg Schütte's "Wellness für Paare" (2016), Barbara Albert's "Licht" (2017), Christian Theede's "The Peppercorns and the Curse of the Black King" (2017), Markus Goller's "My Brother Simple" (2017), Mark Schlichter's "Alfons Zitterbacke – Das Chaos ist zurück" (2019), Franziska Stünkel's "The Last Execution" (2021) and Edward Berger's Oscar® nominated "All Quiet on the Western Front" (2022).

Devid Striesow has also acted in numerous TV movies and series. In 2022, Striesow was nominated for the Nestroy Prize as Best Actor in Thorsten Lensing's staging of "Verrückt nach Trost".

LAURA TONKE

Iris Meyerhoff

Born in 1974 in Berlin to the artist Lucy Tonke and set designer Michael Tonke. She studied theater in Berlin until 1996, and had her feature film debut 1991 in Michael Klier's "Ostkreuz" when she was 16. Tonke had her breakout role in Christopher Roth's "Baader" 2002 playing the part of RAF terrorist Gudrun Ensslin. Oskar Roehler cast her in "Silvester Countdown" (1997), Rudolf Thome in "Just Married" (1998), Tom Tykwer in "Winter Sleepers" (1997), Lars Kraume in "The People vs. Fritz Bauer" (2015), Laura Lackmann in "Too Hard to Handle" (2016), "Mission: Love" (2017), "Caveman" (2023) and Sonja Maria Kröner in "The Garden" (2017).

She has frequently worked with Michael Klier, and received kudos for her turn in "Farland" (2004). She worked with Sonja Heiss on "Hedi Schneider is Stuck", which earned her a German Film Prize 2016, along with the prize Best Supporting Actress in "Too Hard to Handle" 2016.

In 2000, Tonke earned a Golden Camera as Best Newcomer Actress. She earned the Drama Prize as Best Supporting Actress for “Polizeiruf: Der Verurteilte”. She has also acted on the stage since 2005, including for Frank Castorf and Schorsch Kamerun at the Berlin *Volksbühne*.

She has worked with Gob Squad performance group for 15 years, who she tours the world with.

CAMILLE LOUP MOLTZEN

Joachim Meyerhoff, 7 years old

Camille was born in Berlin in 2013, where he lives with his family. He speaks fluent French, loves soccer and ballet, and has acted for film since 2020. Along with roles in short films and TV series “Deadlines” and “Notruf Hafenkante”, he acted in TV movie “Bring mich nach Hause”. He had his first part in a major international feature film in Pablo Larraín’s “Spencer”.

ARSSENI BULTMANN

Joachim Meyerhoff, 14 years old

Arsseni Bultmann (born 2005) grew up in Berlin with his two younger siblings. He was discovered on a playground by Tomorrow Agency when he was 6. He had his acting debut at the Berlin Ensemble in a play by Maxim Gorki. In 2013, he had his feature film debut in a supporting role in “Aschenbrödel und der gestiefelte Kater”. In 2014, Markus Goller cast him in “Alles ist Liebe”, as did Matthias Schweighöfer 2015 in “Der Nanny”. He has larger supporting roles in “Notruf Hafenkante”, “SOKO Wismar”, “Der Kotzbrocken” (2015), “Die Drei von der Müllabfuhr” (2019) and “Servus Papa – See You in Hell” (2022). He had his first major starring role in “Robbi, Tobbi und das Fliewatütü” (2016) directed by Wolfgang Gross, followed by starring roles in “It’s Your Turn Honey!” (2017), “Ein Ferienhaus auf Teneriffa” (2019) and “The Magic Kids” (2020).

MERLIN ROSE

Joachim Meyerhoff, 25 years old

Actor Merlin Rose was born in Berlin-Wedding in 1993. The son of a locksmith and a social worker, Merlin Rose comes from a family that has nothing to do with the film and TV industry. Nonetheless, Merlin Rose quickly realized he wanted to be an actor. He started gathering experience in small parts in short films early.

He had his acting debut in a series for German kid’s pubweb channel KiKA “Krimi.de”, followed by TV comedy “Scheidung für Fortgeschrittene” (2010) and larger roles in “Vater Mutter Mörder” (2011). He had his big-screen debut in “Wetlands” 2013, followed by Marco Petrys “Playing Doctor” (2014), Andreas Dresen’s “Als wir träumten” (2015), François Ozon’s “Frantz” (2016), director Torsten Künstler’s “Hot Dog” (2018) along with top German stars Til Schweiger and Matthias Schweighöfer, Peter Ever’s “A Gschicht über d’Lieb” (2019) and Detlev Buck’s “Christmas Crossfire” (2020).

He also featured in Netflix's "Holiday Secrets" (2019), "Dark" (2020) and "The Empress" (2022). Merlin Rose has been nominated for numerous prizes and awards. He won the Günter Strack TV prize 2016 as Best Newcomer Actor for his part in "Aus der Haut".

CASPER VON BÜLOW

Philipp Meyerhoff, 18 years old

Casper von Bülow, born 2003, lives in Berlin and grew up there. After his acting debut in ZDF series "Druck" (2020–2022) he appeared in "Coming Home" (2021) and most recently David Dietl's "Gute Freunde" (2022). Casper also models for brands including Louis Vuitton.

POLA GEIGER

Marlene, 14 years old

After her debut in two short films, 18-year-old German-Polish actress Pola Geiger had her big-screen debut in "We Might As Well be Dead" (2022), which was screened in the Berlin Film Festival "Perspective German Cinema" sidebar. She was nominated for the Götz George Newcomer Prize at the First Steps Award 2022 for her first big screen starring role in "Jessy" (2019). Pola went to college-track high school in Berlin. She took up analogue photography in her spare time, which she learned from her father. She brought that visual sense to her film work, refining her performance and authentic aura.

CLAUDE HEINRICH

Ferdinand

Born in Berlin in 2006, Claude Heinrich has worked as a voice actor for numerous films, and starred in films and TV movies, including Bjarne Mädel's award-winning directing debut "Sörensen hat Angst" (2020), "Tatort", "Dark" (2019), Hermine Huntgeburth's "Lindenberg! Mach dein Ding" (2018), "A Pure Place" (2020), "Träume sind wie wilde Tiger" (2021), "Wild Republic" (2021) and "Und dann steht einer auf und öffnet das Fenster" (2022), which won the Ensemble Acting Prize at the German Film Festival in Ludwigshafen. On the big screen, he appeared in Hans-Christian Schmid's "Wir sind dann wohl die Angehörigen" (2022).

ANDREAS MERKER

Bell ringer

Berlin native Andreas Merker, born 1979, studied drama at Rostock Drama and Music Academy, where he had his stage debut at the Volkstheater. After several stage roles, he performed in TV movies starting 2008, including in "Wilsberg", as well as in Christian Alvart's Netflix series "Dogs of Berlin" (2017/2018), "SOKO Köln", "Blackout" (2020) and "Nächste Ausfahrt Glück" (2021). WHEN WILL IT BE AGAIN LIKE IT NEVER WAS BEFORE is Merker's big-screen debut.

THE CREW

SONJA HEISS

Director, screenwriter

Screenwriter, novelist and director Sonja Heiss grew up in Munich and lives in Berlin.

She attended Munich Film School while working as casting director for commercials, going on to direct commercials as well. Her student films “Karma Cowboy” and “Christina without Kaufmann” won numerous awards and were invited to international festivals. Her first feature film, “Hotel Very Welcome”, premiered at the Berlin Film Fest 2007 in the Perspective German Cinema sidebar, winning numerous prizes, including the First Steps Award. “Hedi Schneider is Stuck” (2015) also premiered at the Berlin Film Fest, in the Forum sidebar, and was screened at numerous international festivals, winning the Hessian Film Prize. For this film Heiss was nominated for the German Film Prize in the screenwriting category, Laura Tonke won the German Film Prize as Best Actress, as well as the German Actors’ Award.

Heiss published her first book 2011, the short story collection “Das Glück geht aus”, published by Berlin Verlag / Piper. Her critically lauded debut novel RIMINI was published by Kiepenheuer & Witsch in 2017, and made the Spiegel Magazine bestseller list. Sonja Heiss also writes short stories for magazines such as Harper’s Bazaar, directs commercials, and teaches at various German film schools.

JANINE JACKOWSKI, KOMPLIZEN FILM

Producer

Born in Frechen in 1976, Janine Jackowski studied film production at Munich film school HFF 1998 - 2002. When they were still in film school, she founded the production company Komplizen Film with her fellow student Maren Ade in 1999. Their first theatrical feature film was Ade’s graduating film “The Forest for the Trees” 2003, which was a box-office success and won the special Jury Prize in the World Cinema section at Sundance Film Festival. Jackowski also produced Sonja Heiss’ feature film debut “Hotel Very Welcome” (2007) and “Hedi Schneider is Stuck” (2015) as well as Maren Ade’s other successful films, including “Alle Anderen” (2009) which won the Berlin film fest Grand Jury Prize. “Toni Erdmann” (2016) wrote German film history and premiered in competition at Cannes, won numerous awards, became a box office hit and was Germany’s Oscar® submission.

In 2010, Jonas Dornbach joined Ade and Jackowski as producer and managing director of Komplizen Film. The production company made itself a name as one of the leading German independents with a number of prestigious, prize-winning projects. Their credits include Ulrich Köhler’s “Sleeping Sickness” (2011), Barbara Albert’s “The Dead and the Living” (2012), Benjamin Heisenberg’s “Superegos” (2014), Vanessa Jopp’s “Lügen and andere Wahrheiten” (2014) as well as “The Space between the Lines” (2019), Miguel Gomes’ “Arabian Nights” trilogy (2015), Valeska Grisebach’s “Western” (2017), which also premiered in Cannes and won numerous awards. Komplizen Film also co-produced “A Fantastic Woman” directed by Sebastián Lelio, which won the Oscar® 2018 as Best Foreign Language Film.

Komplizen Film's further credits as producers or co-producers include Corneliu Porumboiu's "La Gomera" (2019), Pablo Larraín's Lady Di biopic "Spencer" (2021), which screened in Venice, Kilian Riedhof's "You will not have my hate" (2021), Nicolette Krebitz's Berlin Film Fest entry "A E I O U – A Quick Alphabet of Love" (2022) as well as Marie Kreutzer's drama about Empress Elisabeth of Austria, "Corsage" (2022), which premiered in Cannes and was Austria's submission for the Oscar® as Best International Film.

In 2019, the Komplizen Film team Janine Jackowski, Maren Ade and Jonas Dornbach received the prestigious Raimondo Rezzonico Award at the Locarno Film Festival. Janine Jackowski sits on various industry boards and has been a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences since 2019.

MANU DACOSSE, SBC

Director of Photography

Manu Dacosse was born in Uccle, Belgium in 1977. He had his first DoP stint on Hélène Cattet's and Bruno Forzani's "Amer" (2009) and soon developed a reputation as one of the best Belgian cameramen. His credits include "The Strange Color of Your Body's Tears" ("L'étrange couleur des larmes de ton corps", 2013) and "Let the Corpses Tan" ("Laissez bronzer les cadavres", 2017). He won the Magritte Award for his cinematography on both films. For François Ozon, Dacosse filmed "Double Lover" ("L'amant double", 2017), "By the Grace of God" ("Grâce à Dieu", 2018) as well as Berlin film fest competition entry "Peter von Kant" (2022).

Dacosse also was DoP on Matthieu Donck's "Torpedo" (2011), François Pirot's "Mobile Home" (2012), Fabrice du Welz's "Alleluia" (2014), Joann Sfar's "The Lady in the Car with Glasses and a Gun" (2015), Helene Hegemann's "Axolotl Overkill" (2017), Jean-François Richet's "The Emperor of Paris" ("L'Empereur de Paris", 2018), Robin Pront's "The Silencing" (2020), Olivier Dahan's "Simone: Woman of the Century" ("Simone Veil, le voyage du siècle", 2021) and Kilian Riedhof's "You will not have my hate" (2022).

JULIA KARG, BFS

Editor

Julia Karg studied film at Baden-Württemberg Film Academy. She graduated in editing and has been working as an editor ever since, on documentaries and feature films. Her film and TV credits include "We are Young. We are Strong" (2014), "Mülheim Texas – Helge Schneider hier and dort" (2015), "NSU: German History X - The Perpetrators" (2016), "Tatort", "Die Auferstehung" (2018), hit series "Bad Banks" (Season 1 and 2, 2018–2020) and „In A Land That No Longer Exists" (2022).

In 2021, Karg received the German Film Academy Prize in the editing category for "Dark Woods".

ERWIN PRIB

Production Design

Erwin Vladimirovich Prib (born July 20, 1977 in Karaganda, Kazakh Soviet Republic) is a German production designer. Prib moved to East Germany in 1986 and has lived in Berlin since 1987. He

studied architecture at Berlin Art Academy and then Set Design at Potsdam Film School (today called Babelsberg Film University). Prib has worked with numerous top directors and artists, including Agnieszka Holland, Stephan Daldry and Shirin Neshat.

“In Darkness” directed by Agnieszka Holland was nominated for the Oscar® as Best Foreign Language Film. Erwin Prib won a “Lola” German Film Prize 2008 for the set design of Veit Helmers “Absurdistan”. Ten years later, he won another Lola 2018 as best production designer with a double nomination for “Godless Youth” and “Manifesto”, a series of 13 short films with Cate Blanchett. Prib is currently shooting the high-end series “Helgoland 513” for Sky, directed by Robert Schwentke. The dystopian drama is currently being shot in Berlin and North Germany.

Erwin Prib worked as Head of Department on numerous national and international film productions. His films have screened at numerous “A” festivals including Berlin, Venice, Toronto, Sundance, and Locarno. Erwin Prib sits on several industry boards, representing the craft of set design. Erwin Prib is the chair of the Set Design, Costume and Make-Up Section at the German Film Academy, and works to improve collaboration with the other departments, especially regarding VFX and cinematography. Erwin Prib is a member of the European Film Academy, the German Commercial Film Academy, the Production Designer Collective and the Set Designer and Costume union VSK.

KATRIN UNTERBERGER

Costume Designer

Ever since “Wilde Jungs” (2002), Katrin Unterberger has served as costume designer on several TV productions, including “Crocodile Alert” (2006), “Mogadischu” (2008), “The Miracle of Berlin“ (2008), “Tatort” and “Deutschland 83, 86 and 89” (2015–2019) as well as “Legal Affairs” (2020).

MARTIN HOSSBACH

Music Supervisor

Born in Hamburg 1975. WHEN WILL IT BE AGAIN LIKE IT NEVER WAS BEFORE is Hossbach’s third project with Sonja Heiss, after “Hotel Very Welcome” and “Hedi Schneider is Stuck”. The music supervisor has handled 80 soundtracks, including Maren Ade’s “Toni Erdmann” and “Everyone Else”. He worked for Lisa Bierwirth (“Le Prince”, 2021), Frauke Finsterwalder (“Sisi & I”, 2023), Valeska Grisebach (“Sehnsucht”, 2006), Ulrich Köhler (all films since “Windows on Monday”, 2006), Nicolette Krebitz (“A E I O U – The Quick Alphabet of Love”, 2022), Angela Schanelec (“Musik”, 2023, “The Dreamed Path”, 2016), Maria Speth (“Mr. Bachmann and his class”, 2021, “Madonnen”, 2007), Christian Schwochow (“Munich – The Edge of War“, 2021, “Je Suis Karl”, 2021, “West”, 2013).

He also works as musical programmer for festivals, most recently 2015 to 2020 for Pop-Kultur festival in Berlin. In 2012, Hossbach founded his eponymous music label, which he ran until 2021, releasing music by Tara Nome Doyle, who composed a choral for WHEN WILL IT BE AGAIN LIKE IT EVER WAS BEFORE and covered “Can’t Help Falling in Love”.

CAST // CREW // TECHNICAL DETAILS

CAST

Richard Meyerhoff	Devid Striesow
Iris Meyerhoff	Laura Tonke
Joachim Meyerhoff (7 years)	Camille Loup Moltzen
Joachim Meyerhoff (14 years)	Arsseni Bultmann
Joachim Meyerhoff (25 years)	Merlin Rose
Philipp Meyerhoff	Casper von Bülow
Marlene (14 years)	Pola Geiger
Ferdinand	Claude Heinrich
Bell ringer	Andreas Merker

CREW

Directed by	Sonja Heiss
Based on the novel by	Joachim Meyerhoff, published by KiWi Verlag
Screenplay by	Sonja Heiss, Lars Hubrich
Produced by	Janine Jackowski, Jonas Dornbach, Maren Ade
Production Company	Komplizen Film, Warner Bros. Film Productions Germany, Frakas Productions,
Director of Photography	Manu Dacosse SBC
Editor	Julia Karg BFS
Costume Design	Katrin Unterberger
Production Design	Erwin Prib
Music Supervisor	Martin Hossbach
Sound	Andreas Prescher, Daniel Iribarren, Adrian Baumeister
Music	Dickon Hinchliffe

Original title Wann wird es endlich wieder so, wie es nie war

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