About Us

The DEFA Film Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is the only center worldwide devoted to a broad spectrum of filmmaking from and related to the former GDR that combines distribution with an archive and research center. Founded in 1993, it houses an extensive collection of 35- and 16mm prints, DVDs, DCPs, books, periodicals and articles. Students are involved in all aspects of the Library’s research, outreach and teaching activities and gain valuable experience in subtitling and library, conference and arts management.

The DEFA Film Library, in cooperation with a wide range of partners, makes films available to a wide public by means of: touring film series; renting DVDs, DCPs, and 35- and 16mm prints from its collection; producing and selling films on DVD with English subtitles and extensive bonus materials, featuring experts in the field; and offering streaming services to educational institutions.

The DEFA Film Library supports an international network of researchers with a range of regular programs such as biennial Summer Film Institutes, Filmmaker’s Tours, and workshops and panel discussions at major conferences in North America and Europe. Visiting scholars are also invited to make use of archival materials. These activities help shape national and international research agendas on [East] German and related cinemas during the global Cold War.

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All DVDs in this catalog have English subtitles and are available for purchase, streaming and non-commercial screenings. Not rated, NTSC.

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Cover Image: The Russians Are Coming (p. 1)
The end of WWII is fast approaching and 15-year-old Günter, a member of the Hitler Youth, still believes in a German victory. He is part of the Nazi's last-ditch effort to resist the feared approaching Soviet Army. When he is captured and suspected of killing a Soviet prisoner, the boy faces intense psychological confusion.

*The Russians Are Coming* was withdrawn from circulation before its premiere because it focused on an ordinary Nazi follower and belied the official East German view, which was that Germans had welcomed the Soviet Army as liberators.

Although the original film material was thought to have been destroyed, its editor, Evelyn Carow, had kept a work copy hidden away. The film was finally released in the GDR in 1987.

**Bonus Film:** *Career* (*Karriere*, GDR, 1970, dir. Heiner Carow, 84 min., b/w). In 1970, Heiner Carow used footage from the banned *The Russians Are Coming* as flashbacks in his current affairs film *Career*. In it a now 40-year-old Günter lives in West Germany and faces a similar situation as during the war. A few years after its release, the director vehemently distanced himself from the film’s conformity to the party line.

“Formally oriented toward the *nouvelle vague* (Godard, Truffaut), the film enthralls with its haunting imagery and its honest ‘mourning’ for a misled youth.” — *Filmdienst*

“Carow captures the dreamlike experience [of the boy] in expressive images and a concurrently insistent and retarding montage. [...] This film is the counterpart to [Konrad Wolf’s] *I Was Nineteen.*” — Klaus Wischnewski, *Das zweite Leben der Filmstadt Babelsberg*
BANNED! DEFA’s Forbidden Films of 1965-66

While edits and changes in the face of possible censorship were not uncommon in the almost 50 years of the GDR’s film industry, censorship was not always equally imminent. The notorious highpoint was the Kahlischlag (lit. clear-cutting) of 1965-66 following the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee of the SED.

The young country had already weathered several political crises: While there was hope that erecting the Berlin Wall in 1961 would usher in a period of relative liberalism, this hope was short-lived. Increasing tensions in the early 1960s culminated in the plenum, where officials adopted a new cultural policy that demanded “cleanliness in film production”—that is, they wanted films that were “cleansed” of modernity, experiments, and discussions of taboo topics and problems. After the plenum, twelve films were either taken out of distribution, not approved for release or stopped during production. Each of the banned films has its own complex censorship story, but common to all of the targeted films was that they offered new creativity, fantasy, openness and critical sharpness.

These three DVD releases are dedicated to the memory of film historian and artist Rolf Richter (1932-92), who initiated their restoration and release in October 1989, as head of the Banned Films Committee.

Berlin around the Corner  
Berlin um die Ecke

GDR, 1965/90, dir. Gerhard Klein, 83 min., b/w

Berlin in the 1960s: two young metalworkers provoke their colleagues with critiques... not to mention their leather jackets and motorbikes. This film is the fourth in the Berlin Series by Gerhard Klein and scriptwriter Wolfgang Kohlhaase. Officials banned the rough cut in September 1966, after the 11th Plenum, as “dishonest and anti-socialist.” This DVD presents scriptwriter Wolfgang Kohlhaase’s and editor Evelyn Carow’s 1990 cut.

Spring Takes Time  
Der Frühling braucht Zeit

GDR, 1965, dir. Günter Stahnke, 76 min., b/w

Was it an act of sabotage or willful negligence? Engineer Heinz Solter is suddenly arrested and accused of approving a defective pipeline. The case seems clear-cut to the state prosecutor, but when he probes deeper, he discovers that Solter simply succumbed to pressure from his career-driven boss. The film was removed from circulation two weeks after its premiere, in November 1965, and banned after the 11th Plenum for its critical examination of centralized economic planning and its stylized, avant-garde imagery. Bonus Film: Monolog for a Taxi Driver (GDR, TV, dir. Günter Stahnke, script: Günter Kunert, 37 min., b/w).

When You’re Older, Dear Adam  
Wenn du groß bist, lieber Adam

GDR, 1966/90, dir. Egon Günther, 70 min., color

Adam is a clever boy with an active imagination. One day, a grateful swan gives him a magic flashlight. When it shines on someone who is lying, the person floats up into the air! Before Günther’s comedy was canceled during production in February 1966, officials had already censored the script. When restorers later worked on the film, they discovered that passages of dialog had been removed from the soundtrack. Instead of hiding this aggressive form of censorship, they decided to mark these passages with inserts.

Other films banned after the 11th Plenum are also available on DVD: Born in ‘45 (p. 11), Carla (p. 11), Just Don’t Think I’ll Cry (p. 18), The Lost Angel (p. 20), The Rabbit Is Me (p. 21) and Trace of Stones (p. 25).
In honor of the 70th anniversary of the DEFA Film Studios, a re-release of the first German film made after WWII, featuring a new digitally restored transfer, revised English subtitles and new special features.

**The Murderers Are among Us**  
*Die Mörder sind unter uns*

*Germany, 1946, dir. Wolfgang Staudte, 81 min., b/w*

In 1945, after three years in a concentration camp, the artist Susanne Wallner (Hildegard Knef) returns to a Berlin in ruins. Despite her unspeakable experiences, she is filled with a renewed energy for life. When she arrives at her apartment, she finds that Dr. Hans Mertens (Ernst Wilhelm Borchert) has taken up residence there. He is a physician and a former German officer, who is haunted by the execution of 121 Polish civilians, which he did nothing to prevent. Under Susanne’s care, the broken man gathers new strength and courage. Then, by chance, Mertens meets his former captain and decides to take the law into his own hands.

Berlin’s daily papers enthusiastically reported that Staudte had shot the film’s first scenes in the rubble near Stettiner train station on May 4, 1946. The film premiered at both Berlin’s Admiralspalast theater (afternoon) and Friedrichshain cinema (evening) only a few months later, on October 15, 1946. Political poet Erich Weinert, just returned from over ten years in exile, introduced the afternoon event and called the premiere “a rebirth of German film.”

*The Murderers Are among Us* was the first film made after WWII in Germany and the first film produced by the DEFA Studio, newly-founded on the grounds of the former Ufa Studio and at that time under Soviet administration. The film has since become a classic. Its *film noir* style successfully blends German expressionism with striking neorealism. In 1995, the film was selected as one of Germany’s 100 Best Films.

“*The noirish debut of the postwar German film industry, which perhaps never again so baldly confronted the issue of guilt for mass murder.*” — *The New York Times*

“*Stark, symbolic, and stunning.*” — 2014 San Francisco Film Noir Festival

“One of the most important films to have been produced in the history of the German cinema.” — *Kinoeye*

“*Marked by superb camera and montage technique.*” — *Variety*

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Käthe Kollwitz: Images of a Life

Käthe Kollwitz was 47 years old and already a well-established artist in Germany and abroad when Peter, her youngest son, volunteered to join the German army in WWI... and was killed two weeks later. This tragedy changed Kollwitz's life and art forever. Always politically active, she became a radical pacifist. In her art, she reflected on her son and the meaning of war. After signing a petition against the Nazis, she was excluded from the Prussian Academy of Arts and her art was labeled “degenerate.” Lonely and sick, she spent the last days of her life in Moritzburg and died at the age of 78, before the end of WWII.

Ralf Kirsten—director of The Lost Angel (p. 20), a homage to German artist Ernst Barlach—used episodes from Kollwitz's unpublished letters and diaries fitted together in a mosaic-like self-portrait.

“The Brechtian quality of the film allows one to experience the physical and mental transformation of actress Jutta Wachowiak into her role as Käthe Kollwitz, one of the most important female artists of the 20th century. The result is a thoughtful, beautiful film.”

—Henriette Kets de Vries, Smith College Museum of Art

Apprehension

Inge (Christine Schorn) is a divorced single mother in her mid-30s. She is a therapist and involved with a married man. After a routine physical exam, Inge learns she may have breast cancer and must have surgery the following day. In the next 24 hours, she re-evaluates her relationships and her life.

With a powerful, semi-autobiographical script by Helga Schubert, Apprehension is considered by critics to be DEFA’s greatest women’s film. Cameraman Thomas Plenert, noted for his documentaries (Winter Adé, The Wall), included black-and-white photos of East Berlin life in this low-budget feature film shot exclusively on location. The film was seen as an experiment, but turned into a box-office hit.

“The film is a DEFA gem! Close to reality and psychologically balanced.”

—Cinema

For updates on DVD releases, visit umass.edu/defa

Research visitors are welcome at the DEFA Film Library. Feel free to come use our archives!
Turning Point  Der Aufenthalt

GDR, 1982, dir. Frank Beyer, 101 min., color

In October 1945, 19-year-old Mark Niebuhr is a German POW wrongly accused by a Polish woman to be the Nazi officer who killed her daughter. Mark—played by Sylvester Groth (Inglourious Basterds, The Reader)—is thrown into a Kafkaesque nightmare of accusation and persecution, first in solitary confinement, then among Polish prisoners who detest him, and finally among Germans who assume he is spying for the Poles.

The film is based on Hermann Kant’s autobiographical novel. Although it was to screen at the Berlin Film Festival in 1983, the GDR withdrew it when Poland argued the film would stir up anti-Polish sentiment.

“Staged like a chamber piece, this film discusses existential questions of guilt and atonement, as well as obedience and responsibility.” —Deutsche Welle

Lissy

GDR, 1957, dir. Konrad Wolf, 89 min. b/w

After her marriage, Lissy (Sonja Sutter), a young woman raised in a socialist working-class family, finds herself living a bourgeois lifestyle. When her husband joins up to become a Nazi Storm Trooper, Lissy must juggle her political and personal loyalties. But a final clash of values ultimately forces her to make a very difficult and potentially dangerous choice.

This East German classic, based on the novel by German-Jewish author F.C. Weiskopf, sheds light on the differing paths of Nazis and Socialists in Germany in the early 1930s.

“Weapons cinematography by Werner Bergmann.” —National Center for Jewish Film

Were the Earth Not Round  Wäre die Erde nicht rund

GDR, 1981, dir. Iris Gusner, 87 min., color

East German geology student Christiane becomes part of an international group studying in Moscow. Eventually, she and Hatem, from Syria, fall in love and have a child. When their studies draw to a close, however, they must decide where to move—and each option requires that one of them forego personal and professional self-fulfillment. This poetic, semi-autobiographical drama by one of the GDR’s few female directors explores the strength and limits of will and desire.

“I think the film is wonderfully directed, with absolutely intelligent dialogs!” —Helke Sander, director, Fantasie und Arbeit
**NEW RELEASES**

**Director Herrmann Zschoche Sees East German Youth**

### Just Married

**Grüne Hochzeit**

**GDR, 1988, 95 min., color**

In this sequel to *Seven Freckles*, Susanne (17) and Robert (18) get married, but soon they feel overwhelmed by their life together, parenting twins and being broke. Dealing with all these problems makes them forget that love brought them together in the first place.

“A not-to-be-missed mix of love story and drama by Herrmann Zschoche, who once again skillfully captures the approach to life and problems of young East Germans.”
—Prisma.de

### Swan Island

**Insel der Schwäne**

**GDR, 1982, 88 min., color**

The parents of 14-year-old Stefan decide to move to the housing development of Berlin-Marzahn, which is still under construction. Stefan’s childhood suddenly ends when he must face the violence of an older boy and his gang.

“A plattenbau-Western with a dig at the GDR’s complacent housing propaganda. DEFA films were rarely as critical and realistic as this one.”
—achtung berlin festival

### Next Year at Lake Balaton

**Und nächstes Jahr am Balaton**

**GDR, 1980, 89 min., color**

Jonas and Ines want to spend their vacation together at Lake Balaton in Bulgaria. But Ines’s parents intervene, and the romantic-turned-family vacation falls apart. Everyone goes his or her own way. While hitchhiking to the Black Sea, Jonas meets a beautiful Dutch girl, who is on her way to India…

“A road movie and comedic summer film about young love, wanderlust and the limitations on travel that formerly existed.”
—Cinémathèque Leipzig

Other films by Herrmann Zschoche available on DVD: *Carla* (p. 11), *Eolomea* (p. 14) and *Seven Freckles* (p. 7).

### The Fiancée

**Die Verlobte**

**GDR, 1980, dirs. Günter Reisch & Günter Rücker, 108 min., color**

A young, female anti-Nazi resistance fighter is sentenced to 10 years in prison. Only her love for her fiancé helps her maintain her integrity during her lonely isolation. East Germany’s official submission to the 1981 Academy Awards.

### The Naked Man on the Athletic Field

**Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz**


Kemmel, a strong-willed sculptor, does not take life lightly—his and other’s. When he learns that people reject his works, he questions the importance and role of his art in society.
We started the SIMPLY FILM label in 2014 as a way to make more films available on DVD and for streaming. While our other releases include many special features, these DVDs simply present the film, with the option to turn English subtitles on or off.
The Adventures of Werner Holt

GDR, 1965, dir. Joachim Kunert, 164 min., b/w

Two 17-year-olds, Werner Holt and Gilbert Wolzow, are pulled out of school and into Hitler’s army. Gilbert becomes a fanatical soldier, but at the front Werner begins to understand the senselessness of war. When Gilbert is hanged by the SS, Werner turns his gun on his own army. This film, based on Dieter Noll’s novel, is a political and artistic masterpiece.


The Actress

GDR, 1988, dir. Siegfried Kühn, 86 min., color

Maria (Corinna Harfouch), a rising theater star in Nazi Germany, is in love with Mark, a Jewish actor. She accepts her dream job in Munich, but Mark is banned from performing—except at the Jewish Kulturbund Theater in Berlin. Maria discovers she is unable to live without Mark, but the Nazi Nuremberg Laws forbid their relationship. Bonus Film: Traces (GDR, 1989, dir. Eduard Schreiber, 21 min., doc.), a film on Martin Brandt, an unforgettable actor and member of the Jewish Kulturbund Theater.

“A character study of an extraordinary woman, convincingly performed.” — Encyclopedia of International Film

All My Girls

GDR, 1979, dir. Iris Gusner, 83 min., color & b/w

Film student Ralf is assigned to document a brigade of six young women workers at a Berlin light bulb factory. The team has fun and works well together; but when one of Ralf’s interviews reveals that the brigade leader has secretly been keeping a record of disciplinary issues, Ralf finds himself pulled into their conflicts. Iris Gusner filmed on location at the NARVA factory in Berlin.

“This upbeat portrait of feisty young women workers is a must!” — Andrea Rinke, film scholar

And Your Love Too

GDR, 1962, dir. Frank Vogel, 92 min., b/w

On August 13, 1961—the night the Berlin Wall goes up—three people must make a decision that will change their lives forever. A small crew filmed on the streets of East Berlin with mobile cameras for four months, capturing the city’s daily life and the extraordinary atmosphere of this historic period with precision and humor.

“This film remains fascinating!” — Katie Trumpener, Yale University
Apaches

GDR, 1973, dir. Gottfried Kolditz, 94 min., color

The young warrior, Ulzana, seeks to avenge the mass murder of his tribe. It was led by the American geologist Johnson, who discovered precious metals on the Mexican Mimbreno-Apache reservation. Based on original documents from the Mexican-American War (1846-48), Apaches is one of twelve classic Indianerfilme produced at DEFA between 1965 and 1982.

1977 Special Recognition, Red Earth Festival, Oklahoma City

The Architects

Die Architekten

GDR, 1990, dir. Peter Kahane, 97 min., color

Daniel, an idealistic young architect in East Berlin, is deeply frustrated by working in the communist system. After receiving a plum assignment, he comes up with fresh, innovative plans. But his optimistic design comes at a price, both personally and professionally. Filmed as East Germany crumbled, this was one of the first feature films to deal with life both before and during the unification period.

“Telling, finely drawn, superbly acted!” —The New York Times

The Axe of Wandsbek

Das Beil von Wandsbek

GDR, 1951, dir. Falk Harnack, 111 min., b/w

Hamburg, 1934: An executioner is needed. When Teetjen’s butcher shop faces bankruptcy, he agrees to execute a group of leftwing political prisoners. Once the community learns of his involvement, however, his life falls apart. Officials criticized what they deemed to be a sympathetic depiction of a Nazi executioner. The film was withdrawn, leading to the director’s break with the GDR.

“A rediscovered treasure from post-war German cinema.” —Anne Nelson, Red Orchestra

Bear Ye One Another’s Burden

Einer trage des anderen Last

GDR, 1987, dir. Lothar Warneke, 113 min., color

At a sanatorium in the 1950s, two very different men room together: Josef, a communist policeman, and Hubertus, a Lutheran minister. Prayers compete with party meetings, and images of Christ and Stalin hang on the walls… until the two men learn to tolerate each other. In 1973, the script was banned for its religious content; Warneke finally filmed a revised script over ten years later.

1988 Silver Bear for Best Actor for Jörg Pose and Manfred Möck, Berlin Film Festival
1988 European Film Award Nominee for Best Screenwriter
Beethoven Duet

This DVD presents two East German films on Ludwig van Beethoven and bonus features that outline the importance of the composer in East Germany.

Ludwig van Beethoven (GDR, 1954, dir. Max Jaap, 88 min., b/w, doc.)
One of East Germany’s first full-length documentaries combines original documents, letters and drawings with excerpts from Beethoven’s musical oeuvre.

Beethoven – Days of a Life (GDR, 1976, dir. Horst Seemann, 104 min., color)
This poetic feature film starring Donatas Banionis (Goya, Solaris) explores the joys, heartbreak and artistic spirit of the great composer as he works on his Ninth Symphony.

“A classic reflection on the conflict between art and freedom!”
—Die Welt

A Berlin Romance

Eine Berliner Romanze

GDR, 1956, dir. Gerhard Klein, 81 min., b/w

Mid-1950s Berlin, before the Wall: Uschi, from the East, is attracted to Hans, from the West; but she also loves the bright shop windows in his part of the city. The glitzy West soon loses its glamour to reality, however. This film is one of four Berlin Films made by Gerhard Klein and scriptwriter Wolfgang Kohlhaase.

“The most definitive record of postwar Berlin.”
—Variety

Berlin–Schönhauser Corner

Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser

GDR, 1957, dir. Gerhard Klein, 82 min., b/w

Even East Berlin teenagers want to be free, dance rock’n’roll, trade forbidden Western goods, and get away from the constraints imposed on them by their parents and the state. This classic 1950’s teen cult film stars Bertolt Brecht’s son-in-law, Ekkehard Schall, and was ranked by film critics among Germany’s 100 Best Films.

“The East German version of The Wild Ones.”
—The Washington Post

The Bicycle

Das Fahrrad

GDR, 1981, dir. Evelyn Schmidt, 89 min., color

Susanne is a single mother who lives outside the social norm. After quitting her job, she is short on cash and attempts a minor insurance fraud to make ends meet. This frank portrayal of a less-than-ideal socialist citizen was controversial and The Bicycle, one of very few East German films directed by a woman, was not allowed to be screened abroad until the Wall came down.

“A rare feminist view of socialist Germany.”
—San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
The Blum Affair

Affaire Blum

Germany, 1948, dir. Erich Engel, 105 min., b/w

Dr. Blum, a Jewish manufacturer, is falsely accused of murder. Based on a 1926 court case in Magdeburg, this is one of few German films to portray conservative nationalism and anti-Semitism as it existed in Germany prior to Hitler’s rule. Written by former Ufa scriptwriter and director Robert A. Stemmle (Toxi), and directed by famous Brechtian theater director Erich Engel.

“The Blum Affair is the German counterpart to the French The Dreyfus Affair.”
—The Telegraph, 1948

Born in ’45

Jahrgang 45

GDR, 1966/1990, dir. Jürgen Böttcher, 94 min., b/w

Alfred and Lisa decide to divorce. Alfred takes a few days off to clear his head, roaming through Berlin and meeting strangers. Although he ultimately returns to Lisa, the film’s ending remains open. In 1966, officials banned the rough cut as “indifferent and insignificant.” Inspired by Italian neorealism, Born in ‘45 is the only narrative film by painter and documentary filmmaker Jürgen Böttcher.

“This film can be considered East Germany’s closest counterpart to early Godard.”
—The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Carbide and Sorrel

Karbid und Sauerampfer

GDR, 1963, dir. Frank Beyer, 80 min., b/w

A comedy set at the end of WWII. A non-smoking cigarette factory worker, dogged by every possible mishap, must travel hundreds of miles without a truck to get barrels of carbide back to Dresden, where his co-workers need it to weld their ruined factory back together. As GDR functionaries often rejected humor that flouted authority, Beyer premiered this film in Moscow, where the laughter of Soviet officials gave the green light for a GDR premiere.

“An uproarious odyssey full of high jinks and misadventure!”
—The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Carla

Karla

GDR, 1965/1990, dir. Herrmann Zschoche, 129 min., b/w

Carla, a young and idealistic teacher, challenges the entrenched routines and opportunism of her hypocritical and small-minded environment. This film was labeled “nihilistic, skeptical and hostile” by officials and banned during final production in spring 1966.

“Jutta Hoffmann reminds us of young Giulietta Masina in La Strada.”
—Ralf Schenk, film historian
**Castles and Cottages**  
*Schlösser und Katen*

GDR, 1957, dir. Kurt Maetzig, 203 min., b/w, 2-DVD set

Set on a manor in Mecklenburg just after WWII, the story follows several families from the flight of the aristocratic landowners before advancing Soviet troops, through the building of an agricultural cooperative, to the East German uprising of June 17, 1953. A story of scandal and sabotage, and most of all change, this film chronicled and conveyed the official line on the first years of the new socialist republic.

"An epos about resettlers in the style of Italian neorealism." — *Die Zeit*

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**Changing Skins**  
*Raus aus der Haut*

Germany, 1997, dir. Andreas Dresen, 90 min., color

During the infamous 1977 Red Army Faction kidnappings in West Germany, two East German teens are caught with contraband photos of Baader-Meinhof terrorists. In an attempt to avoid their harsh punishment, they improvise a grotesquely and tragically comic RAF-style kidnapping of the school principal. A little-known gem by Andreas Dresen.

"Recommended!" — *Video Librarian*

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**Chingachgook, the Great Snake**  
*Chingachgook, die Grosse Schlange*

GDR, 1967, dir. Richard Groschopp, 86 min., color

In this adaptation of *The Deerslayer*, by James Fenimore Cooper, French colonists and their allies, the Hurons, are fighting against English troops and the Delaware. Only Chingachgook, a young Delaware, and his fair-skinned friend, Deerslayer, realize that the colonists intend to exterminate the Native Americans altogether. Filmed in Bulgaria and the Tatra Mountains (Slovakia).


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**Coming Out**

GDR, 1989, dir. Heiner Carow, 108 min., color

Philipp, a young teacher in Berlin, has a girlfriend who loves him and is expecting his child. But then he meets Matthias and falls in love. After years of repressing his homosexuality, he must finally decide if he will accept himself as he is. This first and only DEFA feature film about homosexuality premiered on November 9, 1989, the evening the Berlin Wall fell.

"One of the best gay films I’ve seen. I only wish there were more films like this!"  
—Stephen Bourne, *London Gay Times*
Council of the Gods  
*Rat der Götter*

**GDR, 1950, dir. Kurt Maetzig, 111 min., b/w**

During WWII, chemist Hans Scholz discovers that his factory is testing a poisonous gas. He struggles with his conscience, but the industrial big wigs care only for profits. The film is based on Nuremberg Trial transcripts and the 1947 book *I.G. Farben*, by American author Richard Sasuly. Its modernist features include music by Hanns Eisler, electronic sound by Oskar Sala and a script by Friedrich Wolf.

“This feature is a fascinating blend of post-World War II regret and emerging Cold War propaganda.” —buyindies.com


Ten Super-8 shorts made by 1980s avant-garde GDR artists and musicians and selected by film historian Claus Löser from nearly 130 films archived at ex. *oriente. lux.* These films represented a new form of expression in a rigid political climate. **Bonus Film: The Subversive Camera** (Germany, 1997, dir. Cornelia Klauss, 42 min.) documents how the Stasi kept tabs on the rebellious art scene and films made outside official channels.

Destinies of Women  
*Frauenschicksale*

**GDR, 1952, dir. Slatan Dudow, 105 min., color**

In postwar Berlin, four very different women are loosely connected through their relationships with a West Berlin dandy and womanizer. The divided city presents an alternative, however: the chance to become part of a new socialist society in the East and to realize its promise of women’s emancipation. This film is now seen as a richly contradictory work by the Dudow-Eisler-Brecht creative team that made the 1932 Weimar Republic classic *Kuhle Wampe* (p. 18).

Divided Heaven  
*Der geteilte Himmel*

**GDR, 1964, dir. Konrad Wolf, 109 min., b/w**

Rita returns home after suffering a breakdown. There she recalls the past two years: her love for Manfred; his escape to West Berlin right before the Wall went up and her chance to follow him; the lessons she learned working at a railcar factory. Based on Christa Wolf’s internationally acclaimed novel and produced during a brief cultural thaw in the early 1960s, the film was criticized for questioning the need for the Wall.

“The film looks very much like its American independent counterparts.” —*DVD Verdict*
**The Dove on the Roof**  
*Die Taube auf dem Dach*  
GDR/Germany, 1973/2010, dir. Iris Gusner, 82 min., b/w  
In this film that raises questions about the importance of work, love and family in 1970s East Germany, engineer Linda falls in love with two very different men on her team. Officials banned the film, accusing Gusner of presenting an "unrealistic picture of life." A copy was re-discovered and restored in 2010. A rare female perspective on gender roles in the GDR.  
"Gusner stages the struggle between the ideal and the real in an associative and playful manner." —documenta 2012

**Eolomea**  
GDR, 1972, dir. Herrmann Zschoche, 79 min., color  
Eight cargo ships disappear into space without a trace, and space station ‘Margot’ has suddenly fallen silent. Faced with these mysteries, the space council grounds all flights—but one spaceship takes off in secret. *Eolomea*’s release was covered in *The New York Times* feature, "Hailing the DVD Distributors: The Best Vault Raiders of 2005."

**Five Cartridges**  
*Fünf Patronenhülsen*  
GDR, 1960, dir. Frank Beyer, 85 min., b/w  
During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), five International Brigade soldiers of different nationalities are given a crucial assignment: they are to smuggle top-secret information across enemy lines. This captivating action drama stars Oscar nominee Armin Mueller-Stahl (*Shine, Jacob the Liar*) and Manfred Krug (*Trace of Stones*).  
"The aims of the film exhibit strong parallels to Ken Loach’s *Land and Freedom.*" —Stefan Deines, *Erinnern und Erzählen*

**Five Days – Five Nights**  
*Fünf Tage, fünf Nächte*  
GDR/USSR, 1960, dir. Lev Arnshtam, 108 min., color  
May 8, 1945: WWII is over. Dresden is in ruins. But where are the 2200 paintings from the Old Masters Picture Gallery? Red Army Captain Leonov and his soldiers have been ordered to recover the lost paintings. During the next five days, Dresden’s residents join the search for the collection. A secret Nazi document offers a first lead. With a film score by Dmitri Shostakovich and bonus features on issues of looted art.  
"A rare fictional work about the wartime looting of art.” —Margaret Parsons, National Gallery of Art in Washington DC
The Flight  
*Die Flucht*  
GDR, 1977, dir. Roland Gräf, 94 min., color  
The GDR’s Dr. Schmith proposes important international research. After it is tabled, he strikes a deal with an escape agency to obtain a position in West Germany; but when he decides to stay in the East, they pressure him to uphold the contract. *The Flight* is exceptional in East German film history, as the topic of defecting to the West was strictly taboo. Christian Petzold parallels this story in *Barbara* (2013).

The Flying Dutchman  
*Der fliegende Holländer*  
GDR, 1964, dir. Joachim Herz, 101 min., b/w  
The first complete Wagner film-opera. While the script clearly separated the real from the imaginary, the 35mm format reflected this separation visually by changing the image size—from Academy ratio for reality, to wide-screen for fantasy. The film was produced with a groundbreaking 4-channel magnetic soundtrack. Played by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, with choreography by Ruth Berghaus.

1978 Grand Prix, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

for eyes only—top secret  
for eyes only – streng geheim

GDR, 1963, dir. János Veiczi, 103 min., b/w  
Hansen is a double agent working for the East German secret police. He has infiltrated the American Military Intelligence Division, part of a network planning to invade the GDR. Hansen’s mission is to obtain and bring back classified, top-secret documents. Some film critics described this first GDR spy thriller as the answer to the first James Bond film, *Dr. No* (1962).

“The film is infused with a propaganda message, as were all espionage pictures during the Cold War.”  —Glenn Erickson, *DVD Savant*

The Gleiwitz Case  
*Der Fall Gleiwitz*  
GDR, 1961, dir. Gerhard Klein, 69 min., b/w  
This film is a detailed and highly stylized reconstruction of the 1939 attack by a Nazi unit on the Gleiwitz radio station—the event that was blamed on Polish forces and served as Hitler’s justification for starting WWII. Although it narrowly escaped censorship, GDR officials accused the filmmakers of aestheticizing fascism. Featuring the work of Czech cameraman Jan Curík, today the film is considered one of the most modern and experimental films in DEFA’s history.

“Highly Recommended!”  —Video Librarian
**Goya, or the Hard Way to Enlightenment**

**Goya oder der arge Weg der Erkenntnis**

_GDR/USSR, 1971, dir. Konrad Wolf, 134 min., color_

This adaptation of Lion Feuchtwanger’s novel traces Goya’s evolution from bon vivant and court painter for King Carlos IV, to enlightened freethinker. His socially and politically pointed work raises the ire of the Inquisition. Lithuanian film star Donatas Banionis (_Solaris_) gives a towering performance as Goya. _Goya_ is one of ten East German films originally shot on 70mm. This release is the director’s cut and shows the influence of great filmmakers from Buñuel to Eisenstein.

“Remarkable! A provocative, brilliantly stylized bio-pic!” —Film Society of Lincoln Center

**Her Third**

**Der Dritte**

_GDR, 1971, dir. Egon Günther, 111 min., color_

_Her Third_ recounts eighteen years in the life of mathematician Margit through a provocative mosaic of flashbacks. A single mother of two daughters in her mid-30s, Margit’s amorous pursuit of a colleague provides not only an entertaining love story, but is also a testament to the evolving self-confidence and independence of East German women.

Bonus Film: _Sylvia_ (GDR, 1983, dir. Ernst Cantzler, 24 min., b/w, doc.).

**Herzsprung**

_Germany, 1992, dir. Helke Misselwitz, 87 min., color_

In the little town of Herzsprung, the only thing that has changed since German unification is a rise in unemployment. Johanna too loses her job and her husband commits suicide. To make matters worse, she falls in love with a wandering stranger and the whole village is talking about it. Günter Lamprecht and Eva-Maria Hagen co-star in remarkable roles in this director’s feature film debut.

1992 Special Mention, San Sebastian International Film Festival
1993 German Film Award Nominee

**Hot Summer**

_Heisser Sommer_

_GDR, 1968, dir. Joachim Hasler, 91 min., color_

The East German _Grease!_ Resurrected in the 1990s as a cult film, this beach blanket is being pitched on the Baltic Sea, where East German pop stars are living it up. After a number of serious (and banned) films on teenagers, this bit of fluff lit up East German box offices. The blend of pop songs, rock and upbeat lyrics kept the soundtrack on the hit parade for more than a year.

“A charming rarity not to be missed!” - UCLA Film & Television Archive
In the Dust of the Stars  Im Staub der Sterne
GDR, 1976, dir. Gottfried Kolditz, 95 min., color
Spaceship Cyrno goes to planet TEM 4, which has called for help. But the TEM-ers deny having sent the message. When Commander Akala prepares to leave, she and her crew are invited to a futuristic party by TEM’s ruler. This groovy sci-fi classic, complete with 1970s space-age fashion statements, music and set design, is a true gem. Its DVD release was included in The New York Times feature, “Hailing the DVD Distributors: The Best Vault Raiders of 2005.”

I Was Nineteen  Ich war neunzehn
GDR, 1968, dir. Konrad Wolf, 115 min., b/w
Gregor’s family fled from Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union when he was a child. At the end of the war, he returns to Germany as a young soldier with the victorious Soviet troops. Here he feels like a stranger in his own land. Konrad Wolf’s most autobiographical film is an exploration of the postwar dilemma of German identity and powerfully documents the search for a “usable” German past. “One of the most important films to come out of Germany in the postwar period.” —Montreal Mirror

Jacob the Liar  Jakob der Lügner
GDR, 1974, dir. Frank Beyer, 96 min., color
Jacob (Vlastimil Brodsky) invents news reports to bolster the spirits of his fellow Jews living in a Polish ghetto under Nazi occupation. Beautifully performed, this bittersweet story is loaded with human touches and memorable vignettes. Written by the renowned GDR author Jurek Becker, Jacob the Liar quickly achieved international acclaim. A remake starring Robin Williams was released in 1999.

Jadup and Boel  Jadup und Boel
GDR, 1981, dir. Rainer Simon, 100 min., color
In a small 1970s East German town everyone has tried to forget what happened after WWII… until a stranger finds a book that Jadup gave to the young refugee girl, Boel. Memories of the postwar period begin to surface and shake up the whole town. Censored and then banned by GDR officials as too controversial, Jadup and Boel was not released until 1988.
**Jana and Jan**

*Germany, 1991, dir. Helmut Dziuba, 87 min., color*

It is fall 1989 and Jan is almost 16. Caught trying to climb over the Wall, he is now in a juvenile detention center. Here he meets Jana, and what starts as a bet becomes young love. When Jana gets pregnant, the situation spirals out of control. In the summer of 1990, Jana and Jan flee from the reformatory into the unknown, insecure future of a new Germany.

The only feature film set in a GDR juvenile detention center.

“A portrait of lost and abandoned youth during the GDR’s upheaval. Sensitively directed and played.” —film-dienst.de

**1993 Special Youth Award, San Remo Film Festival, Italy**

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**Just Don’t Think I’ll Cry**

*GDR, 1965, dir. Frank Vogel, 91 min., b/w*

High school senior Peter considers the adults around him hypocritical, self-congratulatory and immersed in the past. When he gets suspended for writing an essay his teachers take as a challenge to the state, only his friend Anne stands by him. This masterpiece of critical realism was one of the two films screened and debated at the SED Party’s 11th Plenum; it was banned in 1965 for allegedly anti-socialist elements.

“Formally an exceptionally dense and brilliantly performed film.” —Lexikon des Internationalen Films

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**Kuhle Wampe, or Who Owns the World?**

*Germany, 1932, dir. Slatan Dudow, 74 min., b/w*

With an avant-garde, fragmented narrative, this Weimar Republic leftist classic shows the working class in early-1930s Berlin, during the Great Depression. Young people are organizing for a fairer world, however. Dudow enlisted renowned artists for this project: co-author Bertolt Brecht, cameraman Günther Krampf (*Nosferatu*), composer Hanns Eisler, balladeer Ernst Busch and actress Hertha Thiele (*Girls in Uniform*).

“A landmark of committed cinema.” —The Guardian

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**Kuhle Wampe – Censored!**

*GDR, 1975, dirs. Christa Mühl & Werner Hecht, 62 min., b/w, docudrama*

*Kuhle Wampe*—a low-budget communist film with top-flight personnel—was the source of vehement debates in the film censorship office during the Weimar Republic. An edited version was finally released in 1932, shortly before the Nazis came to power and banned it again. This docudrama is a detailed reconstruction of the original censorship proceedings on *Kuhle Wampe*; it includes original footage of Berlin in the 1920s-30s and reenactments of scenes that were cut.
The Kaiser's Lackey  Der Untertan

GDR, 1951, dir. Wolfgang Staudte, 105 min., b/w

Young Diederich Hessling learns an important lesson for an ambitious man: one must first serve power to gain power. From then on, he bows to superiors and kicks underlings. This classic by Wolfgang Staudte (The Murderers Are among Us, Rotation), based on Heinrich Mann’s satire set in the 1890s Kaiserreich, was ranked by film critics among the 100 Best German Films.

“One of the best films of all time!”—Cinémathèque Royale, Brussels

The Land beyond the Rainbow  Das Land hinter dem Regenbogen

Germany, 1991, dir. Herwig Kipping, 89 min., color

This harsh, yet poetic critique of Stalinism centers on the mythical village of Stalina in 1953. The villagers legitimize injustice by glorifying “real existing socialism.” Only two children—Marie and the Rainmaker—still believe in human goodness and true love. Critics credit this film with being one of the most radical condemnations of the GDR on film, in the style of a cross between Hieronymus Bosch and Breughel.

“A meditation on false beginnings and the uses and abuses of ideologies.” —Reinhild Steingröver, Eastman School of Music

Latest from the Da-Da-R  Letztes aus der Da Da eR

Germany, 1990, dir. Jörg Foth, 86 min., color

In a series of cabaret pieces, Steffen Mensching and Hans-Eckardt Wenzel satirize GDR life in the historic year after the Wall came down. As clowns, they are allowed to leave prison to sing as the country sinks into rebellion. Eventually, the prison is attacked and looted, and people chase the clowns away. With renowned Fassbinder actress Irm Hermann and author Christoph Hein in supporting roles.

“Brecht plus Goethe, times Weill, raised to the power of Eisler, divided by Valentin, equals Wenzel and Mensching.” —Der Tagesspiegel

The Legend of Paul and Paula  Die Legende von Paul und Paula

GDR, 1972, dir. Heiner Carow, 106 min., color

Author Ulrich Plenzdorf (Carla) and director Heiner Carow (Coming Out) teamed up to winningly portray undefeatable, passionate love in this story of a single mother and a married official in East Berlin. Featuring music by the East German cult rock band the Puhdys, the film remains one of the most popular DEFA films ever.

“This film shows that the 70s all over the world, even in the GDR, were the 70s.” —Jennie Livingston, director, Paris Is Burning
**The Lost Angel**  
*Der verlorene Engel*

GDR, 1966/70, dir. Ralf Kirsten, 58 min., b/w

August 24, 1937: The expressionist artist Ernst Barlach (Fred Düren) keeps to himself and wants to steer clear of politics. On this day, he learns that the Nazis have dragged his famous sculpture, The Hovering Angel, out of the Güstrow Cathedral. Barlach begins to reflect on his life and on his work, which has been denounced as “degenerate” by the Nazis. The film was not approved for release, as it was considered “mystical” and “existentialist.” In 1970, it was released in a shortened version. **Bonus Film: Ernst Barlach: Mystic of Modernity** (Germany, 2006, dir. Bernd Boehm, 26 min., doc.).

**Marriage in the Shadows**  
*Ehe im Schatten*

Germany, 1947, dir. Kurt Maetzig, 104 min., b/w

This film spans a ten-year period starting in 1933. Celebrated German actor Hans Wieland marries the Jewish actress Elisabeth Maurer. As Nazi anti-Semitic policies increasingly infringe on their lives, they struggle to survive. Then Hans is given an ultimatum by a Nazi official: Save himself by divorcing his wife. The director dedicated his debut film to the acclaimed German theater couple, Meta Wolff and Joachim Gottschalk, whose fate had been hidden from the public by Nazi authorities.

“The film’s specific merit is its honesty, which sometimes produces effects far more impressive than the glamour of Hollywood.”

—Siegfried Kracauer, *Commentary*

**Miraculi**

Germany, 1991, dir. Ulrich Weiss, 113 min., color

A group of young people draws straws to see who’ll steal some cigarettes. With this theft, Sebastian starts a bizarre, symbolic odyssey. When he tries withdrawing from one social paradigm, he finds himself caught in another. The fall of the Wall enabled director Ulrich Weiss (*Your Unknown Brother*), to finally make a film again. With a cameo by the outstanding Brechtian actor Käthe Reichel.

“This quixotic movie is dominated by political allegory.”

—The New York Times

**The Mistake**  
*Die Verfehlung*

Germany, 1991, dir. Heiner Carow, 100 min., color

In 1988, Jacob, from West Germany, falls in love with Elisabeth in her village in East Germany. In the GDR, this is illegal. The lovers meet secretly in East Berlin, but the Stasi finds out and Jacob is picked up and deported. Elisabeth knows who begrudges her this love and plans her revenge. Meanwhile, her sons are on opposite sides of the social changes taking place in the country.
The fun-loving, 26-year-old architect Franziska Linkerhand works for a famous professor. Yet, she feels restrained by her dependence on him and longs to take risks. When her marriage falls apart, she moves to a small town for a fresh start without any compromise. Based on Brigitte Reimann’s bestselling, semi-autobiographical novel, Franziska Linkerhand.

“Our Short Life expresses the impasses and melancholia of late socialism.”
—Hunter Bivens, film scholar
**Rotation**

**GDR, 1949, dir. Wolfgang Staudte, 84 min., b/w**

Hans Behnke is thoroughly apolitical. He considers joining the Nazi party to improve his financial standing, but also helps friends print resistance leaflets. His son, a member of the Hitler Youth, reports him and he goes to prison. Censored by DEFA’s Soviet authorities because of its pacifist message and a clip from Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* (1936).

“Highly recommended! A powerful film that provides valuable insight into the conflicted German mindset during this tumultuous era.”

—Video Librarian

1954 Golden Leopard, Locarno Film Festival.

**The Second Track** *Das zweite Gleis*

**GDR, 1962, dir. Joachim Kunert, 80 min., b/w**

When station inspector Brock fails to report a robbery, he starts having flashbacks of his failure to take a stand against Nazi persecutions. This film was rarely shown in theaters, in part because officials denied that former Nazis led normal lives in the GDR.

“The film is a landmark! Uncanny touches, such as lightly suggested incest, borrow from the vernacular of Hollywood’s subversive Europeans: Sirk, Preminger, Wilder.”

—Boston Phoenix

**Silent Country** *Stilles Land*

**Germany, 1992, dir. Andreas Dresen, 98 min., color, 2-DVD set**

A young, enthusiastic director comes to a provincial GDR town to put on Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*—but he must get the lethargic theater company invested in the project. Meanwhile it is fall 1989, and far away in the capital a revolution is taking place. The second disc in this set includes six student films by Andreas Dresen (*Changing Skin*), and an extensive 2007 interview with the director.

“Remarkable! The film brilliantly reenacts the events of 1989 and is graced with excellent acting.”

—Inez Hedges, *Jump Cut*

**The Silent Star** *Der schweigende Stern*

**Poland/GDR, 1960, dir. Kurt Maetzig, 95 min., color**

An international expedition is sent to Venus to decipher a message found in the Gobi desert—a declaration of war on Earth. This original, uncut version of the GDR’s first sci-fi movie, based on a Stanislaw Lem novel, was bootlegged in North America in the 1960s as the highly edited *First Spaceship on Venus*.

“A critically acclaimed, serious space film with good special effects. Try and imagine a 1960 American movie with a Black astronaut.”

—*Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film*
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Solo Sunny
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Sunny, an aspiring singer, longs to be recognized as someone special. Kicked out of her band, she starts over in East Berlin’s Prenzlauer Berg underground scene. Now a 70s retro classic, this smash hit addressed the longings and frustrations of East German youth of the time. Ranked by film critics among Germany’s 100 Best Films.

“Critical and refreshing, entertaining!” — Variety

Somewhere in Berlin
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After WWII Berlin lies in ruins. For Gustav, Willi and their friends, the rubble is an adventurous, dangerous playground. When Gustav’s father finally returns from a POW camp, broken in health and spirit, Gustav and Willi try to help him fit in again. By director Gerhard Lamprecht, who directed Emil and the Detectives (1931) during the Weimar Republic, with a script by Billy Wilder.

The Sons of Great Bear
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Gojko Mitic stars in his first Indianerfilm as the fearless chief Tokei-ih- to, whose Dakota tribe is being driven from its land. In a last attempt to retain their freedom, they attempt to flee from the reservation to Canada. Based on the well-researched Western fiction by Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich—the GDR’s answer to Karl May.

Stars
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Stationed in a secluded Bulgarian village in 1943, Wehrmacht Corporal Walter lives an almost idyllic life, far from the war. But when a transit camp is set up for Greek Jews being deported to Auschwitz, he meets Ruth. This film subtly broke with depictions of both Wehrmacht soldiers and Jewish suffering and resistance. Based on Bulgarian scriptwriter Angel Wagenstein’s experiences and historic events during the Holocaust in the Balkans.

“A milestone in the history of Holocaust-related cinema. Highly recommended!” — Video Librarian
The Story of a Young Couple

Roman einer jungen Ehe

GDR, 1952, dir. Kurt Maetzig, 99 min., b/w

Two young actors working in Berlin before the Wall is built: Agnes is on location in East Berlin, her husband Jochen works in West Berlin. With diametrically opposed views on politics and art, their arguments threaten their marriage. This film portrays many cultural and political figures of the period—including Veit Harlan, director of the notorious Nazi propaganda film Jud Süss.

"An authentic document about the hysteria and resulting falsification of truth in the Cold War."
—epd filmdienst

Sun Seekers

Sonnensucher


Two women are arrested after a barroom brawl in 1950 and sentenced to work in the GDR's Wismut uranium mines. Chaotic as a Wild West gold rush town, it is full of characters, including old anarchists and former SS and Soviet officers. Banned at Soviet insistence, this film impresses even today with its political complexity, variety of characters and realistic portrayal of work in a top-secret zone of the industrial landscape.

The Tango Player

Der Tangospieler

GDR, 1990, dir. Roland Gräf, 96 min., color

Dr. Dallow has been released after 21 months in prison for playing piano in a “subversive” cabaret program. He refuses a Stasi offer to help him get his university position back in exchange for becoming an informant. He lives in increasing isolation and despair as he tries to deal with a hypocritical social system and the injustice done to him. Based on Christoph Hein’s 1989 novella.

1991 German Film Prize in Silver for Best Actor (Michael Gwisdek)
1991 Golden Rosa Camuna, Bergamo International Film Festival

Toxi

FRG, 1952, dir. Robert A. Stemmle, 85 min., b/w

A five-year-old girl appears on the doorstep of a well-to-do Hamburg family. The members of the multi-generational household react differently to the arrival of Toxi, the daughter of an African-American GI and a white German woman. This is the first West German feature film to explore the subject of “Black occupation children.”

“Stemmle presents German positions on race and racism with remarkable honesty and candor.”
—Harvard Film Archive
Trace of Stones  
*Spur der Steine*

**GDR, 1966, dir. Frank Beyer, 133 min., b/w**

Foreman Balla is self-proclaimed king of a massive construction site. But things get rocky when supplies become scarce and two newcomers threaten his authority: Kati Klee, a young engineer, and Werner Horrath, the new Party Secretary. A cult film, *Trace of Stones* was censored after its release in June 1966 and shelved for 25 years.

“A well-balanced mixture of comedy, drama, and social satire!” —The Guardian

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Until Death Do Us Part  
*Bis dass der Tod euch scheidet*

**GDR, 1978, dir. Heiner Carow, 92 min., color**

Scenes from an East German marriage: Sonya and Jens are very much in love, and they get married and have a child. When Sonya (Katrin Sass, *Goodbye, Lenin!* wants to go back to work, however, they clash for the first time, as Jens insists that she remain a full-time wife and mother. A film by critically acclaimed director Heiner Carow, who specializes in the anatomy of relationships (*Coming Out, The Legend of Paul and Paula, The Mistake*).

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The Woman and the Stranger  
*Die Frau und der Fremde*

**GDR, 1984, dir. Rainer Simon, 97 min., color**

Prisoners on the eastern front in WWI, Karl and Richard become close friends… so close that Richard shares intimate details about his wife, Anna. Karl falls in love with Anna in his thoughts and, when he escapes, he goes to her and pretends he is Richard. Anna tries to resist, but feels a growing response to him. Then one day Richard returns. Based on a novel by Leonhard Frank.

“Kathrin Waligura’s performance is of outstanding quality.” —Variety

1985  Golden Bear, Berlin International Film Festival

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Wozzeck

**Germany, 1947, dir. Georg C. Klaren, 101 min., b/w**

While an anatomy seminar prepares to examine the cadaver of Franz Wozzeck in the name of scientific progress, medical student Büchner excoriates humanity for having allowed Wozzeck’s fate. The tragic story unfolds in flashbacks, as Büchner narrates.

“A dialectical Marxist experiment in expressionism. An extremely astonishing work!” — Austrian Film Museum
**Your Unknown Brother**  
*Dein unbekannter Bruder*

GDR, 1981, dir. Ulrich Weiß, 103 min., color  

Released from a Nazi camp for political prisoners in 1935, Arnold Clasen is afraid he is being watched and ambivalent about contacting his resistance group. A film about isolation, fear, betrayal and the need for friendship. This rare psychological take on antifascism examines a crucial but little-discussed juncture in leftwing resistance to Nazism. Invited to the Cannes Film Festival, the film was withdrawn by East German officials.

“A milestone!” —The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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**The Devil’s Three Golden Hairs**  
*Wer reisst denn gleich vor’m Teufel aus?*

GDR, 1977, dir. Egon Schlegel, 89 min., color, English dubbed  

In order to save his own life and marry the beautiful princess, poor Jacob must get the Devil’s three golden hairs. A classic fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm.

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**The Golden Goose**  
*Die goldene Gans*

GDR, 1964, dir. Siegfried Hartmann, 65 min., color, English dubbed  

As a reward for his kindness, a good-hearted shoemaker receives a goose with feathers of pure gold.

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**The Singing, Ringing Tree**  
*Das singende, klingende Bäumchen*

GDR, 1957, dir. Francesco Stefani, 70 min., color, English voice over  

The prince must find the singing, ringing tree in order to win the hand of the haughty princess before the sun sets, or else he will be turned into a bear. A landmark of children’s filmmaking and a European cult film.

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**The Story of Little Mook**  
*Die Geschichte vom kleinen Muck*

GDR, 1953, dir. Wolfgang Staudte, 96 min., color, English dubbed  

Germany’s most beloved children’s film classic in the magical setting of the Arabian Nights. Staudte’s lavish production and special effects were seen by 13 million viewers.
ARTWORK – Six Shorts


Throughout his creative life, artist and filmmaker Jürgen Böttcher explored the theme of art and artists. This DVD presents six filmic milestones on this topic: Short Visit with Hermann Glöckner (GDR, 1984, 32 min., color & b/w, doc.); Shunters (GDR, 1984, 22 min., b/w, doc.); Transformation Trilogy: Potter’s Bull, Venus after Giorgione, Woman at the Clavichord (GDR, 1981, 17 min. / 22 min. / 17 min., color) and Three of Many (GDR, 1961, 33 min., b/w, doc.).

“Böttcher’s films could be the foundation of a counter-genre.”
—Harun Farocki, filmmaker

ARTS in EXILE

Kunst im Exil


Nine short documentaries address the situation of artists under the Nazis and the decision of some artists to go into exile. This DEFA Foundation selection features films on: film director Slatan Dudow; actor Martin Brandt; authors Erich Fried, Erich Weinert, and Arnold Zweig; photographer Walter Ballhause; cartoonist Leo Haas; and journalist Egon Erwin Kisch.

“East German documentaries often portrayed leftist and liberal artists who were forced into exile by the Nazis. This topic corresponded to the GDR’s official antifascist film policies […] and depended on current propaganda demands.”
—Ralf Schenk, chair, DEFA Foundation Berlin

La Villette


Only two months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, two hundred controversial East German visual and performance artists, including the Autoperforation Artists, Via Lewandowsky, Trak Wendisch and Jürgen Böttcher, presented works rarely seen before at a unique, three-day exhibition—The Other Germany Outside the Walls—at La Villette in Paris. With extensive bonus materials about the event.

“The ‘Wild Youth’ from the East transformed the Paris slaughterhouse into a space of subversive counter-culture.” —babylon cinema, Berlin

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And check out the DEFA Film Library’s curated film series on our website!
For more information: filmtour@german.umass.edu or (413) 545-6681.
**Last to Know**

*Jeder schweigt von etwas anderem*

Germany, dirs. Marc Bauder & Dörte Franke, 2006, 72 min., color, doc.

This intense and very moving documentary features four (of approximately 250,000) former political prisoners in the GDR. Nearly twenty years after the fall of the Wall, it is still difficult to answer their children’s and friends’ questions. Conversation with people in search of how to come to terms with a very personal and painful past.

“The documentary counterpart to *The Lives of Others*.”

—Hamburger Morgenpost

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**Latin American Trilogy**

Germany/Ecuador, 1994-2002,
dir. Rainer Simon, 130 min., color, feature film/doc.

Since making *The Ascent of Chimborazo* (1989), his feature film about the explorer Alexander von Humboldt in Ecuador, director Rainer Simon has focused on the life and culture of the indigenous people there. This DVD presents three of the short films he shot in Ecuador: *The Colors of Tigua* (Germany, 1994, 43 min., doc.); *Talking with Fish and Birds* (Germany, 1999, 43 min., doc.); *The Call of Fayu Ujmu* (Germany/Ecuador, 2002, 44 min.).

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**Acquire the entire [East] German Film Collection on DVD or for Streaming!**

This unique collection presents films made from the 1930s until the 2000s in a wide range of genres, including comedy, drama, sci-fi, fairy tales, period films, literary adaptations, documentaries and animations. Topics include everyday life in the GDR, history, sexuality, art and artists, the role of women in socialist society, WWII, the Holocaust, the Cold War, the fall of the Wall and unification.

Many DVDs have special features tailored for classroom use, teaching and research. All essays, bonus films, interviews and historical documents are in English.

To get more information or a quote for purchasing the collection, please email:

video@german.umass.edu
Last Year Titanic  
Letztes Jahr Titanic

Germany, 1990, dir. Andreas Voigt, 101 min., color & b/w, doc.

The director interviewed people of different ages and social backgrounds about their experiences after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. He paints an important picture of this historic period in German history, radical social and economic change and insecurity. Since 1986, Voigt has documented life in the city of Leipzig. His long-term film observation project, spanning almost thirty years, includes six films. Last Year Titanic is the third film in the series.

“Snapshots of fates and destroyed illusions, but also of the humor and self-irony of a [country’s] ending.” —Chronik-der-Mauer.de

1991 Forum, Berlin International Film Festival

Leipzig in the Fall  
Leipzig im Herbst


The most comprehensive documentation of events in Leipzig from in fall 1989, this film includes interviews with demonstrators, members of the citizens’ rights movement, officials, and bystanders. An unparalleled look at the East German civil rights movement that brought down the Wall, and the second film in Voigt’s Leipzig series. Bonus Film: Eastern Landscape (Germany, 1991, dir. Eduard Schreiber, 15 min.), an ironic portrait of the remnants of a society.

1989 Golden Dove, Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film

Look at This City  
Schaut auf diese Stadt


This fast-paced montage covers the postwar history of Berlin until 1961 from an East Bloc perspective. The strikingly modernist propaganda documentary argues that the building of the Berlin Wall was a defensive necessity against communism’s Cold War enemies.

“A provocative and informative time capsule from the Cold War.” —Northwest Film Forum, Seattle

For regular updates on events and news, don’t forget to “Like” the DEFA Film Library on Facebook!
A Place in Berlin


This experimental documentary takes a critical look at how the meanings of monuments change. Ten years after the fall of the Wall, Böttcher revisited the 35mm material he shot during the creation of the Marx-Engels Forum in the 1980s and combined it with new digital video material. Günter “Baby” Sommer (perc) and Dietmar Diesner (sax) interpret the space and artwork with their improvisational jazz.

“A striking nonfiction essay!” —National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

2001 Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival

The Red Orchestra

Germany/USA, 2004, dir. Stefan Roloff, 86 min., color, doc.

Using pioneering animation techniques and interviews with survivors, this film tells the inside story of the resistance group that the Nazis called the Red Orchestra. Until recently, a twist of fate led the Allied secret services to uphold the Gestapo’s claim that the members of this group were communists and traitors, when in fact they were simply principled Germans.

“Resonates powerfully long after the lights go up.” —The Jewish Week

That Was the GDR: A History of the Other Germany

Germany, 1993, multiple directors, 360 min., color & b/w, doc., English subtitles and voice over, 2-DVD set

Seven short documentaries on the history of the GDR, told from the point of view of its people using historical footage and documents. Cultural, economic and political developments, from the founding of the GDR in 1949 to German unification on October 3, 1990. Highlighted are: the 1953 uprising, the Prague Spring, Bitterfelder Weg, the building of the Wall, the cultural repression of the 1960s, economic stagnation, Stasi activity, and the East German citizens’ movement that finally brought down the Wall.

VERDICT ON AUSCHWITZ: The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965

Germany, 1993 (180 min.)/2005 (60 min.), dirs. Rolf Bickel & Dietrich Wagner, color & b/w, doc., 2-DVD set with booklet

Based on 430 hours of original audiotapes, this production is an unparalleled document of the first Auschwitz Trial. In one of the most significant trials in German legal history, 360 witnesses from 19 countries, including 211 Auschwitz survivors, confronted former members of Hitler’s SS. Includes extensive educational materials.

“Highly recommended. Editor’s Choice!” —Video Librarian
**The Wall**
*Die Mauer*

*Germany, 1990, dir. Jürgen Böttcher, 98 min., color & b/w, doc.*

Shot in 35mm, this masterpiece by painter and filmmaker Jürgen Böttcher highlights the Berlin Wall’s historic and symbolic significance. Footage of historical events is projected onto the crumbling Wall, conveying a painter’s sensitivity against the acoustic backdrop of construction equipment, curious masses and relentless media.

“A poetic and enigmatic documentary.” —The Hammer Museum, L.A.

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**whisper & SHOUT**  
*flüstern & SCHREIEN*

*GDR, 1988, dir. Dieter Schumann, 120 min., color, doc.*

This road movie shows how young people related to the music scene in the GDR. Concert footage and interviews with band members and fans document parts of the GDR rock and punk scene of the late 1980s and introduce bands such as Silly, Chicorée, Sandow and Feeling B (some of whose members later joined Rammstein).

“A rare East German documentary of the rock music scene.” —The New York Times

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**Winter Adé**

*GDR, 1988, dir. Helke Misselwitz, 112 min., b/w, doc.*

A groundbreaking road movie across East Germany, featuring interviews with women of different ages and backgrounds. This film caused a sensation because it undermined the official image of women in the GDR and challenged the socialist claim to have achieved gender equality.


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**Cartoons**

*Animation before Unification*

*GDR, multiple directors, 1974-1990, 57 min., color & b/w, no dialog*

By the time it closed, the DEFA Studio for Animation Film had produced more than 800 shorts. The 16 cartoons on this DVD, shot on 35mm, are unified by elements of social and political satire that would never have been allowed in live-action films.

“Fascinating to see! Cultural historians should find these worth a look.” —DVD Verdict
In addition to a box set of films from the WENDE FLICKS series, we offer three boxes of DVDs in our BOOKed series, which accompany newly published books. Please see our website for more detailed information on the box sets!

### BOOKed #1: East German Cinema

**12-DVD set**

Accompanies *East German Cinema – DEFA and Film History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), by Sebastian Heiduschke (Oregon State Univ.).

“A concise and clearly written introductory text that offers the reader basic information on the film production context for some of the great classics of GDR cinema.”

—Jan-Christopher Horak, UCLA Film and Television Archive

### BOOKed #2: Last Features

**11-DVD set**

Accompanies *Last Features: East German Cinema’s Lost Generation* (Camden House, 2014), by Reinhild Steingröver (Eastman School of Music at the Univ. of Rochester).

“Meticulously researched! Nuanced analyses! Highly recommended.”

—2014, Choice Outstanding Academic Title

### BOOKed #3: DEFA at the Crossroads

**13-DVD set**

Accompanies *DEFA at the Crossroads of East German and International Film Culture* (DeGruyter, 2014), edited by Marc Silberman (Univ. of Wisconsin) and Henning Wrange (Gettysburg College).

“A detailed analysis of over fifty East German films and the international networks in which these films were produced.”

—DEFA Film Library

### WENDE FLICKS

**11-DVD set**

Includes 8 feature films and 4 documentaries made between 1988 and 1992 by East German filmmakers in the period surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification, which give insight into this period of radical upheaval. It represents films included in the 2009 series, *WENDE FLICKS: Last Films from East Germany.*

“The range of cinematographic styles and vocabulary is breathtaking.”

—Los Angeles County Museum of Art
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Colleges and universities can now stream films from the DEFA Film Library. We offer over 200 films as single titles or playlists with new titles each year.

1-year or 3-year subscriptions are available for:
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- A range of thematic sub-collections, such as: Art & Artists, Banned & Censored, Berlin and the Wall, DEFA Classics, Images of the Holocaust and Antifascism, REEL Women in East Germany, WENDE FLICKS Collection, the World Wars.
- Individual DEFA titles: $150 (1-yr) and $350 (3-yrs).

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