

JUNAFILM PRESENTS



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MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2019
Official Selection

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Toronto International
Film Festival 2019



A FILM BY KATRIN GEBBE

PELICAN BLOOD

STARRING NINA HOSS

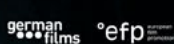
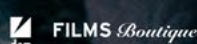
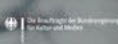
"PELICAN BLOOD"

JUNAFILM presents a film by KATRIN GEBBE producer VERENA GRAFE-HÖFT co-produced by MIRAMAR FILM co-produced by SWR in cooperation with ARTE

FUNDED BY FILMFÖRDERUNG HAMBURG SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN BEAUFTRAGTE DER BUNDESREGIERUNG FÜR KULTUR UND MEDIEN DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS BULGARIAN NATIONAL FILM CENTER EURIMAGES WITH THE SUPPORT OF TORINO FILM LAB AND BERLINALE CO-PRODUCTION MARKET
STORYLINE NINA HOSS KATERINA LIPOVSKA ADELINA-CONSTANCE OCCEPPO MURATHAN MUSLU CASTING DIRECTOR SIMONE BAR & ALEXANDRA FUCHANSKA COMPOSER JOHANNES LEHNIGER & SEBASTIAN DAMERIUS COSTUMES STEFANIE BIEKER & KRISTINA TOMOVA MAKE-UP TATYANA TITA SLEPTSOVA & NELI TEOVA
EDITOR HEIKE GNIDA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MORITZ SCHULTHEISS ART DIRECTOR SILKE FISCHER & ANNA BOYANOVA



SWR» arte



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OPENING FILM - VENICE ORIZZONTI

A FILM BY KATRIN GEBBE

PELICAN BLOOD

Germany, Bulgaria / 2019 / 121'

With Nina Hoss, Katerina Lipovska,
Adelia-Constance Giovanni Ocleppo, Murathan Muslu

Junafilm UG in co-production with Miramar film

SCREENINGS VENICE

WED	AUG	28th	9:00	GIARDINO	<i>Press & Industry</i>
WED	AUG	28th	11:15	DARSENÀ	<i>Press & Industry</i>
WED	AUG	28th	16:00	DARSENÀ	<i>Premiere</i>
WED	AUG	28th	21:30	PALABIENNALE	<i>Public</i>
THU	AUG	29th	8:30	PALABIENNALE	<i>Press & Industry</i>

SCREENINGS TORONTO

SUN	SEP	8th	21:15	SCOTIABANK 1	<i>Public</i>
MON	SEP	9th	10:15	SCOTIABANK 8	<i>Press & Industry</i>
MON	SEP	9th	13:15	SCOTIABANK 4	<i>Public</i>
TUE	SEP	10th	13:30	SCOTIABANK 11	<i>Press & Industry</i>
SAT	SEP	14th	21:45	SCOTIABANK 13	<i>Public</i>

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SYNOPSIS

Wiebke (45) lives together with her adoptive daughter Nicolina (9) on an idyllic horse farm. After many years of waiting, she now has the chance to adopt another girl, Raya (5), to provide Nicolina with the longed-for sister. The first weeks are harmonious, and the siblings get along great. But shortly thereafter, Wiebke realizes that Raya, initially shy and charming, is becoming increasingly aggressive and poses a danger to herself and others. The mother will soon have to cross borders and take extreme decisions to protect her cubs.



PRODUCER'S NOTE

Pelican Blood combines the genres Drama and Psychological-Thriller; playing upon the tension these two styles present in order to archive a story that is both touching and dense with substance. The film's central point focuses on a woman who adopts a child from Bulgaria, who carries with her a traumatic background. As the story develops around this new family unit, a theme of complexity is exposed as the characters begin an emotional journey through uncharted psychological territory. Multifaceted layers of human nature are brought into view, confronting the audience with a kind of spiritual abyss. The film plays with the horror elements of "the Evil Child". However, unlike more classically based genre-horror films, Pelican Blood concentrates on bringing more genuine human emotion and struggle into the foreground, as opposed to inauthentic situations and scenarios used simply for effect to create suspense. Earlier, before I had even begun working on this project, I recall reading an article concerning adoptive parents, and the difficulty they are faced with when caring for children that have been traumatized from life-events prior to their adoption. The potential outcome of such situations poses some very big questions, but due to the complexity of the circumstances involved, straightforward answers are simply out of reach. Questions like "How far would you go for love?", "Can



a deep personal trauma be healed?" or "How easily are parents, especially mothers, stigmatized?" –There is no right or wrong answer easy to give. It is personal and comes down to everyone's own beliefs. The many personal and true stories that we investigated throughout the development shows that there is a taboo and we like to touch on that. With this project, Katrin and I would like to further our successful collaboration from "Nothing Bad can Happen" (Cannes 2013/Un Certain Regard), and continue evolving a stylistically sensitive and humanistic approach to storytelling in film. Katrin Gebbe has a very strong and clear visional concept on how she wants to tackle those themes and it will be an exciting journey to see this evolve in front of our audience.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

PELICAN BLOOD explores the nightmare vision of parenthood. The title refers to the Christian image of the mother pelican that feeds her dead offspring with her own blood and as a result brings them back to life. It is a metaphor for self-sacrificing love and faith. The protagonist of my film as well cuts her own sacrificial path in order to heal her emotionally „dead“ child. She starts a questionable treatment and becomes more and more obsessed with finding a solution for her dilemma.

The film tells the story of the horse trainer Wiebke, who adopts a second child from abroad. Soon she finds out, that the new one is emotionally disturbed, suffers from severe trauma and is a real threat to the life of her sibling. It becomes a dilemma: either Wiebke endangers her and the older sibling's health or deprives the new ones last chance of healing. Through the confrontation she learns, that she is unwilling to give up one of the children for the other. But it seems there is no way to make it work. In order to do so, she will have to cross borders.



Since working on my debut feature NOTHING BAD CAN HAPPEN, I have been exploring the origins of good, evil, and free will. During my research into the childhood of psychopathic offenders, I came across exciting fates. I have been wondering if it would be possible to save an “evil” child; a child that might also be a victim as well? How far would I go to give love and patience to someone, who doesn’t love me back? Would I – under all circumstances - stand by my child, partner, friend or family-member whose mental illness destroys a healthy family life and which might never be cured?

How – in general - do we treat members of our society who do not behave according to our moral and behavioral standards? How much are we willing to give in order to integrate them? And the question that seems particularly personal: What does it cost us to stick to our ideals, moral and dreams? What will it cost us to not give up hope?

I am excited to dig into the supposedly discrepancy between technocracy and mythology, between rationality and emotion. We always long for the one and only truth. But life is not that easy. Sometimes we need to open our horizon, follow our instincts and take risks. We have to trust, that life has more to offer.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Katrin Gebbe is a writer / director from Germany. Her first feature **NOTHING BAD CAN HAPPEN** (TORE TANZT, 2013) premiered in Un Certain Regard at Cannes. The film won the German Film Critics' Award, the Bavarian Film Award, and the New Auteurs Critics' Award at AFI Fest (a.o.). Before her first feature, she attended the Hamburg Media School where she directed award-winning short films. Prior to this, she shot her first experimental films at the Academy of Visual Arts and Design in the Netherlands, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, USA.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

- **PELICAN BLOOD**, feature (writer, director), Junafilm/ Miramar Film, world premiere: Venice Film Festival 2019, Opening Film Orizzonti
- **A NOCTURNAL BREATH**, short segment as part of THE FIELD GUIDE TO EVIL – anthology (co-writer/ director), 11'40" / full film: 1h57', Timpson Films, world premiere: SXSW 2018
- **TROPIC – I AM THE RAIN IF YOU ARE THE MEADOW**, music video, (idea/ director, GER 2015, 5' Curtisfilm
- **NOTHING BAD CAN HAPPEN**, feature, 110', GER 2013 (writer/ director), Junafilm, world premiere: Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard 2013

NINA HOSS

Hoss acted in radio plays at the age of seven and appeared on stage for the first time at the age of fourteen. In 1997 she graduated from the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin. Her first major success was the title role Rosemarie Nitribitt of Bernd Eichinger's *A GIRL CALLED ROSEMARY* in 1996, a period drama set in the 1950s.



In 2000 she was one of the Shooting Stars at the Berlinale. Her close collaboration with director Christian Petzold has been extremely successful; she won the 2003 Adolf Grimme Award for her role in his film *SOMETHING TO REMIND ME* and two years later the Adolf Grimme Award in Gold for *WOLFSBURG*. Her performance of *YELLA*, earned her the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2007 and the German Film Award in 2008. Another collaboration with Petzold, *BARBARA*, in which Hoss plays a doctor exiled to an East German provincial backwater in 1980, premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2011 and the Toronto International Film Festival in 2012.

Hoss has been a member of the Juries of the Locarno International Film Festival in 2009, and the Berlin International Film Festival in 2011. She was an ensemble member at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin from 1998 to 2013, where she appeared as Medea and as Franziska in *Minna von Barnhelm*.

In 2012, she was appointed sole judge of the 2012 Alfred Kerr Acting Prize at the Berliner Theatertreffen. In 2013, she joined the ensemble of the Schaubühne Theatre in Berlin. In July 2016 she was named as a member of the main competition jury for the 73rd Venice International Film Festival.

2019 sees Hoss appear in *UNE JOURNÉE À LA MER*, *CRIMINAL*, *PELICAN BLOOD*, *SCHWESTERLEIN* AND *THE AUDITION*, alongside her upcoming role in Bron Studios' *SHADOWPLAY*, directed by Måns Mårild. Nina Hoss is an Academy Member.

MURATHAN MUSLU

Muslu is an Austrian actor born in Vienna in 1981 to Turkish parents.

He left school at the age 15 and found himself collecting and watching VHS-movies, which he claims would be his “acting school.” He still owns 5,000 of them to this day.



Following a brief professional soccer career, which ended early at the age of 18 due to a major knee-injury, he began producing as a rapper/musician with his group Sua Kaan which would later cause a political uproar in 2007. The group was accused by Austrian politicians of encouraging young immigrants in the country to riot.

Eventually, director Umut Dag shot the music video for Sua Kaan’s first major hit “Wer.” Muslu, in return, starred in Dags feature film debut *Papa*, which immediately received Germany’s famous First Steps Award and marked the beginning of Muslu’s prolific acting career.

Within four years he achieved major recognition winning Austria’s two biggest Acting awards for his leading role in *Cracks In Concrete*. Since then, Muslu has performed in more than 20 leading roles in both German and Austrian movies and TV shows. Muslu stars in the Sky mini-series *8 Days* and the upcoming Netflix series *Skylines*.

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with the support of TORINO FILM LAB and BERLINALE CO-PRODUCTION MARKET

starring NINA HOSS

KATERINA LIPOVSKA, ADELINA-CONSTANCE OCLEPPO, MURATHAN MUSLU

Casting Director SIMONE BÄR & ALEXANDRA FUCHANSKA, Composer JOHANNES
LEHNIGER & SEBASTIAN DAMERIUS, Costumes STEFANIE BIEKER & KRISTINA TOMOVA,

Make-up TATYANA TITA SLEPTSOVA & NELI TEOVA, Editor HEIKE GNIDA,

Director of Photography MORITZ SCHULTHEISS,

Art Director SILKE FISCHER & ANNA BOYANOVA

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FILMS *Boutique*