



Verfluchte Liebe deutscher Film

Doomed Love – A Journey through German Genre Films

Dominik Graf, Johannes F. Sievert

Producer Johannes F. Sievert, Jan Löffler. **Production company** Augustin Film (Berlin, Germany). **Written and directed by** Dominik Graf, Johannes F. Sievert. **Director of photography** Hendrik A. Kley. **Editor** Patricia Testor, Claudia Wolscht, Sebastian Bonde. **Music** Florian van Volxem, Sven Rossenbach. **Sound design** Luigi Rensinghoff. **Sound** Sergio Campanese. **Costumes** Ute Paffendorf.

DCP, colour & black/white. 90 min. German.

Premiere 19 February 2016, Berlinale Forum

Don't we all feel the same longing for German films that break ranks, that are wild and sensual, that possess a true physicality? Dominik Graf's thrillers, the articles he's written on cinema and his new documentary all tell of this longing. What happened to this section of our film tradition, which in the 1970s and 80s brought forth a genre cinema that showed a very different Germany, one looking into the abyss?

Even before Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, there were reflections of neon signs in nocturnal streets and a dark angel who wanted to rescue a prostitute in Roland Klick's *Supermarkt* (1973). Klaus Lemke and Roland Klick sit before Graf's camera as nonchalantly as their heroes and rave about how actors who make full use of their bodies. At first, post-war Germany did not want maimed bodies sweaty with exertion, until Mario Adorf and Klaus Kinski brought back the need for the physical. Suddenly, there was space for violent, bloody and dirty stories, with the RAF's first department store bomb reverberating through films such as *Blutiger Freitag* (1972). This is another way of telling German history.

Anke Leweke

Treasures of genre cinema

The documentary film *Verfluchte Liebe deutscher Film* (cursed love for German film) takes us on a journey to the nightshade plants in the cellars of German film. Many of them are real treasures of genre cinema. With a burning pleasure in discovery, we talk with historians and primarily with protagonists of our history to provide viewers with a glimpse of the suppressed maelstroms of German film.

Verfluchte Liebe deutscher Film is the story of a difficult love: the love for German film. And it presents some of the best and simultaneously least-known films of our country.

Dominik Graf: 'Over the years, I have discovered and rediscovered a lot of strange, fascinating films that have often inspired me more than the films "certified" as artistically valuable. We have too many "good" films, anyway: nice films, decent films, formally assiduous films... At the movies, I always loved the "dirt" and sought the "dangerous" – that's what I consider the essence of film.'

Johannes F. Sievert: 'The first time I saw bounce-back guys like Theo (Marius Müller-Westernhagen) and his buddy, the fantastic Guido Gagliardi, in *Invitation to the Dance* and *Theo Against the Rest of the World*, I realised that a different gaze was cast at our country: here someone was showing a different dream of happiness than earlier West German movies and TV did, stories of outsiders and their pursuit of happiness. With a downright laconic American style à la Howard Hawks, yet autonomous, and unmistakably German.'

Johannes F. Sievert, Dominik Graf

The Woman who Weeps and Waves. On Klaus Lemke's *Sylvie* (1973)

In New York, Lemke veritably bubbles over with ideas, and more than ever the editing seems dead certain in its rhythm and its choice of the right material. For twenty minutes, the director and editor [Peter Przygodda] jointly narrate how a little affection turns into what seems like love when the other person is absent. Only in New York does Sylvie fall in love with the man she kissed in Munich and who she hopes is waiting for her there.

And what a hodgepodge of means currently despised in movies and television this film contains, rather than editing them out: the people in cafés, street scenes and trains are constantly looking directly into the camera! The zoom that constantly pulls people out of their surroundings into their solitude – the zoom has almost completely vanished from world cinema. Totally overexposed sequences show pale figures that become recognisable only when they enter a tunnel. The use of leading characters' off-camera commentaries seems completely inconsistent here: sometimes with her, sometimes with him and once Paul Lyss even speaks live directly into the picture we see of Sylvie, and then the camera pans to him while he speaks.

In the end, Paul flees from Sylvie's infatuation back to sea. She weeps and waves and weeps. We see that she loves her tears maybe even more than him. Only Lemke/Przygodda films are sometimes even a bit more beautiful than Lemke films.

Dominik Graf, in: *Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen. Texte zum Film*, ed. by Michael Althen, Alexander Verlag Berlin, 2009, p. 43

The Marnie Syndrom. On Wolfgang Büld's *Penetration Angst* (2003)

Sex and crime and fun was the battle cry of a certain generation of German directors of the 1980s, the time that today's critics and historians want to see as a downright void in German film. Instead, we are now headed full-tilt back to the old artistic correctness of the auteur film and to serious world prestige. Accordingly, it seems only logical when someone like Wolfgang Büld, who happily mixes and jumbles the genres, sidesteps first to video (*Drop Out*, 1998) and then to England as a shooting location. In the 'Making of' on the DVD, one again gets an inkling of how much fun it can be to film so joyfully independently and in freedom.

Dominik Graf, in: *Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen. Texte zum Film*, ed. by Michael Althen, Alexander Verlag Berlin, 2009, p. 63



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Dominik Graf was born in Munich, Germany in 1952. He studied in the Film Department of the University of Television and Film in Munich from 1974 to 1980. He made his first film, *Der kostbare Gast*, in 1978. Since then, Dominik Graf has made more than fifty films for cinema and television. In addition to working as a director and writer, he is also a professor of Feature Film Directing at the Internationale Filmschule Köln (ifs).

Films

1979: *Der kostbare Gast* (60 min.). 1982: *Das zweite Gesicht* (101 min., Berlinale Neue Deutsche Filme 1983). 1987: *Die Katze* (117 min.). 1990: *Spieler* (111 min.). 1994: *Der Sieger* (134 min.). 2001: *Der Felsen* (117 min., Berlinale Competition 2002). 2005: *Der rote Kakadu* (128 min., Berlinale Panorama 2006). 2010: *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens* (Berlinale Forum 2010, TV-series, 10 x 47 min.). 2011: *Dreileben* (89 min., TV-movie, part 2 "Komm mir nicht nach", Berlinale Forum 2011), *Lawinen der Erinnerung* (89 min., Berlinale Forum 2012). 2014: *Die geliebten Schwestern* (140 min., Berlinale Competition 2014). 2015: *Was heißt hier Ende?* *Der Filmkritiker Michael Althen* (120 min., Berlinale Forum 2015). 2016: *Verfluchte Liebe deutscher Film / Doomed Love – A Journey through German Genre Films*.



Johannes F. Sievert was born in Bielefeld, Germany in 1968. He studied Film and Television, Theatre, and Political Science at the Ruhr University in Bochum, as well as in Cologne and Berlin. After graduation, he worked as, among other things, a unit manager and assistant director for international television, film, and advertising productions. From 2002 to 2005, Sievert studied

Directing at the International Film School in Cologne. In 2011, he founded the Augustin Film production company. Along with Dominik Graf, he is the co-editor of the publication *Im Angesicht des Verbrechens: Fernseharbeit am Beispiel einer Serie* (In the face of crime: Television work using the example of a series, 2010).

Films

2005: *Koma* (11 min.). 2009: *Junge Hunde* (70 min.). 2010: *Sinan G* (Episode in: *Zeche is nich - Sieben Blicke auf das Ruhrgebiet 2010*, 20 min.), *Gangsta Fiction – Im Angesicht des Verbrechens: Making of* (30 min.). 2015: *Von Zeit zu Zeit* (100 min.). 2016: *Verfluchte Liebe deutscher Film / Doomed Love – A Journey through German Genre Films*.