

Beta Cinema
presents

T H E M E T H O D

with
**Hannah Herzsprung, Damian Hardung, Alexander Fehling,
Haley Louise Jones, Christian Friedel a.m.m.**

Written & directed by
Lena Stahl

Based on the novel by
Juli Zeh

Produced by
Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann, Laura Mihajlovic

World Sales
BETA CINEMA // beta@betacinema.com // Phone: +49 89 673469 828 // www.betacinema.com

Main Cast & Crew

Mia Holl
Moritz Holl
Heinrich Kramer
Christiane Bülow
Lutz Rosentreter
Sylta Falk
Prosecutor Bell
Judge Sophie
Franco
Tom
Julia

Hannah Herzsprung
Damian Hardung
Alexander Fehling
Haley Louise Jones
Christian Friedel
Imogen Kogge
Leopold Hornung
Agnes Decker
Ludger Bökelmann
Reza Brojerdi
Esther Bechtold

Written and directed by
Based on the novel by
Producers
Director of Photography
Production Design
Costume Design
Make Up Design
Editing
Casting
Music by
Production Managers
Line Producer
German Distributor
World Sales

Lena Stahl
Juli Zeh
Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann, Laura Mihajlovic
Philipp Haberlandt
Christian M. Goldbeck
Waris Klampfer
Kerstin Gaecklein, Anna von Gwinner
Barbara Gies
Alexandra Montag
Volker Bertelmann, Lennart Saathoff
Adam Porkert, Benedikt Maurer
Susann Funke El-Harif
Leonine
Beta Cinema

Germany, 2026 - 103 min

Short Synopsis

In the near future, "The Method" delivers perfect health and complete transparency to society. Scientist Mia Holl is thrown into turmoil when her brother Moritz is accused of murder, with evidence stacked against him. Refusing to accept his guilt, Mia defies a world where doubt is forbidden and truth is tightly controlled. As she fights to clear her brother's name, she must decide whom she can trust: her colleague Christiane, her brother's determined lawyer, or the charismatic journalist Kramer. Every step brings Mia closer to becoming a target herself. In her relentless search for justice, she risks everything and finds herself hunted by the very system she once served.

Based on the internationally bestselling novel, this tense, highly topical thriller from the producers of 'The Lives of Others' explores into the fragile balance between personal freedom and state control.

Production Notes

Ab initio – The Foundation

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. It is not merely the absence of disease.

Juli Zeh's novel **THE METHOD**, one of the most widely read contemporary German books and a required reading for high school graduation exams for several years, served as the basis for this intense thriller by writer and director Lena Stahl. At the center of the story is a society in which health and safety take precedence over everything else. Decisions are based on comprehensive data collection and precise analysis—until a seemingly flawless system emerges. But then a murder shakes the city. DNA evidence seems to clearly incriminate the perpetrator, but only his sister firmly believes in his innocence. This gives rise to a gripping mystery set in a world of control, power, and the struggle for freedom.

Juli Zeh originally wrote **THE METHOD** as a play commissioned by the RuhrTriennale. The play premiered in Essen on September 15, 2007. The novel was then published in 2009. The film rights were secured by the successful production company Wiedemann & Berg Film, run by Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann. "As a team, we're always on the lookout for the next big story and regularly discuss what's happening in the book market. A few years ago, a colleague handed me Juli Zeh's novel, and I read the blurb. I rarely manage to read an entire book right away. But **THE METHOD** fascinated me so much that I had finished it by the next morning," recalls producer Quirin Berg.

In the eyes of the Oscar®-winning producer ("The Lives of Others"), various aspects made *THE METHOD* ideal material for a major film adaptation: "First, there are external factors that make sense for a major film adaptation: For one thing, Juli Zeh is a fantastic author whose body of work is unique and who has consistently struck a chord with novels like *THE METHOD*. Over a million people have bought *THE METHOD*, so there are probably several million people who have read the novel. The popularity of the source material helps us position a feature film. Furthermore, **The Method** is required reading for the high school graduation exam in some German states. The book therefore has wide circulation, deep-rooted appeal, and relevance."

Among the internal factors is the subject matter, which in and of itself already holds the potential for a great film with a fascinating core concept, Quirin Berg continues. The producer explains: "We live today in a world where a certain degree of uncertainty prevails in many areas—whether social, cultural, political, economic, technological, or medical... On the one hand, people strive for optimization; on the other, many things are marked by big question marks. Such as the security situation, the question of how our society should ideally be governed, how decision-making processes take place in the world, what the conditions are regarding social inequality, and what kinds of technologies shape our everyday lives..."

And: To what extent can, do, or should we place decisions that affect our lives in the hands of third parties—whether in the hands of a government or in the hands of technology? How

important is individual freedom to us, and to what extent do we want to have a say and be masters of our own decisions and our own lives? To what extent are we perhaps also willing to set aside our own wishes and demands for the good of the community?

THE METHOD is a captivating thought experiment about what a form of society might look like if we were to confront all these issues with a view to their further development. “It’s purely a ‘what-if’ scenario. To me, the material has something utopian about it. The top priority for all of us today is to safeguard our quality of life and health. These two aspects take center stage in the world Zeh has sketched out. She shows us a society that is fully focused on this and willing to pay a high price for it,” says Quirin Berg.

For Quirin Berg, the world of THE METHOD is not only extremely exciting but also very cinematic. What makes the story so outstanding is the central dramatic question raised by the murder in this world, where there’s actually no room for doubt, the producer continued. “The evidence is clear; the perpetrator was convicted based on DNA. And yet, our heroine, in her unwavering belief in her brother, stands up against the system. That piques my curiosity, and I want to know how that’s possible. Together with Lena Stahl, we’ve turned this into a gripping thriller with a major dramatic dimension set in a fascinating world, where we follow a wonderful woman who, with great strength and unwavering resolve, follows her convictions, instincts, and heart as she stands up against something supposedly unshakable. That has a powerful, positive energy.”

Magnum ingenium – A Filmmaker with a Keen Instinct

Either you betray yourself, or you speak your mind and put yourself in danger. That’s how it is in your safe world. – Moritz Holl

According to Lena Stahl, it was a big leap from her 2021 feature film debut, “MY SON,” to a dramatic thriller like THE METHOD. The “Tatort: Was ihr nicht seht” episode, which she directed before her second feature film, served as a good exercise for her in combining the crime/thriller genre with a deeply personal drama—a combination that also defines THE METHOD. “It’s a genre I really enjoy, and at the same time, it’s a good vehicle for a very emotional and relevant story. That’s what THE METHOD is to me. At its core, it’s about a woman fighting for her brother’s freedom in a highly totalitarian system that stands against him.” Stahl recalls that it was above all this sibling relationship that she immediately connected with after reading Juli Zeh’s bestselling novel on which the film is based. The filmmaker also found the premise of the story—set in an unspecified near future—exciting.

“Thematically, it’s about the tension between freedom and security.”

Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann were already very impressed by Lena Stahl’s film “MY SON.” Quirin Berg says: “We hold Lena in high regard. She’s one of the few filmmakers in Germany who writes and directs—and does so at this level and with a distinct style. We’ve been in a productive dialogue for a long time, searching for the right material. With tremendous creativity and precision, she developed an impressive vision for CD; it was an intense process that was a lot of fun. And to me, the result is absolutely outstanding. From the inspiration of the source material to crafting this story, her work with the actors and

actresses, the world and the visuals she created here together with production designer Christian Goldbeck and cinematographer Philipp Haberlandt—she’s really pulled off a major success.”

“I had already read books by Juli Zeh, but not **THE METHOD** yet,” said Lena Stahl. She found the source material philosophically and politically very compelling, but also complex for an adaptation, since it deals heavily with inner processes. After reading it, she wrote a pitch that immediately convinced producer Quirin Berg. “Wiedemann & Berg Film stands for a certain kind of film. They produce high-quality projects, but always with an eye toward a broad audience, not a niche one. For me, this also sparked the desire to approach **THE METHOD** as a major thriller.”

With this in mind, and in agreement with Wiedemann & Berg Film, the foundation was laid. The next step was a meeting with Juli Zeh. “We talked a lot about what a film adaptation would mean—for me, for her. I was very happy that she quickly placed her trust in me and that, with her blessing, I could get started on the development. She gave me a great deal of freedom in the adaptation, knowing that the novel—which is, after all, based on a play she wrote—is highly allegorical, more of an experimental setup, a quality that’s also embedded in the characters. I suspect that’s also why Juli had a very open attitude toward the process of turning it into a screenplay.” Juli Zeh served as a consultant throughout the various stages of the adaptation. “It was important to her—but also to me—that it be my interpretation. I’d almost say the film is inspired by Juli’s book, and I think adaptations are, at their best, interpretations. So I’d say: Although you’ll find the premise in the film, it’s quite different from the novel,” says Lena Stahl.

The creative freedom that was important to Lena Stahl in order to make the material her own and bring it to the big screen was granted not only by Juli Zeh but also by Wiedemann & Berg Film, who proved to be ideal sparring partners. “What sets Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann apart is that they are both doers and enablers. They have that spark within them that makes them confident in taking on things others might be more likely to shy away from,” says Lena Stahl.

This “incredible energy” resonates deeply with her. “When I do things, I always give it 3,000 percent. And above all, I take a holistic approach—from writing to directing to the myriad creative aspects. I’m interested in everything, and I want to have control over it all.” The filmmaker praises Quirin Berg’s keen instincts, which he demonstrated during screenplay development and later, especially, during editing. “That’s a tremendous talent and a quality that’s important to me as a creative partner.”

Libertas vs. Securitas – The Core Theme

We’ve developed a method that enables everyone to live a life free of pain and suffering. We’re certain of it. Because reason has prevailed.

For Lena Stahl, the central theme of *THE METHOD* was the tension between freedom and security. “This is a very contemporary issue. On the one hand, we strive for maximum security and accept the consequences of being completely transparent; on the other hand,

there is individual freedom—the individual's desire for freedom. This raises the question: Why is so-called security even so desirable in the first place? What is the price we pay for it? Each and every one of us has this urge for freedom, yet at the same time we seek a framework of security around us, whether within the small circle of our family or in the communities we form. This is a very archaic theme, a major motif that has often been explored in literature and film. Precisely because it preoccupies and troubles people so much," says Lena Stahl.

External, state-imposed control plays a central role in *THE METHOD*. It, too, supposedly creates security. It, too, is a contemporary issue. In the world depicted in *THE METHOD*, everyone has chips implanted that store everything—from movement patterns and food intake to bank data. "While this is a vision of the future, we're not that far off. Tools like facial recognition are already in use; we pay with the chip in our phone or watch, track our stats through it, and so on," says Lena Stahl.

But the story also touches on a completely different, very subtle, interpersonal theme. *THE METHOD* is also about love—about the power that love and trust can unleash—"that out of love, one is willing to sacrifice everything, to risk everything, just as the main character does for her brother," says the filmmaker.

In medias res – An Adaptation as Interpretation

I know the method works. And yet I believe more in my brother's innocence than in my own existence. – Mia Holl

For Lena Stahl, the goal during screenplay development was to break down Juli Zeh's text, make it cinematic, and create suspense in the vein of a thriller plot. "And yet still retain its political and philosophical power. That was the big challenge," says the filmmaker. "The phrase 'inspired by' really applies to my film. It contains motifs from the novel, but it's a completely new narrative. There are different characters, different dynamics. Mia and Moritz's relationship takes place in the present... As a result, it addresses entirely different themes," says Lena Stahl.

The transition to a film was a big one, confirms producer Quirin Berg. "I'm very grateful to Juli Zeh for giving Lena Stahl and us the freedom to take what we found exciting from the novel, to develop it further in the spirit of the novel, while at the same time weaving it into a cinematic narrative—a coherent cinematic puzzle. Juli Zeh was always open to dialogue."

Lena Stahl took the first steps in screenplay development with Bernd Lange, a longtime friend and highly experienced screenwriter and dramaturg who not only served as a lecturer during Stahl's studies at the HFF Munich but has also collaborated with her twice before. "It was good to have Bernd by my side from the start. With him, I could bounce ideas back and forth and explore what lies within Juli Zeh's novel," says Stahl. "I gave a lot of thought to what the rules of a genre film are and how one can follow them—or break them."

At the same time, the challenge was to visualize this highly complex world—which is described rather casually in the source material—and to imagine how it would be realized in the cinematic space. Thus, exploring futurology formed a major part of Stahl's research for the screenplay: the development of cities, whether in terms of urban planning, public transportation, or even everyday objects.

Personae multiplices – The Characters and the Cast

At the center of THE METHOD are the siblings Mia and Moritz Holl. Mia works as a neurologist for “The Method,” which is considered infallible and grants people a life free of illness and a safe, violence-free world. The flip side of the coin is the round-the-clock surveillance of every individual's mental and physical state—enforced via an implanted chip—and a daily life on the streets monitored by drones. Moritz is a free spirit and opponent of “The Method” who likes to disable his implanted chip from time to time to enjoy life beyond the “hygiene zone,” with everything that being human entails. When Moritz is accused of the rape and murder of a young woman, Mia does everything in her power to save her brother. For although his DNA was found on the victim—making the evidence seem conclusive—Mia is certain of his innocence.

As Mia conducts her investigation, she is supported by her colleague Christiane Bülow, Moritz's court-appointed defense attorney Lutz Rosentreter, and the journalist Heinrich Kramer. The only question is whether everyone truly has her best interests at heart—or if they're actually on the side of “The Method”...

Mia Holl

“The Method” has virtually flawless data security, yes. But what about that tiny fraction where we might be wrong?

– Mia Holl

As a scientist, Mia is a rational, fact-oriented woman who has become very successful within the system of “The Method.” The positive aspect of “The Method” is that diseases have been virtually eradicated—from the slightest cold all the way to cancer—none of these illnesses exist anymore. As a doctor, she has made it her mission to help humanity and to further improve “The Method.”

However, she has already suffered a great loss in her family: her mother has passed away, and her father was expelled as an opponent of the System and forced to leave the Method. The pain from her past intensifies her determination to protect what she has. The personal freedom that her brother Moritz is so concerned with, Mia must first discover for herself, as well as the urge to be human. For humanity has become increasingly rare within the system, where even love is regulated by a state-run matchmaking service that brings genetically compatible couples together.

Mia Holl is played by **Hannah Herzsprung**, who previously appeared in Lena Stahl's feature film debut, "MY SON." "I immediately had Hannah in mind when writing Mia," says the filmmaker.

Moritz Holl

I am free, and that is why I am lost. – Moritz Holl

Moritz lives as a free spirit who flouts the rules of the Method. He lives in his late mother's house, regularly leaves the state-mandated hygiene zone, and wants to show Mia a bit of this free life. Mia, on the other hand, repeatedly takes responsibility for Moritz. This may also have to do with the fact that she has taken on the role of the absent parents. This allows Moritz to take liberties without thinking about what that means for others.

For Lena Stahl, Goethe's *Werther* was also a major literary inspiration for the character of Moritz. For Moritz, too, there is a dark side. It's about transcending boundaries and transcendence. Because the question hanging over him is: How far would one go to protect personal freedom?

Moritz Holl is played by **Damian Hardung**, who had already portrayed the role on stage in Cologne in 2022. "Together, we conceived Moritz for the film as a 'Stürmer und Dränger,'" says Lena Stahl. "A young man who will even cross physical boundaries for the sake of personal freedom."

Heinrich Kramer

People are fallible—that's just the way it is. And the Method is man-made. – Heinrich Kramer

Heinrich Kramer is the editor of the Method's own publication, "Common Sense." He enters Mia's life because he wants to write about the Moritz Holl case, which has the entire country in an uproar. Kramer is close to Sylta Falk, a defender of the Method, whom he regularly supplies with information.

Although Heinrich Kramer is on the other side, he also realizes that his convictions are beginning to waver because of Mia and the experiences he has with her and her dedication to her brother. He's torn inside. And yet he remains a proponent of the Method. Heinrich Kramer is a character for whom there is no alternative, because the Method saved him. "At one point, we also open a window into the past, where you get a sense of where the Method actually comes from and why society chose it in the first place," says Lena Stahl.

Lutz Rosentreter

I'm a public servant. Do you seriously think I'd put myself in a vulnerable position? Come on, Mia. There are ways and means. — Lutz Rosentreter

Lutz Rosentreter is Moritz Holl's court-appointed defense attorney. He is a civil servant who drowns out big questions with bootleg alcohol. "I found it interesting to portray someone who has settled into the system and goes with the flow, even if he isn't a true believer," says Lena Stahl. In Mia, Rosentreter encounters someone who sacrifices everything in the pursuit of the truth—someone who is unstoppable, even if it means she ends up in prison herself. "This heroic element ultimately rubs off on Rosentreter, and he'll take a courageous step," Stahl continues.

Lutz Rosentreter is played by **Christian Friedel**, who most recently enjoyed worldwide success in "The Zone of Interest" and also had a role in the acclaimed series "The White Lotus, Season 3." "Christian plays the role so brilliantly, capturing all of its resignation—that sense of having already given up—right up to a newfound courage," enthuses Lena Stahl.

Christiane Bülow

I don't even want to think about what might happen if you suggest that something isn't right here.—Christiane Bülow

Christiane Bülow is working with Mia Holl on the "Braincore" project, which can be used to read thoughts and help locked-in patients. After Christiane initially distances herself from her colleague because Mia directly attacks the system—thereby putting her in danger—she ultimately helps her solve Moritz's case.

Christiane Bülow is played by **Haley Louise Jones**, who has most recently appeared on the big screen in films such as "Allegro Pastell" and "Sad Jokes," and in TV series like "Berlin ER" and "Call My Agent Berlin."

"I really wanted Mia not to be an isolated figure within a system, as the novel portrays her, but rather to show her as a living, breathing woman with friends, colleagues, and a career she loves. That's why Christiane was important," says Lena Stahl, continuing: "The film's theme is told primarily through Mia's conflict, but you always need other characters to reflect the main character's value system and to experience her in as many facets as possible," says the filmmaker. "Christiane's attitude toward the method is different from Mia's. But she's important for helping us understand why there are people who continue to protect the system."

The Casting

Lena Stahl already had the actors for the siblings Mia and Moritz Holl in mind while writing the screenplay. "Hannah Herzsprung crept into my thoughts early on, and Damian Hardung also came to mind quickly," says the filmmaker. For Stahl, THE METHOD also stands out because the story is driven by a strong female character.

“There aren’t many major productions in Germany that feature female characters in leading roles. You also notice time and again that something like ‘star power’ is missing—the kind you find, for example, in France or, of course, the U.S. I think there are fantastic actors in our country – and we should make them our stars!”

Damian Hardung also has star power. Since “Maxton Hall,” the actor has been known around the world, but “Moritz” in *THE METHOD* is his first major leading role in a feature film. “Damian is incredibly ambitious and has developed wonderfully,” says Lena Stahl. She had been in contact with Hardung long before the casting process began. He had already played the role of Moritz Holl on stage and had a wealth of insights to share about it. “I found that exciting. Damian is an incredibly curious, well-educated, open-minded young man who engages deeply with political and philosophical topics. He was perfect as Moritz Holl.”

The rest of the cast was assembled together with casting director Alexandra Montag. “The dynamics between the characters are very important to me. It’s not just about big names and great actors and actresses, but above all about how they work together,” said Stahl. The filmmaker has always admired Alexander Fehling. “I hadn’t seen anything from him in a while, but I could easily picture him as Heinrich Kramer. Fortunately, an interesting dynamic developed between him and Hannah Herzsprung. That’s what mattered to me.”

Christian Friedel, who took on the role of Lutz Rosentreter, is just as much of a wild card. Lena Stahl is thrilled: “Christian Friedel brings something to the table that I’ve rarely encountered. Despite having such a stellar international career, he brings an incredible openness and modesty. On top of that, he and Hannah have known each other for ages and have worked together before. That was a huge gift.”

Regarding the casting of Haley Louise Jones, who plays Mia Holl’s colleague and friend Christiane Bülow, producer Quirin Berg says: “‘Berlin ER’ had just come out, and we were all thrilled with Haley.” Lena Stahl adds: “She’s a fantastic actress and brought a down-to-earth quality to the role. I thought that was important for the ensemble.”

Down to the smallest roles, **THE METHOD** is cast with great sensitivity and is absolutely spot-on. Stahl calls Imogen Kogge, who plays Sylta Falk, her “secret dream.” “I’m so happy she agreed to be part of it, even though her role is very small.” In addition to Agnes Decker, Leopold Hornung, and Ludger Bökelmann, Lena Stahl singles out Esther Bechtold, who plays a young guard. “We have Alexandra Montag to thank for casting Esther. Esther is a great discovery and shines in a role that tells a very powerful story without a single word.”

Spectaculum – Preparing with the Actors

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that one’s very existence is an act of rebellion. – Moritz Holl

Lena Stahl places great importance on rehearsing with the cast before filming begins. She prefers it when there's a period of rest between rehearsals and the start of filming, during which what has been rehearsed can sink in. However, given the stressful and tight schedule of a production, this is often not so easy to accomplish. "When you're working with such busy actors and actresses, it's anything but easy. I really felt that during THE METHOD. It was already a stroke of luck that we managed to coordinate our schedules at the same time."

On THE METHOD, the filmmaker collaborated for the first time with the renowned acting coach **Giles Foreman** from London's *Centre of Acting*, who has also supported major TV series projects such as "4 Blocks" and "Die Kaiserin." Lena Stahl cites the one-week rehearsal period they had together on set as the most important foundation for her work with the duo Hannah Herzsprung and Damian Hardung. "For me, the sibling relationship is the heart of the film. Knowing that time on set itself will be limited, it's essential to rehearse this central element in advance. Everything that isn't in the script but happens beneath the surface—we worked that out during that week with Giles, Hannah, Damian, and me as the foundation." It's not so much about individual scenes, but rather about truly sensing who the characters are, what their relationship is like, where the conflicts lie—in short, about the question of how to maximize their three-dimensionality, Stahl continues. "Once that foundation is laid, you draw on it on set."

Giles Foreman works according to a method all his own, one in which Lena Stahl was also involved. "Hannah, Damian, and I were completely on the same page afterward and had developed something that carried us through it all," Stahl recalls. The first week of filming began with the emotionally gripping prison scenes. "That was tough and was only possible because we had that week of rehearsals beforehand. I consider it essential for my work that we all know what we're talking about, that we know what lies beneath the surface. Only then can you tap into it when you enter the scene."

Quirin Berg also noticed the fine line between acting and directing: "Lena Stahl brought out the best in everyone. I think we see a side of each of them that's a pleasant surprise and that we haven't seen very often. These are very unique, complex roles. There isn't a single character who doesn't have surprising moments. None of the characters can be clearly categorized... They unfold in many layers. That's a quality that's particularly demanding for actors and requires very precise direction. All of that has come together here."

Mundus Futurus – World-Building with a First-Class Creative Team

In my dreams I see a city come to life. Where the houses wear hairstyles made of rusty antennas. Where owls live in shattered roof trusses. Where loud music, smoke sculptures, and the rich clack of billiard balls echo down from the upper floors of dilapidated industrial complexes. Where people shove their bikes into the bushes to park them and drink wine from dirty glasses. Where all the young girls wear the same denim jacket and constantly walk hand in hand, as if they were afraid. Afraid of the others. Of the city. Of life. There, I walk barefoot through construction sites and watch as the mud seeps between my toes. And the police stand nearby, smoking a cigarette. – Moritz Holl

Not only in front of the camera but also behind it, Lena Stahl collaborated with a remarkable team on *THE METHOD*, a team that helped build the world of this animated thriller. The team includes cinematographer **Philipp Haberlandt** (“*Babylon Berlin*,” “*Black Mirror*”), production designer **Christian M. Goldbeck** (Oscar® for “*All Quiet on the Western Front*,” “*Delicious*,” “*23,000 Lives*”), costume designer **Waris Klampfer** (“*My Son*,” “*Cicadas*”), as well as composers **Volker Bertelmann** (Oscar® for “*All Quiet on the Western Front*,” Oscar®-nominated for “*Conclave*”) and **Lennart Saathoff** (“*A House of Dynamite*”).

Prior to this, Lena Stahl had only worked with Waris Klampfer. However, she had known Christian M. Goldbeck personally for a long time, and Waris Klampfer and Christian M. Goldbeck, in turn, were part of the team behind Edward Berger’s “*All Quiet on the Western Front*” (for which Goldbeck won the Oscar). “So there were already certain connections among the four of us HoDs,” says Lena Stahl. She calls the collaboration an “absolute highlight. The four of us clicked right away.” They quickly found a shared vision for the world-building of **THE METHOD**.

The world of **THE METHOD** was already taking shape in Lena Stahl’s mind’s eye as she was writing the screenplay. “I originally come from a photography background, so I can’t help but visualize what’s written and imagine worlds in my mind’s eye. I create huge mood boards and collect references.” She shared this collection with production designer Christian M. Goldbeck, costume designer Waris Klampfer, and cinematographer Philipp Haberlandt. Together, they continued to explore how the ideas could be translated into reality. “The idea of telling the story in a very minimalist way helped us. That was the right approach. In my opinion, the world we’ve created is unlike anything seen before in German cinema. It’s our own vision of how to depict the future.”

The set and costume design are spot on. The locations—Mia’s apartment, her workplace, the prison visiting room, the courtroom—are minimalist but very stylish. For the costume design, themes included Scandinavian minimalism and modern textures, as well as the question of how individuality is expressed through fashion. “The set and costume design complemented each other very well; they blended together quite organically,” says Lena Stahl.

The collaboration with cinematographer Philipp Haberlandt developed just as organically. “It was a magical encounter with Philipp. I hope our paths cross again on future projects,” says the filmmaker. Direction and cinematography strongly set the tone on set. With Philipp, a very special dynamic emerged, and everything unfolded exactly as she envisioned—completely naturally, according to Stahl. “I have very clear visual ideas. It was wonderful that Philipp supported my vision. Everything went smoothly, at the highest creative level,” enthuses Stahl, who also mentions Steadicam operator Mark Rimmer in this context, noting that he fit into the team just as harmoniously. “Mutual trust was established quickly. That was essential. When we realized that a scene didn’t feel right on a dolly, we switched to a handheld camera. It was important to maintain a certain intimacy and liveliness alongside the stylish, finely lit wide shots.”

As for the score, Lena Stahl envisioned a blend of old and new, of rough and soft, masculine and feminine.

“On the one hand, there are many dramatic elements in the film; on the other hand, there’s the harshness of the system. For the score, I therefore wanted a symbiosis of electronic and classical music,” explains the filmmaker. Volker Bertelmann and Lennart Saathoff have “composed an extraordinary score that I love very much,” Stahl continues. She recalls that the Oscar®-winning composer wrote the so-called “Freedom Melody”—which Moritz Holl carries out into the world and which can be seen as the seed of what remains as a glimmer of hope at the end—right at the very beginning. “During our very first phone call, I sang a Swedish song to Volker that had been stuck in my head... An hour later, he called back and said, ‘I’ve got it!’ He had crafted a wonderful melody that ultimately became the final version. It was a fantastic, exciting collaboration with him,” says Stahl.

Quirin Berg also speaks very highly of the work of the creative team behind the camera, starting with production designer Christian M. Goldbeck, whose work he greatly appreciates, to Waris Klampfer, whose creative energy had already come to the fore as a costume design assistant on “All Quiet on the Western Front” and “Conclave,” to cinematographer Philipp Haberlandt, who captured the jointly developed vision in the right images, to Volker Bertelmann and Lennart Saathoff, who found a special musical tone and, with a grand score, successfully bridged the gap between dystopia, mystery, and intellectual play. We are immensely grateful to the entire team for their extraordinary work. “One might wonder why great genre cinema is so rare in Germany. It’s simply rare to find this level of quality. There aren’t many stories that possess such power. When you do find one, however, it takes the best in their field to do it justice and create extraordinary worlds that make people want to go to the movies.”

Scaena – A Mind Game of an Alternative Present

Mia: *I’m using my brain, Moritz!*

Moritz: *Is that why you live in a house like this? Where everyone keeps an eye on each other? Do you really think you’ve made it?*

Mia: *What about you? Do you feel comfortable surrounded by Mom’s old furniture?*

Moritz: *I love this house. Not everything that’s old is bad.*

THE METHOD was filmed in the summer of 2025. “Producer Laura Mihajlovic from Wiedemann & Berg Film was on set every day, by my side every day. The clear vision we shared for the film—together with the HoDs, the crew, and the cast—carried us through all the ups and downs and ultimately allowed us to overcome all the major challenges,” says Lena Stahl.

While filming took place almost exclusively “on location,” production designer Christian Goldbeck had Mia’s apartment built in a studio. This location was meant to be unique and fully reflect the unseen world of the Method. “We put a lot of thought into what the city

should look like. We didn't want to depict a clearly identifiable place or create a direct comparison, but rather to show a vision of a major European city in the near future," said Lena Stahl. Therefore, in addition to the existing filming locations, elaborate VFX elements and virtual set extensions were required—elements that had to be planned for during filming and that enhance the film's cinematic dimension and unique look.

"For me, the story is very much anchored in the here and now. We had no ambitions to be overly futuristic. For me, the world is more of a thought experiment about an alternative present. There's almost nothing in the film that couldn't exist exactly as it is today," says Quirin Berg.

In addition to set extensions, the VFX team worked with motion graphics for the so-called subjective shots. THE METHOD is set in a world where cell phones and screens no longer exist. People now only wear lenses in their eyes that create a virtual reality and through which they can read and process content. "I'm very glad that my brother supported us with the motion graphics design; he's worked as a concept artist on major productions like *The Hunger Games*," says Lena Stahl. "He helped us find the right aesthetics for the subjective shots. What we've created here is unprecedented in German cinema."

For producer Quirin Berg, given the tight production schedule, it was all the more important to give Lena Stahl the necessary space to develop the material and realize her vision, and to pave the way for her. He was deeply involved in *THE METHOD* as a producer. "I'm very pleased that Lena and the entire team succeeded in finding a vision that combines the novel's potential with our production capabilities, while doing justice to both our personal take on the material and the responsibility that comes with adapting such a beloved novel. The initial wave of reactions following the release of the trailer and first images confirms that we've struck the right chord with the many fans."

Conclusion – Last but not least

Either you betray yourself, or you speak your mind and put yourself in danger. That's how it is in your safe world. – Moritz Holl on Mia Holl

For Lena Stahl and Quirin Berg, THE METHOD is a film that resonates. "I hope it sparks conversations among people," says Lena Stahl. Even the test screenings with a very diverse audience have shown just how deeply these issues resonate.

"I think it's our responsibility to stay vigilant. Through film, through art, I can draw attention to these issues. For me, as a creative person, it's become increasingly important to address questions in my work that I find relevant, that I find pressing, and that I believe should be discussed. And I hope that THE METHOD achieves that—with moviegoers of all ages."

The filmmakers agree that THE METHOD belongs on the big screen. Quirin Berg explains: "As producers, we have to have a very clear answer to the question, 'Why do people go to the movies?' We all know there are many alternatives these days. We love the movies, believe in the movies, and see that people enjoy going to the movies. But a movie has to have a compelling hook; there has to be a reason that makes it truly worthwhile. And I'm

firmly convinced that THE METHOD is an outstanding reason to go to the movies. The atmosphere, the visuals, the theme, the cast... The whole package speaks for itself. We all want to go to the movies to be entertained and to see something we can't see anywhere else. With THE METHOD, that's exactly what will happen. It's a film that will stay with you for a while, that continues to resonate, and that you'll be talking about for a long time to come."

In Front of the Camera

Hannah Herzsprung (Mia Holl)

HANNAH HERZSPRUNG made her major international breakthrough as the lead actress in Chris Kraus's box-office hit *FOUR MINUTES* (2006), for which she was honored as a European Shooting Star at the 2008 Berlinale and received, among other accolades, the Bavarian Film Award, a nomination for the German Film Award, and a dozen other international awards. She went on to collaborate with the filmmaker twice more: on **THE FLOWERS OF YESTERDAY** (2016) and **15 YEARS** (2023), for which she received another nomination for Best Actress at the German Film Awards in 2024.

Hannah Herzsprung has not only taken on leading roles in films such as Baran bo Odar's **WHO AM I: NO SYSTEM IS SAFE** (2014), Dominik Graf's **THE BELOVED SISTERS**, which was in competition at the 2014 Berlinale and was selected as an Oscar nominee in 2015, **SWEETHEARTS** (2019) by Karoline Herfurth, **THE FLYING CLASSROOM** (2023) by Carolina Hellsgård, and the two **WOODWALKERS** films (2024 & 2026), but she has also appeared in successful German series such as "BABYLON BERLIN" (since 2017).

She demonstrated her versatility as a character actress in German arthouse cinema with leading roles in **MACKIE MESSER – BRECHT'S THREE PENNY FILM** (2018) and **MONTE VERITA – THE RUSH OF FREEDOM** (2021). Most recently, she played a leading role in David Dietl's **A MAN FROM MUNICH IN HEAVEN – DEATH IS ONLY THE BEGINNING** (2026) and in Dani Levy's new film **KOCHSCHULE SCHWARZ**.

Damian Hardung (Moritz Holl)

DAMIAN HARDUNG made his big international breakthrough as the lead actor in the Prime Video young-adult series "MAXTON HALL – THE WORLD BETWEEN US," which became a massive global hit. The third and final season premieres soon. Born in Cologne, he began acting in front of the camera as a teenager and made a name for himself with his role in the series "The Red Band Society." The series was followed by a feature film in 2019, in which he reprised his role.

Damian Hardung made his film debut in **TRANSPAPA** (2012) by Sarah-Judith Mettke. His other film projects include **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD** (2018) by Aron Lehmann, **AUERHAUS** (2019) by Neele Leana Vollmar, and **STELLA. A LIFE.* (2023) by Kilian Riedhof.

His TV filmography includes the internationally produced series "THE NAME OF THE ROSE," "YESTERDAY WE WERE STILL CHILDREN," the German Netflix hit "HOW TO SELL DRUGS ONLINE (FAST)," "LOVE SUCKS," and the award-winning drama "BIS ZUR WAHRHEIT."

Alexander Fehling (Heinrich Kramer)

ALEXANDER FEHLING was born in Berlin in 1981. After graduating from the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin, he appeared in various stage productions. In Robert Thalheim's **AND THERE WILL BE TOURISTS** (2007), Alexander Fehling played a person performing community service at Auschwitz and received the German Film Encouragement Award in the acting category for his role.

In 2009, Fehling appeared in Hans-Christian Schmid's war crimes drama **STORM**, and his role in Quentin Tarantino's blockbuster **INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS** (2009) garnered international attention. Philipp Stölzl's **GOETHE!** (2010) cemented Alexander Fehling's status as a star. For his leading role, he was nominated for the German Film Award, received the Jupiter Award in the category of Best Actor in Germany, and the German Metropolis Directing Award. He was also honored as one of the "Shooting Stars of European Cinema" at the 2011 Berlinale. Also in competition at the Berlinale was Andres Veiel's **WHO IF NOT US**, in which Alexander Fehling played the role of RAF terrorist Andreas Baader. This was followed by a leading role in Toke Constantin Hebbeln's drama **VINCENT WANTS TO SEA** (2012). In 2015, he was honored with the Bavarian Film Award for his leading role in the internationally acclaimed film **THE LABYRINTH OF LIES**.

Alexander Fehling also enjoyed great success as part of the ensemble cast of the fifth season of the hit series "HOMELAND" with Claire Danes and Mandy Patinkin, and in 2016 appeared in front of the camera in *A HIDDEN LIFE*, directed by Terrence Malick. In 2017, Fehling appeared in Matti Geschonneck's **IN TIMES OF DIMMING LIGHT**, as well as in Jan Zabeil's **THREE PEAKS**, which won the coveted Variety© Piazza Grande Award at the 70th Locarno Film Festival. That same year, he also appeared on stage at Schauspiel Frankfurt in "Seven Against Thebes/Antigone," directed by Ulrich Rasche. For his role in Robert Schwentke's **DER HAUPTMANN**, Alexander Fehling received a nomination for the German Film Award (Best Supporting Actor) in 2018 and appeared in the Amazon Prime series "Beat."

Most recently, Alexander Fehling appeared on stage at the Burgtheater in Vienna in Andrea Breth's production of "A Long Day's Journey Into Night." In 2019, he was awarded the German Film Award (Best Supporting Actor) and the German Film Critics' Award (Best Actor) for his supporting role in Philipp Leinemann's political thriller **THE END OF TRUTH** (2018). That same year, he starred alongside Nora Tschirner in **GUT GEGEN NORDWIND**, the film adaptation of Daniel Glattauer's bestselling novel. In 2021, he filmed **WANN KOMMST DU MEINE WUNDEN KÜSSEN** with director Hanna Doose, which celebrated its world premiere at the Munich Film Festival in 2022. In 2022, he once again appeared in front of the camera under the direction of Robert Schwentke for **SENECA – ODER: DIE GEBURT VON ERDBEBEN**, which premiered as a special screening at the 2023 Berlinale, and in 2023 he filmed the Sky series "Helgoland" with Schwentke once more. He celebrated the world premiere of Thomas Arslan's **SCORCHED EARTH** at the 2024 Berlinale. In 2025, he starred alongside Barbara Sukowa in Frauke Finsterwalder's **EUROTRASH**, based on

the novel by Christian Kracht. He has just wrapped filming on the feature film **ABOUT FEAR**, directed by Johannes Naber.

Haley Louise Jones (Christiane Bülow)

After completing her acting training, HALEY LOUISE JONES took on various roles in film and television before making her big-screen debut in 2021 with Sarah Blaßkiewitz's **IVIE WIE IVIE**. For this role, she was honored with a nomination for the German Acting Award in the category "Best Dramatic Leading Role."

This was followed by leading roles in the award-winning Netflix series "LIEBES KIND" (Emmy® Award) by Isabell Kleefeld and Julian Pörksen, as well as in Mark Schlichter's **ALFONS ZITTERBACKE – ENDLICH KLASSENFAHRT!** and Fabian Stumm's **KNOCHEN UND NAMEN**. The actress also appeared in Fabian Stumm's award-winning **SAD JOKES**, for which she was later honored with the German Acting Award in the category of Best Supporting Role in a Drama. She also starred in Kerstin Polte's **BLINDGÄNGER** and the remake of the classic **MOMO**.

In 2025, Haley Louise Jones starred as the ambitious doctor Dr. Suzanne Parker in the highly acclaimed Apple TV+ series "BERLIN ER," whose second season was recently produced in Berlin. In 2026, she will appear in two film adaptations of books: "THE METHOD" and "ALLEGRO PASTELL."

Christian Friedel (Lutz Rosentreter)

CHRISTIAN FRIEDEL is one of the most versatile artists of his generation. On the big screen, he has delivered standout performances in films such as **THE ZONE OF INTEREST**, **13 MINUTES**, and **THE WHITE RIBBON**; TV series fans also know him from the hit shows "BABYLON BERLIN" and "THE WHITE LOTUS." In addition to his work in front of the camera, Friedel regularly performs on renowned stages in Germany and also works as a theater director. As a musician, he is the frontman of the band *Woods of Birnam*, which also accompanies him in select theater productions. His upcoming film projects include **ATHOS 2643** and **THE IDIOTS**.

Behind the Camera

Lena Stahl (Drehbuch/Regie)

LENA STAHL studied directing and screenwriting first at the European Film College in Denmark, then at the University of Television and Film (HFF) in Munich, where she graduated with the medium-length film “EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE,” which enjoyed success at international film festivals. After several years of production work in Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, she began her career as a screenwriter. She participated in the renowned international screenwriters’ workshop *eQuinox* and wrote, among other things, two episodes of the Netflix series “DIE KAISERIN” and co-wrote Karoline Herfurth’s box-office hit **BEAUTIFUL** (2022).

Lena Stahl made her directorial debut with **MY SON** (2021) for Warner Bros., starring Anke Engelke and Jonas Dassler. The film celebrated its world premiere at the Munich Film Festival and won the New German Cinema Award.

In 2022, Lena Stahl directed her first **Tatort** episode, titled “Was ihr nicht seht.” She wrote the screenplay for this ratings hit based on a story by Peter Dommaschk and Ralf Leuther.

THE METHOD is Lena Stahl’s second feature film. Her photographs are regularly exhibited in the Leica Galleries, with which she has a long-standing collaboration.

Juli Zeh (Writer of the novel)

JULI ZEH was born on June 30, 1974, in Bonn and is a German lawyer and writer.

After graduating from high school, Juli Zeh studied law with a focus on international law in Passau, Kraków, New York—where she completed an internship at the UN—and Leipzig, and earned her doctorate in 2010 from the University of Saarbrücken.

Starting in 1996, she was also enrolled at the German Literature Institute in Leipzig, where she earned her diploma four years later.

Juli Zeh enjoyed great success as early as 2001 with her debut novel, **Adler und Engel**. The book has been translated into 31 languages. Her subsequent books also garnered attention, such as the 2001 travel diary about Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Die Stille ist ein Geräusch**; the 2004 novel **Spieltrieb**, a sort of philosophical crime thriller set at a high school in Bonn; and the 2009 novel **Corpus Delicti / The Method**, a story about a future health dictatorship. In 2012, she published the relationship drama **Neuzeit**; in 2016, the social novel **Unterleuten**, which was adapted for television; followed in 2017 by the novel **Leere Herzen**, a year later by **Neujahr**, and in 2021 by **Über Menschen**. Together with Simon Urban, she published “Zwischen Welten” in 2023.

Zeh has received numerous awards for her work. She is also politically active.

Wiedemann & Berg Film (Production Company)

A pioneering spirit, a focus on quality, collaboration with outstanding creative talent, and a great team have made WIEDEMANN & BERG one of the most successful production companies in Germany. Wiedemann & Berg Film was founded in 2003 by Quirin Berg and Max Wiedemann.

Wiedemann & Berg Film's first feature film was Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's directorial debut, **THE LIVES OF OTHERS**, which won an Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film in 2007. In 2019, Henckel von Donnersmarck's **NEVER LOOK AWAY** also received two Oscar® nominations. Other No. 1 box office hits include Baran bo Odar's hacking thriller **WHO AM I – NO SYSTEM IS SAFE** (2014), Simon Verhoeven's comedy **WELCOME TO THE HARTMANN'S** (2016), which was the most successful German film of the year with nearly 3.9 million theatergoers, as well as **NIGHTLIFE**, the most successful German film of 2020. Marc Rothemund's *WOCHENENDREBELLEN* (2023) and Simon Verhoeven's *GIRL YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE* and *ALTER WEISSER MANN* (2024) are among the most recent productions. Also included are *ALLES FIFTY FIFTY* (2024) by Alireza Golafshan, *DER VIERER* (2024) by Iván Sáinz-Pardo, as well as David Dietl's *LONG STORY SHORT* (2024) and *EIN MÜNCHNER IM HIMMEL – DER TOD IST ERST DER ANFANG* (2026).

In the family entertainment sector, Wiedemann & Berg Film has enjoyed great success with the *DIE DREI ???* films. The first installment, *DIE DREI ??? – ERBE DES DRACHEN*, premiered in theaters in January 2023 and drew 1.6 million viewers. The second installment, *THE THREE ??? AND THE CARPATHIAN DOG*, hit theaters in January 2025. The next one, *THE THREE ??? – DEATH ISLAND*, is set for January 2026.

Upcoming theatrical productions include, in addition to **CORPUS DELICTI**, **ACCOMPLICES – REASON IS NO SOLUTION** by Sonja Heiss, **BIBI BLOCKSBERG – THE TOTALLY ENCHANTED TIME TRAVEL** by Gregor Schnitzler, and Philipp Stölzl's **FRANKIE**.

Wiedemann & Berg Film is a subsidiary of LEONINE Studios.