79
Locarno Film Festival
CONCORSO CINEASTI DEL PRESENTE
OFFICIAL SELECTION

Morgen ist länger als vorher

Press Notes

Morgen vor langer Zeit

TOMORROW A LONG TIME AGO

Amid German reunification in 1990, 50-year-old Patty first loses her job and then her friend Jelena. In a small East German town, she collects discarded objects and meets the younger Franz. When her apartment becomes so full of belongings that she can no longer enter it, she sets out into a colorful forest. A journey through landscapes and history begins—carrying away more than just her.

A Film by
Luise Donschen

starring
Gerti Drassl
Manuela Biedermann
Pola Friedrichs
Clemens Bobke
Nele Christoph
Uwe Preuss
Jan Kampmann
Peter Schneider

Germany / 1h30 / 1.33:1 / colour / 2026
German with English Subtitles

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Press Notes

Locarno Screenings
Industry Screening
TBA

Press Screening
TBA

World Premiere
14th August 2026
11:30 am
Palacinema 1

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79
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CONCORSO CINEASTI DEL PRESENTE
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Contents

[6]
“The Spirit of a Place”
Interview with Luise Donschen

[11]
Luise Donschen
Biography and Filmography

[12]
Cast

[14]
Crew

[16]
Production Companies

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The Spirit of a Place

Luise Donschen in conversation with Patrick Holzapfel

[Patrick Holzapfel]
Do you believe in ghosts?

[Luise Donschen]
I do believe in the spirit of a place. It consists of the people who used to live there, but also those who live there now, as well as the animals, stones, and plants. I experience that in my life when visiting places. Yet I have never had an experience with a ghost. I would be open to one, though.

[PH]
Let's talk about the spirit of places then. Your film is set in a specific landscape in the former GDR, Eastern Germany, the place of the peasants' war. Watching the film, we get a strong feeling about where we are. At the same time, though, you don't really name the places Bad Frankenhausen or Bitterfeld. It somehow remains more abstract, almost like an intermediate world. Could you say something about that? How did you come to this place?

[LD]
I know Bad Frankenhausen from my childhood. I've always been fascinated by the "Peasants' War Panorama" by Werner Tübke and the Kyffhäuser Monument, which is on the other side of the hill. The latter is the only nationalist Emperor William monument that wasn't destroyed during socialism. These two warring monuments, one representing revolution by peasants, the other the power of the emperor, intrigued me. I also became interested in the Kyffhäuser as the smallest low mountain range we have in Germany. I thought that with its 6 km width and 12 km length, I had a chance to experience it by wandering through. I worked on this film for eight years, and after a while, I felt that I understood the place and could translate that understanding into a film. When we went there with the crew, I had a relationship with the places and the people inhabiting them.

[PH]
Your understanding of place gets enhanced by the way you weave together different stories and protagonists in your film. For example, there are traces you make us aware of in the beginning that return towards the end. Some of them are bigger, some smaller. Motifs, characters, or developments over time. Sometimes you seem to work across just a few square meters, only to reveal a huge historical panorama. It's a very precise work in that regard. How did you work on the script?

[LD]
The writing was inspired by being in the places themselves. I spent a lot of time there, knowing that I wanted to tell a story about German reunification and that my protagonists should arrive at the Kyffhäuser at some point. However, I wanted to understand better how the space and all its historical layers come together. After a while, I found and developed my main protagonist, Patty. She is a woman collecting objects and getting lost in the process of reunification. Her world vanishes, and she decides to retreat into the landscape. The film consists of three parts, two women and one girl: Jelena, Patty, and Grace. They inhabit this landscape at different moments in time. Patty is there mainly in 1990, Jelena and Grace are there today. There are movements between these different periods, making them move through each other. We could also call them loops. These loops were already present in the script, but they fully emerged and found their rhythm in the editing process.

[PH]
These loops are accompanied by soundscapes. For example, when Jelena arrives at the so-called "Blutrinne", a hollow way in the mountain range where one of the bloodiest massacres of the Peasant's War took place, we hear sounds of a battle. Later, we also hear the screams of people demanding democracy and, at one point, chants against foreigners. These cries from different directions at different times started to merge in my head. How did you employ them in your film?

[LD]
Two revolutions took place in this area in different ways, and with different results: the so-called Early Bourgeois Revolution during the peasants' war and the so-called Peaceful Revolution in the GDR. In the character of Patty, both of them come together via the Blutrinne. The peasants were massacred in this ravine, and Patty disappears there after suffering from the aftereffects of the Peaceful Revolution. It was peaceful, but people still had to pay a price. At the same time, the question of

what comes next is always lurking. What could be the next revolution? For me, it's an open question. Nevertheless, we can hear cries and commotion caused by attacks on foreigners on the eve of reunification. Thus, racism became entrenched in the process of German reunification at a very early stage.

[PH]
How does the latent feeling of threat or violence relate to this? I am thinking of the motocross rider Jelena meets in the beginning or the presence of military, for example.

[LD]
I have always experienced the area around the Kyffhäuser as a very male-dominated landscape. There are many motorcyclists; it's almost impossible to stand anywhere in this hill range without hearing motorbikes. There is also the worship of emperors or knights associated with the Kyffhäuser Monument. The right wing of the AFD held historic meetings there. And the German Panzer Battalion is stationed in the area. You can see soldiers eating ice cream on the main square. So, there is a potential for violence in the presence of this place, which is connected to different periods of the past. Some of it I show, others I don't. Above all, it's a decision based on what I can bear to see and hear.

[PH]
Your protagonist is a woman losing her livelihood. You show how things lose their value. It's quite a disillusioning look at the reunification. You were born in East Berlin. To what extent is it also a personal film?

[LD]
When the *Wende* took place, I was seven years old. I lived in East Berlin then. That makes a difference compared with the people I show in my film. My father could easily go to West Berlin to work. We stayed in the same city. In contrast to many people in the GDR, we didn't have to move to find another job. Nevertheless, I felt at the mercy of history. Up to this point, my childhood had felt like an eternal present, and then suddenly there was a before and an after. I experienced the monetary and material devaluation that I show in the film. All these things I had used suddenly had no value anymore. It was hard to understand. This feeling of something that apparently no longer exists, although it is still around you, is very important for the film. There are layers to it. When does the present become history? How does history make itself felt in the present? This is why there is a sort of opaqueness in the production design and costumes. It feels as if one were being confronted with overlapping layers of time. As a child, this sensation frightened me; today I find it rather exciting. There is an ambivalence in this experience of time, and I don't want to resolve it or turn it into a judgment. I want to remain close to its complexity and the shimmering impressions that appear when different times, memories, and materials begin to coexist.

[PH]
The objects you describe are everywhere in the film. The money, the box with toys standing in the rain, a vase, cassettes, and so on. In recent years, I have had the feeling that this specific time of the *Wende* has garnered more interest in Germany. There were some public debates, books, and films. Why do you think that is?

[LD]
Beyond a certain nostalgia for that time, what is particularly interesting to me is what an East German perspective on this time could be. It's important to look at the time of the Wende because, in today's discourse, a supposed lack of democratic understanding in the East is often explained almost exclusively through the decades of the GDR. But much less attention is paid to the democratic failures of the German reunification itself. In my opinion, we have to ask where exactly a deficit in democratic understanding was produced in the early 1990s.

[PH]
I find Gerti Drassl's performance as Patty very impressive. She is withdrawn and very present at the same time. Nevertheless, her acting seems not to be psychological at all. How did you work with her?

[LD]
Gerti has a timeless quality. In one moment she is childlike; in another, she appears like a creature from a fairy tale. She has an extraordinary ability to transform her appearance. When I met her in Vienna, I filmed her walking and eating an apple. Then I asked her to look into the camera lens in three different ways: first, as if her colleagues at work had been dis-

missed; then, as if she were harvesting potatoes; and finally, as if the tent she had been living in had caught fire. When she did that, I jumped up and down with excitement; it was exactly what I wanted. To me, acting is about the moment an expression is just about to be seen. There should be a vividness to it, a flash of something in a gaze or a gesture. The moment it appears, it should already be over again. That's important in cinema for me. There is a possibility of stepping back, so that you can perceive what overwhelms you in the flood of daily life. A reduction and isolation can help us to perceive where and how movements or situations begin to feel like happiness, or sadness, or dismay.

[PH]
Can you tell me something about the film factory where Patty works before she is dismissed? Is it based on a real film factory?

[LD]
The historical model is the ORWO factory and the East German film material that was produced in Bitterfeld. Interestingly, there is a successor called Filmotec, which basically still produces film on a smaller scale. The workers there all worked for ORWO too. They took over the machines and some of the old equipment. They still use the old forms and film cans from ORWO—more than 30 years later. It's like a living museum. In the film, you can see Patty perforating the film strip before examining whether the spacing is right. As in the other scenes, I am not interested in historical accuracy. Of course, they have new sockets in the factory. I am interested in where the present and the past meet and merge. That's what makes this factory fit so perfectly into the film.

[PH]
The presence of the film strip also relates to Jelena's drawings in the first episode of your film. There is also the Panorama Museum. They all ask the same question: How do we represent what we can see? How can we represent the past?

[LD]
There is also the archival television footage relating to the Peaceful Revolution. The panorama and television are the two forms of historical representation we have regarding these events. These two media also speak of their respective times.

[PH]
Another medium seems to be nature, doesn't it? There are stones and trees, all witnesses to history in their own way.

[LD]
It's about broadening classical concepts of history. I want to go beyond the chronological order of events and look at how history is embedded in nature. From there, it rebounds into our own time. It's a small version of how we can think about the Anthropocene: the traces we leave in nature.

[PH]
It's again about layers deposited in a landscape.

[LD]
That's the way it is, but it is difficult or even impossible to film. It has to remain a feeling. Yet this hill forms a certain habitat; it has a particular shape, and because of this, the Peasants' War happened the way it did. People react to what surrounds them. They fled into the "Blutrinne", which is like a tube, where people could be slaughtered because of the specific geological conformation of the soft limestone of the southern Kyffhäuser mountain. This entanglement of nature and history, of microhistories and historical contexts, is what has interested me over these eight years. This hill is not a backdrop against which history unfolds; it participates in shaping history, perhaps more powerfully than some of the political decisions we usually describe as major events.







Luise Donschen, born 1982 in East Berlin, Germany, is a filmmaker based in Berlin. Her films, among them her debut documentary film Casanova Gene (2018), have been shown internationally at film festivals (including Berlinale, Int. Film Festival New York, Int. Shortfilmfestival Oberhausen, FID Marseille, Viennale) and have received several awards. She teaches regularly in various contexts, including at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg from 2012-2017.

ELLE

HD / 14min / colour / 2021

In the glaring light of a spring day, a father and his child roam the Botanical Garden of Kyoto.

(2021/2022 New York Film Festival, FIC Valdivia, Viennale, ZINEBI, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, BEST EXPERIMENT FILM AWARD by the Association of German Film Critics)

ENTIRE DAYS TOGETHER

HD / 23min / colour / 2019

A young girl is cured of her epilepsy just as summer vacation is about to begin. During her last days with her classmates, she'll come to experience life in a new way.

(2019/2020 New York Film Festival, Viennale, Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata, ZINEBI – GRAND PRIZE of the Festival, Citic's Week Berlin, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, International Short Film Festival Hamburg)

CASANOVA GENE

Super 16mm / 67min / 2018

A person enters the frame dressed up as a bird. In a dressing room, John Malkovich sheds the costume of Casanova. A young woman's skirt is just as orange as the beak of a zebra finch. Casanova Gene is a funny and seductive look at seduction, organized according to the ineffable logic of desire itself.

(2018 Forum of the Berlinale, Visions du Reel, Art of the Real ,Taipei Film Festival, FID Marseille, New Horizons FF, Open City Documentary, Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata – BEST FILM in the Altered States section)



Gerti Drassl as Patty

Gerti Drassl was born in Bolzano. After graduating from high school, she moved to Vienna, where she studied acting at the Max Reinhardt Seminar. She subsequently performed on numerous stages in Austria , Germany, and South Tyrol. She has worked with directors including Sabine Derflinger, Adrian Goiginger, Andreas Prochaska, Michael Sturminger, Michael Kreihsl, Markus Schleinzer, Antonin Svoboda, Elisabeth Scharang, and Luise Donschen. In addition to her work in film and theater, she has appeared in numerous radio drama productions. She lives in Vienna.



Manuela Biedermann as Jelena

Manuela Biedermann is a Swiss actress with many years of experience in film, television, and theater. For her role as village police officer Susann Walter in the second season of the SRF series “Wilder”, she received the Prix Swissperform in 2020. Her recent work includes the British television series “The Good Ship Murder” and the Peruvian-Mexican-Swiss feature film “Sobre el Acantilado”. She works in several languages in Swiss and international productions.



Pola Friedrichs as Grace

Only ten years old, the aspiring actress Pola Friedrichs is already known for her multifaceted variety of character interpretations in cinema and TV. Pola started her career at age 6 as the stuttering daughter of Britta Hammelstein in the dark comedy feature film “Kommt ein Vogel geflogen”. She portrayed disabled yet highly energetic Nina in “One Million Minutes”, motherless Lene in the SadCom “MaPa”, the daughter of a stalking victim in the famous German crime series “Tatort”, a hippie girl in Portugal for the independent movie “Daughters of the Earth”.



Crew

[Production]
Fünferfilm
NewMatterFilms

[Producers]
Julia Cöllen
Karsten Krause
Frank Scheuffele
Luise Hauschild
Mariam Shatberashvili

[Cast]
Gerti Drassl
Manuela Biedermann
Pola Friedrichs
Clemens Bobke
Nele Christoph
Uwe Preuss
Jan Kampmann
Peter Schneider

[Writer, Director, Editor]
Luise Donschen

[Director Of Photography]
Helena Wittmann

[Sound]
Johannes Doberenz
Johann Meis

[Sound Design]
Nika Son
Jakob Spengemann

[First AD]
Oliver Grüttner

[Second AD]
Jonas Erler

[Casting]
Ulrike Müller

[Dramaturgy]
Herbert Schwarze

[Gaffer]
Max Berg

[Set Design]
Fanny Welz

[Prop Master]
Sara Wendt

[Costume Design]
Marie Gerstenberger
Ulrike Plehn

[Sound Mix]
Tobias Adam

[Color Grading]
Tim Liebe

[Casting]
Ulrike Müller

[Music]
Bastian Hagedorn

[Graphics]
Jim Kühnel

Supported by

Distribution

Funded by

Markets

This project participated in EAVE Ties That Bind, First Cut Lab and First Cut +









F

Fünferfilm is dedicated to auteur-driven cinema with a distinctive visual and narrative language. We develop and produce feature films, documentaries, and short formats for the international market, with a strong focus on emerging talent and long-term artistic collaborations. Our films regularly premiere at major festivals such as Venice, Locarno, Berlinale, and Rotterdam and and are supported by Creative Europe MEDIA Slate Development (2025). Fünferfilm has built a strong European network through platforms such as EAVE, Torino Film Lab, Berlinale Co- Production Market, MIDPOINT, and When East Meets West.

Our editorial focus lies on bold cinematic voices, socially relevant themes, and projects that challenge conventional forms, with a commitment to diversity, sustainability, and European collaboration.

www.fuenferfilm.de

[2026]

TOMORROW A LONG TIME AGO
D: Luise Donschen I Fiction
Locarno Film Festival — Cineasti del Presente

PETTY THIEVES
D: Mate Ugrin I Fiction
Karlovy Vary Film Festival — Proxima Competition

IN BETWEEN, A PLACE
D: Faezeh Nikoozad I Documentary
Premiere: Vision Du Reel – Burning Lights Competition

[2025]

STRANDZHA
D: Pepa Hristova I Documentary
International Film Festival Rotterdam — Harbour

[2024]

DER FLECK
D: Willy Hans I Fiction
Locarno Film Festival — Cineasti del Presente

REPRODUKTION
D: Katharina Pethke I Documentary
Berlin International Film Festival — Forum

[2023]

LA EMPRESA
D: André Siegers I Documentary
International Film Festival Rotterdam — Bright Future

[2022]

HUMAN FLOWERS OF FLESH
D: Helena Wittmann I Fiction
Locarno Film Festival Festival — Concorso Internationale

[2019]

OLANDA
D: Bernd Schoch I Documentary
Berlin International Film Festival - Forum

[2017]

DRIFT
D: Helena Wittmann I Fiction
Settimana Internationale della Critica

NewMatterFilms

New Matter Films was founded in 2020 by Luise Hauschild and Mariam Shatberashvili in Berlin and Leipzig while they were studying at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB). The company is dedicated to developing and producing films in close, long-term collaboration with directors, with a focus on distinctive artistic voices and singular cinematic forms.

From the very beginning, New Matter Films has made its mark on the international festival circuit. Their first feature films premiered at major international festivals and received worldwide recognition, including “What Do We See When We Look at the Sky?” by Alexandre Koberidze (2021) and “Talking About the Weather” by Annika Pinske (2022). Since then, the company has continued to present their work at leading festivals such as Berlinale, Venice, Locarno, and Rotterdam.

In 2026, New Matter Films celebrated the world premiere of Valeska Grisebach’s “The Dreamed Adventure”, which they co-produced, in competition at the Cannes Film Festival. The company is currently developing new feature films with a diverse group of acclaimed directors, including Alexandre Koberidze, Annika Pinske, Katharina Wyss, Lanxi Ruan, Cyril Schäublin, Oliver Grüttner, Tatjana Kononenko, and Faraz Fesharaki, continuing its commitment to innovative, internationally recognized filmmaking.

www.newmatterfilms.com

[2026]

TOMORROW A LONG TIME AGO
D: Luise Donschen I Fiction
Locarno Film Festival — Cineasti del Presente

THE DREAMED ADVENTURE
D: Valeska Grisebach I Fiction
Cannes International Film Festival — Competition

[2025]

DRY LEAF
D: Alexandre Koberidze I Fiction
Locarno Film Festival — Concorso Internazionale — FIPRESCI Award

[2024]

BOOMERANG
D: Shahab Fotouhi I Fiction
Venice Film Festival – Giornate degli Autori

WHAT DID YOU DREAM LAST NIGHT, PARAJANOV?
D: Faraz Fesharaki I Fiction
Berlin International Film Festival — Forum

[2023]

NATUREZA HUMANA
D: Mónica Lima I Fiction
International Film Festival Rotterdam — Tiger Competition

[2022]

PERFORMER
D: Oliver Grüttner I Fiction
Filmfest München — New German Cinema

TALKING ABOUT THE WEATHER
D: Annika Pinske I Fiction
Berlin International Film Festival — Panorama

[2021]

WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SKY?
D: Alexandre Koberidze I Fiction
Berlin International Film Festival — Competition





