

# REEL

## WOMEN in East Germany



Presented by the DEFA Film Library



**The following Recommended Categories (RC) are meant as suggestions for pairing films or composing thematic series that touch on various aspects of East German women's lives and filmmaking:**

- [1] Bodies, Sex & Sports
- [2] Consumer Culture
- [3] Education
- [4] The Holocaust
- [5] Women & Justice
- [6] Literature
- [7] Love
- [8] Memory
- [9] War
- [10] Motherhood
- [11] The Postwar Period
- [12] Science Fiction & Fantasy
- [13] Travel
- [14] Women & the *Wende*
- [15] Work & Career
- [16] Politics
- [17] Women Artists
- [18] Youth & Emancipation
- [19] Female Directors
- [20] Stardom & Celebrity
- [21] Environment
- [22] Race and Racism

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**ALL FILMS IN GERMAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES**

35mm, DCP (Digital Cinema Package), DVD and Vimeo links are available for non-commercial public screenings or classroom use.

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## FEATURE FILMS □

### **A Berlin Romance (Eine Berliner Romanze)**

GDR, 1956, 81 min., b/w

Director: Gerhard Klein

Mid-1950s Berlin, before the building of the Wall: Uschi, a salesgirl and aspiring fashion model from the East, is attracted to Hans, from the West—but also loves the bright shop windows in his part of the city. The flashiness of this new world soon vanishes into reality, however, when Hans loses his job.

RC: [2][7][11]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

### **A Strange Love (Eine sonderbare Liebe)**

GDR, 1984, 104 min., color

Dir.: Lothar Warneke

Sibylle (Christine Schorn), a single woman who devotes her whole life to her work, and Harald, a widower with two sons, decide to enter into a relationship of convenience; when their partnership begins to fail for lack of passion and romance, they discover their bond is greater than they realized. Warneke was a master of applying documentary style to feature films. *Winner of the 1984 Grand Prix at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.*

RC: [1][7][20]

Available formats: 35mm

### **All My Girls (Alle meine Mädchen)**

GDR, 1979, 83 min., color

Director: Iris Gusner

Film student Ralf is assigned to document the work of a brigade of six young women workers at NARVA, a Berlin light bulb factory. The team has fun and works well together; but soon tensions between the women become apparent and they pull Ralf into their conflicts. Director Iris Gusner's biggest hit, this was the only East German film ever to feature so many female protagonists.

RC: [1][7][15][19]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

### **And Your Love Too (...und deine Liebe auch)**

GDR, 1962, 92 min., b/w

Director: Frank Vogel

On August 13th, 1961—the night the Berlin Wall goes up—a young woman and two young men must make a decision that will change their lives forever.... This film features live footage shot on the street during this historic crisis, as well as actor Armin Mueller-Stahl in one of his first major film roles.

RC: [7][9][11]

Available formats: DVD, mp4, Kanopy

### **Apprehension (Die Beunruhigung)**

GDR, 1982, 81 min., b/w

Director: Lothar Warneke

After learning that she (Christine Schorn) may have breast cancer, a divorced woman in her mid-30s goes through her life with new eyes. Shot exclusively on location mostly with lay actors, this film's script is by author Helga Schubert, who pursued her writing career while working as a

psychologist in a family counseling center in Berlin.

RC: [1][10][15][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

### **The Architects (Die Architekten)**

GDR, 1990, 97 min., color

Director: Peter Kahane

Filmed as the GDR crumbled, this somber, finely drawn portrait of life in East Berlin depicts the dissolution of a young family whose life is strangled by. While the husband's creative career is stifled by communist dogma, the wife falls in love and decides to leave the GDR. One of the first fiction films to bridge the GDR and reunification periods.

RC: [7][10][14][15]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD

### **The Axe of Wandsbeck (Das Beil von Wandsbek)**

GDR, 1951, 111 min., b/w

Director: Falk Harnack

Hamburg, Germany, 1934: the conservatives need an executioner for some controversial political prisoners. In order to save his business, Teetjen (Erwin Geschonneck) agrees. Once this becomes known, everything falls apart for him and his wife, played by famous theater actress Käthe Braun.

RC: [9][20]

Available formats: DCP, DVD

### **Bailing Out (Kaskade rückwärts)**

GDR, 1983, 96 min., color

Director: Iris Gusner

Maja is thirty-something and a widow, who cannot seem to get over her husband's death. Encouraged by her daughter, she picks up and moves to the city, and a series of attempts at dating ensue. This story, which balances romance and satire, with ironic sideswipes at daily life in East Germany, is director Iris Gusner's favorite of her own films.

RC: [1][7][10][15][19]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

### **Berlin - Schönhauser Corner (Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser)**

GDR, 1957, 82 min., b/w

Director: Gerhard Klein

They are East Berlin teenagers, each with their own personal problems. They want to be free to rock'n'roll, trade in forbidden Western goods, and get away from the constraints of their parents and the state. This 1950's teen cult film became a box-office hit. Ranked by film critics among Germany's *100 Most Important Films* of all time.

RC: [1][2][3][7][11][18]

Available formats: 35mm, DCP, DVD, Kanopy

### **The Bicycle (Das Fahrrad)**

GDR, 1982, 89 min., color

Director: Evelyn Schmidt

Susanne is a young single mother who lives a somewhat alternative lifestyle. After quitting her job, she finds herself in trouble financially and attempts a minor insurance fraud to make ends meet. *The Bicycle*, director Evelyn Schmidt's best-known film, was selected to be part of the *Rebels*

*with a Cause: The Cinema of East Germany* retrospective, which premiered at The Museum of Modern Art in 2005.

RC: **[5][7][10][15][19]**

Available Formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

### **Biology! (Biologie!)**

GDR, 1990, 89 min., color

Director: Jörg Foth

On a field trip with her biology class, Ulla, a sensitive and principled 10<sup>th</sup>-grader, discovers that a trout farm and weekend homes are being built illegally in a local conservation area. Even after discovering that her boyfriend Winfried's family is responsible, she solicits his help to create a touched-up photograph of a rare bird as "evidence" that the conservation area is home to an endangered species. When Ulla's deception is discovered, she faces serious consequences.

RC: **[1][7][18][21]**

Available Formats: DVD, mp4, Kanopy

### **Born in 45 (Jahrgang 45)**

GDR, 1966/1990, 93 min., b/w

Director: Jürgen Böttcher

Alfred and Lisa, only married a couple of months, are having problems and finally decide to divorce. Although Alfred ultimately returns to Lisa, the ending remains open. East Germany's closest counterpart to early Godard, the film was banned in 1966 and Boettcher never returned to feature filmmaking.

RC: **[1][7][15]**

Available Formats: 35mm, DCP, DVD, Kanopy

### **Carla (Karla)**

GDR, 1965/1990, 129 min., b/w

Director: Herrmann Zschoche

Carla (played by Jutta Hoffmann) is a young and idealistic teacher at the start of her career. When she discovers her students are hiding their true thoughts and feelings, she goes against the routine opportunism of her hypocritical and small-minded surroundings. *Carla* became one of a dozen East German films banned in 1965-66.

RC: **[1][2][7][15][20]**

Available formats: DCP, DVD, Kanopy

### **Castles & Cottages (Schlösser und Katen)**

GDR, 1957, 201 min., b/w

Director: Kurt Maetzig

The story of the young Annegret is one of several interwoven plotlines in this two-part epic set from 1945 through 1953. Unbeknownst to all but her parents, Annegret's birth resulted from the rape of her mother by the local wealthy landowner. Annegret herself becomes pregnant out of wedlock while she is away studying agronomy. All these issues must be resolved when she returns to help build the new agricultural collective and nation.

RC: **[3][8][10][11][15][16]**

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

### **Changing Skins (Raus aus der Haut)**

Germany, 1997, 90 min., color

Director: Andreas Dresen

East Germany 1977, at the time of the infamous RAF kidnapping of industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer in West Germany. A couple of East German teens are caught with contraband music and photos of the Baader-Meinhof gang. In an attempt to divert harsh punishment, they improvise an RAF-style kidnapping of the school principal.

RC: [1][3][7][8][18]

Available formats: DVD

### **Childhood (Kindheit)**

GDR, 1987, 87 min., color

Director: Siegfried Kühn

At the end of WWII, Alfons lives with his grandparents on a farm in a Silesian village. He adores his grandmother (Carmen-Maja Antoni), who runs everything after her husband dies. But everything changes after the appearance of a travelling showman in the xenophobic village.

RC: [7][9][11][20]

Available Formats: 35mm

### **Children's Home (Heim)**

GDR, 1978/1990, 26 min., b/w

Directors: Angelika Andrees, Petra Tschörtner

A film about children and teenagers living in an East German children's home in Mentin, Mecklenburg in the late 1970s. They talk openly about their past experiences, how they affected their lives and why they ended up in the home, describing unstable home situations, domestic violence and their parents' alcohol abuse. But these young people also share their hopes for the future.

RC: [18][19]

Available Formats: Kanopy

### **Coming Out (Coming Out)**

GDR, 1989, 108 min., color

Director: Heiner Carow

Philipp and his girlfriend are expecting a child. Then Philipp meets Matthias and falls in love. After years of repressing his homosexuality, he must finally accept himself for who he truly is. This first and only DEFA feature film about homosexuality premiered on the evening the Berlin Wall fell.

RC: [1][7][14]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, mp4, Kanopy

### **Counter Images (Gegenbilder)**

GDR, 1983-1989, 90 min., color

Multiple Directors

Of the ten short films on this DVD, three are made by female artists Cornelia Klauß, Cornelia Schleime and Ramona Köppel-Welsh. Featuring Super-8 films made between 1983 and 1989 by young artists, musicians, performers, and writers in the GDR, the DVD reveals an underground scene which functioned outside official channels. Many of the Super-8 directors are now leading figures in the international art world.

RC: [17][19]

Available formats: DVD

**Destinies of Women (Frauensicksale)**

GDR, 1952, 105 min., color

Director: Slatan Dudow

Berlin in the early 1950s: Four very different women seek happiness and a man in the divided city. Their destinies are loosely connected through one person: the West Berlin dandy and womanizer, Conny. Now seen as a richly contradictory work by the Dudow-Eisler-Brecht creative team that made the 1932 Weimar Republic classic, *Kuhle Wampe*.

RC: [2][3][7][11][22]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Divided Heaven (Der geteilte Himmel)**

GDR, 1964, 109 min., b/w

Director: Konrad Wolf

Recovering from a breakdown, Rita (Renate Blume) returns to her childhood village to mull over the past two years: her love for the research chemist Manfred; his enthusiasm for, then bitter disappointment at the rejection of his project; his escape to West Berlin a few weeks before the Wall went up; and her decision not to follow him.

RC: [1][3][6][7][8][15][16][20]

Available formats: DVD, VoD

**Do You Know Urban? (Kennen Sie Urban?)**

GDR, 1971, 95 min., b/w

Director: Ingrid Reschke

After he gets out of jail, Hoffi is looking for a fresh start. He wants to find Urban, a role model of sorts that he met during a brief hospital stay. Along the way, Hoffi meets a young woman, Gila, who is willing to overlook his past. Despite her family's disapproval, Gila decides to build a life with Hoffi, but initially he balks at the responsibility. Thanks to the encouragement of his brigade members, Hoffi realizes his mistake and decides to give his relationship with Gila a chance.

RC: [7][18][19]

Available Formats: Kanopy

**Don't Cheat, Darling! (Nicht schummeln, Liebling!)**

GDR, 1972, 91 min., color

Director: Joachim Hasler

As the mayor of Sonnenthal prepares plans to have a champion soccer team, Barbara Schwalbe, the director of the agricultural school, establishes a girls' soccer team. Conflicts develop quickly, not only between the mayor and the school director, but also between team captains, Bernd and Brigitte. Then, as tensions ease, the two pairs start to warm up toward their respective rivals. An East German film musical featuring pop stars Chris Doerk and Frank Schöbel (*Hot Summer*, 1967)

RC: [1][7][15][18]

Available formats: mp4, Kanopy

**The Dove on the Roof (Die Taube auf dem Dach)**

GDR/Germany, 1973/2010, 82 min., b/w

Director: Iris Gusner

Young, self-confident and independent Linda is the construction supervisor of a large-scale housing project. She falls in love with two very different men. Iris Gusner's debut film was unexpectedly banned before its release and never widely distributed until 2010.

RC: [1][3][7][15][19][22]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy



**Dream of an Elk (Der Traum vom Elch)**

GDR, 1986, 89 min., color

Director: Siegfried Kühn

The selection of men from which Anna and Annette's can choose is as limited as their choices in everyday life: a technocrat, a self-absorbed artist, or a married man. In this film, which features the actress Katrin Sass (*Goodbye, Lenin!*), self-destruction proves a catalyst for self-discovery.

RC: [1][7][20]

Available formats: 35mm

**Eolomea (Eolomea)**

GDR, 1972, 79 min., color

Director: Herrmann Zschoche

Eight space cargo-ships disappear without a trace within three days. And the orbit station "Margot" has suddenly fallen silent. The space council is faced with mysterious questions and orders a total flight stop. However one space ship leaves secretly to the orbit station.

RC: [12]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**The Fiancée (Die Verlobte)**

GDR, 1980, 84 min., color

Directors: Günther Rücker, Günter Reisch

The wrenching story of a woman (Jutta Wachowiak) sentenced to ten years in prison in 1934 for antifascist activities. The love between her and her fiancé enables her to survive the challenges of her time in prison, where she is one of few political prisoners.

RC: [1][4][5][6][7][9][16][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**The Flight (Die Flucht)**

GDR, 1977, 94 min., color

Director: Roland Gräf

When research proposal of Dr. Schmith (Armin Mueller-Stahl) is rejected, he decides to leave East Germany and strikes a deal with an escape agency. When he starts seeing an attractive young doctor (Jenny Gröllmann) at his clinic and wants to change his mind, the agency gets rough.

RC: [1][3][7][15][16][20]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**The Flying Dutchman (Der fliegende Holländer)**

GDR, 1964, 98 min., b/w

Director: Joachim Herz

To escape her narrow, restrictive life, Senta, the daughter of a rich merchant, seeks refuge in her fantasies and dreams—where a cursed seafarer, the Flying Dutchman of legend, appears to her. Herz's successful staging of Wagner's opera led to an invitation to make this film opera; his revolutionary focus on the central role of Senta has influenced stagings of the opera ever since.

RC: [7][12][18]

Available formats: DCP, DVD, Kanopy

**Her Third (Der Dritte)**

GDR, 1972, 107 min., color

Director: Egon Günther

After two failed relationships and with two children, a newly liberated Margit sets out to discover herself. Her amorous pursuit of a colleague is both an entertaining treatment of love and relationships, and a testament to the evolving independence of East German women. Starring Jutta Hoffmann, one of today's leading German actresses.

RC: [1][7][15][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**Herzprung (Herzprung)**

Germany, 1992, 87 min., color

Director: Helke Misselwitz

In the little town of Herzprung almost nothing has changed since German unification, except a rise in unemployment. Johanna, a young mother and widow, becomes one of the unemployed and lives on welfare. To make matters worse, she falls in love with a dark-skinned, roving adventurer and the whole village starts talking about it. The first feature film by Helke Misselwitz (*Winter Adé*).

RC: [1][7][10][14][15][19][22]

Available formats: 35mm, DCP, DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**Hostess (Hostess)**

GDR, 1976, 99 min., color

Director: Rolf Römer

A meditation on relationships and marriage. After two years of living together, Johannes suggests that he and Jette (Annekathrin Bürger) marry. Hurt by the nonchalance of his proposal, Jette begins to systematically question what marriage means. The film includes songs by Nina Hagen, Veronika Fischer and Stern-Combo-Meissen.

RC: [1][7][20]

Available formats: 35mm

**Hot Summer (Heisser Sommer)**

GDR, 1968, 91 min., color

Director: Joachim Hasler

A group of high school girls and another of boys hitchhike to the Baltic Sea for summer vacation, where fun and trouble create ties of friendship and love. After a number of "pessimistic" DEFA films for teenagers, this musical was a breakthrough into unrestrained entertainment and was one of East Germany's top hits. Featured in the 1997 documentary *Eastside Story*.

RC: [1][3][7][13][15][20]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**In the Dust of Stars (Im Staub der Sterne)**

GDR, 1976, 95 min., color

Director: Gottfried Kolditz

The spaceship Cyrno lands on the planet TEM 4 in response to their call for help, but they deny having sent the message. As commander Akala prepares to leave, she receives an invitation from the ruler of the planet to a party, where the guests are slipped drugs that affect their consciousness. Meanwhile, back on the ship navigator Suko begins to discover the planet's secret.

RC: [12]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Isabel on the Stairs (Isabel auf der Treppe)**

GDR, 1983, 67 min., color

Director: Hannelore Unterberg

Twelve-year-old Isabel and her mother, a famous political singer in Chile, fled their home country to the GDR after the 1973 military coup. Six years later, their neighbors and sponsors have grown distant. In her loneliness and worry about her husband, Isabelle's mother becomes more despondent and Isabel feels alienated and increasingly worried. Isabel begins sitting on the stairs and to intercept a letter about her father, hoping to save her mother the grief.

RC: [8][10][18][19][22]

Available formats: DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**Jadup and Boel (Jadup und Boel)**

GDR, 1981/1988, 100 min., color

Director: Rainer Simon

In a small East German town, everyone has tried to forget what happened after the War—until a stranger finds a book that Jadup gave to the young refugee girl Boel, over 30 years ago. Painful memories about Boel and the postwar period begin to surface and shake up the whole town.

RC: [9][11][16]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Jana and Jan (Jana und Jan)**

Germany, 1991, 84 min., color

Director: Helmut Dziuba

Fall 1989: Jan is almost 16. Caught while trying to join his parents in West Germany, he is transferred from prison to a juvenile detention center. Here, he meets Jana ... and what starts as a bet, becomes true love. When Jana gets pregnant, the situation spirals out of control. In the summer of 1990, Jana and Jan flee into the unknown, insecure future of a new Germany.

RC: [1][3][7][14][15][18]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**Kaiser's Lackey (Der Untertan)**

GDR, 1951, 105 min., b/w

Director: Wolfgang Staudte

Growing up, Diederich Hessling learns an important lesson for an ambitious man: one must serve power to gain power. He bows to superiors and spurns those weaker than himself—including women. This historical satire, based on Heinrich Mann's world-famous novel, *Der Untertan*, was ranked by film critics among the *100 Most Significant German Films* of all time.

RC: [1][6][7]

Available formats: DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**The Legend of Paul and Paula (Die Legende von Paul und Paula)**

GDR, 1973, 106 min., color

Director: Heiner Carow

Author Ulrich Plenzdorf and director Heiner Carow winningly portray everyday life in East Berlin in a story of undefeatable love between a passionate single mother and a married bureaucrat. Featuring the acclaimed actress Angelika Domröse and the music of the East German cult rock band, The Puhdys, the film proved so popular that official media blackouts could not keep audiences away.

RC: [1][7][10][15][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**Lissy (Lissy)**

GDR, 1957, 89 min., b/w

Director: Konrad Wolf

Lissy (Sonja Sutter) has grown up in a socialist, working-class family. Seeking to better herself, she marries a white-collar worker, but he loses his job. Joining the Nazi SA assures him employment but creates a deep conflict for Lissy. A rare socialist view of the contradictory role of women in Nazi Germany.

RC: [1][4][7][15][16][20]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Location Hunting (Motivsuche)**

GDR, 1990, 112 min., color

Director: Dietmar Hochmuth

Rüdiger Stein starts filming Klaus and Manuela, teenagers expecting a child, for a documentary on young families. As the project threatens to fall apart, Rüdiger becomes personally involved, an experience which changes his life and work.

RC: [1][7][18]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**Love's Confusion (Verwirrung der Liebe)**

GDR, 1959, 106 min., color

Director: Slatan Dudow

Sonya, an art student, loves the med student Dieter. And Siegi, a factory worker, loves the bricklayer Eddie. At a lavish Carnival party at East Berlin's art school an unintentional exchange of partners begins. When everyone takes off their masks, Dieter realizes that he did not spend the evening with Sonya, but with Siegi!

RC: [1][7][18]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

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

Germany, 1947, 105 min., b/w

Director: Kurt Maetzig

The first postwar German film to address explicitly the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. Based on the true story of an acclaimed theatre couple, the Jewish actress Meta Baer Gottschlak and her non-Jewish husband Joachim.

RC: [1][4][7][8][9][17][22]

Available formats: DCP, DVD, Kanopy

**Miss Butterfly (Fräulein Schmetterling)**

Germany, 1965/2020, 68 min., b/w

Director: Kurt Barthel

When their father dies, 17-year-old Helene Raupe and her little sister become orphans. Abandoned by their aunt, they must face the challenges of daily life in East Berlin. Helene is only happy in her dreams, where she can fly or be a stewardess or model. In real life, in contrast, she fails to meet people's expectations and loses several jobs. Slated to be the first official experimental feature film made in the GDR, it was banned for its negative portrayal of everyday reality. Reconstructed in 2020 based on the original script and preserved audio-visual materials.

RC: [6][12][18]

Available formats: mp4, DVD, Kanopy

**The Mistake (Die Verfehlung)**

Germany, 1991, 100 min., color

Director: Heiner Carow

1988. Jacob from Hamburg, in West Germany, falls in love with Elisabeth in East Germany.

When they secretly meet in East Berlin, it seems the *Stasi* (secret police) has been tipped off, and when Jacob visits her village, he is informed on and deported. Elisabeth is driven to take matters into her own hands. Featuring acclaimed actors Angelica Domröse and Gottfried John.

RC: [1][7][10][14][15][16][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**Mother Courage and Her Children (Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder)**

GDR, 1960, 151 min., b/w

Director: Manfred Wekwerth, Peter Palitzsch

Set during the Thirty Years' War, in the first half of the 17th century: Anna Fierling, also called Mother Courage, is a merchant with a wagonload of food and goods. She follows the armies as they move back and forth across Central Europe, and does not bemoan war's injustices. One after the other, she loses her children to the war from which she profits. This does not change her mind about war, however, and Mother Courage diligently continues to ply her trade.

RC: [2][6][9][10][16]

Available formats: mp4, Kanopy

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

Germany, 1946, 81 min., b/w

Director: Wolfgang Staudte

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 desire for life. When she goes back to her old apartment, she learns Dr. Hans Mertens (Ernst Wilhelm Borchert) has taken up residence there.

RC: [4][9][11][20]

Available formats: DCP, DVD, Kanopy

**On Probation (Bürgschaft für ein Jahr)**

GDR, 1981, 93 min., color

Director: Herrmann Zschoche

The story of a single mother (Katrín Sass) who has been deemed an unfit parent and lost her children. She is given a year to pull her life back together with her youngest daughter, but at the end she gives up. This film was controversial for questioning whether socialist paternalism wasn't really oppression of the individual.

RC: [1][5][7][10][20]

Available formats: 35mm

**Professor Mamlock (Professor Mamlock)**

GDR, 1961, 99 min., b/w

Director: Konrad Wolf

The story of a prominent German Jewish surgeon in the late 1920s-1930s. Despite being warned by his colleague, Dr. Inge Ruoff, his belief in the German humanistic traditions makes him blind to the increasing threat of Nazi anti-Semitism. Based on the 1934 play by the director's father, Friedrich Wolf.

RC: [4][6][8][9][15][22]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

### **The Rabbit Is Me (Das Kaninchen bin ich)**

GDR, 1965/1990, 109 min., b/w

Director: Kurt Maetzig

After lending its name to all the banned "Rabbit Films" of 1965, this film earned critical praise after 1989 as one of the most important and courageous works ever filmed by an East German director. A young female student has an affair with a judge—without knowing that it was he who sentenced her brother for his political activities. When she discovers this, she accuses him of injustice and opportunism.

RC: [3][5][15][16]

Available formats: 35mm, DCP, DVD, Kanopy

### **The Seventh Year (Das siebente Jahr)**

GDR, 1968, 83 min., b/w

Director: Frank Vogel

Shortly before her seventh wedding anniversary, a heart surgeon doubts her ability to keep up with the double burden of career and home. Although the couple lives a comfortable life, they are searching for a different kind of happiness in their marriage.

RC: [7][10][15][20]

Available formats: mp4

### **Shortcut to Istanbul (So schnell geht es nach Istanbul)**

Germany, 1990, 19 min., color

Director: Andreas Dresen

A young Turkish guest worker living in West Berlin is looking for a cheap place to stay. He meets an East Berlin girl a few days after the Wall opens. A parable about the relationship between East and West Germans, and between Germans and foreigners, based on Jurek Becker's short story "Romeo."

RC: [1][2][6][7][14][22]

Available formats: DVD

### **Silent Country (Stilles Land)**

Germany, 1992, 98 min., color

Director: Andreas Dresen

A young, naive director comes to a provincial GDR town to put on Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" at the local theater and strikes up a relationship with the dramaturg Claudia. Meanwhile it is fall 1989: far away in the capital a revolution is taking place that eventually touches the theater troupe in large and small ways. Dresen's debut film took the 1993 Berlin Film Festival by surprise, receiving both the *Hesse Film Award* and the *German Critics' Award*.

RC: [7][14][17]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

### **Silent Star (Der schweigende Stern)**

Poland/GDR, 1960, 95 min., color

Director: Kurt Maetzig

The first science fiction film made in East Germany, based on Stanislaw Lem's mysterious novel, *The Astronauts* (1951). An international expedition of men and women is sent to Venus to decipher a message found in the Gobi desert: a declaration of war on the Earth. With historic sets by renowned designer Alfred Hirschmeier.

RC: [6][12][22]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Solo Sunny (Solo Sunny)**

East Germany, 1980, 102 min., color

Director: Konrad Wolf

The aspiring singer Sunny longs to be happy and recognized as an artist. When she gets kicked out of one band, she starts over in the "underground" scene of East Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg. Based on a true story, this smash hit addressed the longings and frustrations of East German young people. Ranked by film critics among the *100 Most Significant German Films* of all time.

RC: [1][7][15][17][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**Star-Crossed Lovers (Königskinder)**

GDR, 1962, 88 min., b/w

Director: Frank Beyer

Magda (Annekathrin Bürger) and Michael have loved each other since they were children. But when the Nazis come to power, Michael rebels and is sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Magda goes underground and then emigrates to the Soviet Union. When Michael later arrives in Moscow, he discovers that he has just missed her and she is on her way back to Germany.

RC: [1][7][8][9][13][20]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**Stars (Sterne)**

Bulgaria/GDR, 1959, 88 min., b/w

Director: Konrad Wolf

Stationed in a secluded Bulgarian village in 1943, Walter, an artist and corporal in the Wehrmacht, lives an almost idyllic life far away from the war. Then one day, a transit camp is set up for Jews from Greece who are to be sent to Auschwitz. Ruth, one of the Greek Jews, asks Walter to help a pregnant woman in the camp; at first he refuses, but then changes his mind and sends a doctor into the camp. *Stars won the Special Grand Jury Prize at the 1959 Cannes Film Festival.*

RC: [4][7][8][9][22]

Available formats: DCP, DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**The Story of a Young Couple (Roman einer jungen Ehe)**

GDR, 1952, 99 min., b/w

Director: Kurt Maetzig

A young married couple—both actors—work in Cold War Berlin before the Wall is built. Agnes is on location in East Berlin, and Jochen works at the Westend Theater in West Berlin. They hold diametrically opposed views on politics, art and the responsibility of the individual to society; their vehement arguments threaten to break apart their marriage.

RC: [1][7][11][15]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Sun Seekers (Sonnensucher)**

GDR, 1958/1971, 116 min., b/w

Director: Konrad Wolf

A socialist story of "atoms for peace" and compulsory labor in an East German uranium mine under Soviet control. Banned at Soviet insistence, it impresses even today with its political complexity, variety of characters, and realistic portrayal of daily work in a forbidden zone of the industrial landscape - evoking Pabst's *Kameradschaft*.

RC: [1][5][11][15][21]

Available formats: DCP, DVD, Kanopy

**Too Young for Love? (Für die Liebe noch zu mager?)**

GDR, 1973, 86 min, color

Director: Bernhard Stephan

At the textile company everyone appreciates the work of 18-year-old Susanne (Simone von Zglinicki), but nobody really considers her a woman—including Lutz, with whom she is in love. She sets about to make a change. Featuring popular 1970s rock music by Hungarian musicians Zsuzsa Koncz and the Illés Ensemble and by the East German Klaus Renft Combo, which was banned in 1975.

RC: [1][7][12][13][15][20]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Trace of Stones (Spur der Steine)**

GDR, 1966/1990, 133 min., b/w

Director: Frank Beyer

Foreman Balla is self-proclaimed king of a massive construction site. Things stop running smoothly when supplies become scarce and two newcomers arrive: Kati, a young engineer, and Werner Horrath, the new Party Secretary. Balla's swaggering melts away when he falls in love with Kati, but Kati loves Horrath. Censored and shelved by East German officials for 25 years.

RC: [1][6][7][15][16]

Available formats: DCP, DVD, Kanopy

**Until Death Do Us Part (Bis daß der Tod euch scheidet)**

GDR, 1978, 92 min., color

Director: Heiner Carow

A young couple, Sonja (Katrin Sass) and Jens, are very much in love; they get married and have a child. When Sonya wants to go back to work after her maternity leave, they clash for the first time; Jens insists that she remain a full-time wife and mother.

RC: [1][7][15][20]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**Wedding Night in the Rain (Hochzeitsnacht im Regen)**

GDR, 1967, 100 min., color

Director: Horst Seeman

One day, she packs her bags and drives to Berlin-Hoppegarten, known for its horse racecourse, where she is roundly rejected by the head coach. Gabi doesn't want to give up her dream, though. In order to stay in the city, she needs an official residence permit. Her only option is to rush into a marriage with the seemingly nice guy, Freddy (Frank Schöbel, *Hot Summer*). The marriage soon proves to be her second rejection, however, as Freddy openly dislikes the fact that she wants to be a jockey.

RC: [1][7][15][18]

Available formats: mp4, Kanopy

**Were the Earth Not Round (Wäre die Erde nicht rund)**

GDR, 1981, 87 min., color

Director: Iris Gusner

While studying geology in Moscow, Christiane from East Germany and Hatem from Syria fall in love and have a child. This poetic, semi-autobiographical drama explores the strength and limits of will and desire.

RC: [1][3][7][10][13][1][19][22]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy



### **The Woman and the Stranger (Die Frau und der Fremde)**

GDR, 1984, 97 min., color

Director: Rainer Simon

Karl and Richard, two German soldiers captured by the Russians in World War I, become very close friends—so close that Richard shares intimate stories about his wife, Anna. Through these stories, Karl falls in love with her in his thoughts. When Karl escapes, he goes to Richard's home. Anna knows he is not her husband, but....

RC: [1][6][7][8][9][11]

Available formats: DVD

## **DOCUMENTARIES** □

### **35 Photos (35 Fotos)**

GDR, 1984/1985, 7 min., color

Director: Helke Misselwitz

A woman born in 1949, the year the GDR was founded, talks about her life based on 35 images in her family album that each represent one year. This short was to premiere on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of East Germany. Officials rejected the short, however, as an ostensibly negative portrait of GDR family life presented by an atypical woman. It was released under a different title a year later. Part of *DEFA Kinobox 1985/39*.

RC: [8][10][15][19]

Available formats: DCP, mp4, Kanopy

### **The Free Orchestra (Das freie Orchester)**

GDR, 1988, 17 min., color

Director: Petra Tschörtner

Barbara, a saleswoman at the East Berlin Market Hall, is frustrated about always having to tell her customers, “Ham wa nich!” (We don’t have that!). In the evening, she is the loud and wild singer of the legendary East Berlin avantgarde and punk band Das Freie Orchester. Playing music with her friends helps her escape the monotony of her job, convey feelings of unfulfillment with everyday life in East Germany in the 1980s and dream of a different life.

RC: [2][15][16][17][18][19]

Available formats: mp4

### **Last to Know (Jeder schweigt von etwas anderem)**

Germany, 2006, 72 min., color

Director: Dörte Franke, Marc Bauder

Four young East German men and women were imprisoned because they couldn't keep silent. Over 20 years later, they tell their stories. This intense and very moving documentary has been called the counterpoint to features four former male and female political prisoners in East Germany.

RC: [8][14][15][16]

Available formats: DVD

**La Villette (La Villette)**

GDR, 1990, 53 min., color

Director: Gerd Kroske

Just two months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in January 1990, almost 200 controversial East German visual and performance artists presented their works in an exceptional 3-day exhibition in Paris. Among the female artists were multimedia artist Else Gabriel, dancer Conny Hege and photographer Helga Paris.

RC: [14][17]

Available formats: DVD

**Nude Photography – e.g., Gundula Schulze (Aktfotografie – z.B. Gundula Schulze)**

GDR, 1983, 12 min., color & b/w

Director: Helke Misselwitz

East German photographer Gundula Schulze (b. 1954) vividly explains her creative process and talks about her desire to and concerns about capturing the whole personality of the women in her work. She sees her nude portraits, posed in social settings, as the antithesis of the usual, superficially erotic nude photographs. As of the late 1970s, Schulze's innovative photo series were met with official disapproval because they captured and conveyed the loneliness, poverty and distress felt by some in East German society.

RC: [1][6][17][19]

Available formats: DCP, mp4, Kanopy

**Rock 'n' Roll (Rock 'n' Roll)**

GDR, 1987, 20 min., color

Director: Jörg Foth

Judy and Dean, two young East Berliners, are passionate about rock 'n' roll dancing. A glimpse of 1980s East German youth culture.

RC: [1][7][15][17]

Available formats: DVD, Kanopy

**She (Sie)**

GDR, 1970, 30 min., b/w

Director: Gitta Nickel

A young doctor who specializes in family planning speaks with five East German women working at the Treffmodelle textile plant in Berlin. Of all different ages, positions and social backgrounds, they discuss birth control, children's education and women's emancipation. Their open discussion about contraception caused a sensation when the film was released.

RC: [1][3][5][10][15][19]

Available formats: mp4

**The Subversive Camera (Die subversive Kamera)**

Germany, 1997, 42 min., color

Director: Cornelia Klauss

The history of the GDR Super-8 scene—an underground art movement that produced films outside official channels in the 1980s—produced by Cornelia Klauss, herself a Super-8 artist. The *Stasi* (secret police) monitored this rebellious scene closely. Women artists Ramona Köppel-Welsch, Cornelia Schleime and Christine Schlegel, among others, talk about their art and films, their experiences as artists in the GDR, and how their work changed after the Wall came down.

RC: [14][15][17]

Available formats: DVD

**Tango (Tango)**

GDR, 1985, 6 min., color

Director: Helke Misselwitz

A brief history of the emergence and artistic innovations of tango in 19th-century Argentina and Europe. The film offers a mosaic of tango melodies, art works, dance performances, historical footage, photographs of Buenos Aires at the turn of the 20th century and texts by Celedonio Flores and Enrique Santos Discépolo. Part of *DEFA Kĩnobox 1985/40*.

RC: [6][19]

Available formats: DCP, mp4, Kanopy

**Tango Dream (TangoTraum)**

GDR, 1985, 20 min., color

Director: Helke Misselwitz

A melancholic dream about dance and music, as well as unfulfilled desires and wanderlust behind the Berlin Wall. Sitting at her typewriter in her Prenzlauer Berg apartment, listening to tango music, a woman (played by Helke Misselwitz) writes the script for a film about tango and dreams about Buenos Aires and Montevideo. These places are far away—a different world, where, long ago, tango was born. The film explores the tense relationship between the human desires, poetry and politics that merge in tango, and an awareness of life that can only emerge and exist in the culture in which it was born.

RC: [6][16][17][19]

Available formats: DCP, mp4, Kanopy

**Time Loops: In Conversation with Christa Wolf (Zeitschleifen – Im Dialog mit Christa Wolf)**

GDR, 1990, 110 min., color & b/w

Director: Karlheinz Mund

A personal and open conversation between Christa Wolf and her friend, the author Daniela Dahn, during and after the radical political and social changes in East Germany in 1990. The film draws the picture of an exceptional biography, intimately entwined with German history, by combining a discussion full of intense, philosophical and challenging ideas with rarely shown footage of Wolf's readings, her statement at the mass protest in East Berlin on November 4, 1989 and clips from her films.

RC: [6][14][15][16][17][20]

Available formats: DVD (on Miss Butterfly), mp4, Kanopy

**whisper & SHOUT (flüstern & SCHREIEN)**

GDR, 1988, 115 min., color

Director: Dieter Schumann

Documents important parts of the East German rock music scene of the late 1980s, from well-established bands like Silly, to underground bands like Feeling B. This road movie features young people using music to express their take on life, opposition to their parents' generation and opinions on the social and political climate in East Germany.

RC: [1][14][17][18]

Available formats: 35mm, DVD, Kanopy

**Who's Afraid of the Bogeyman (Wer fürchtet sich vorm schwarzen Mann)**

GDR, 1989, 50 min., b/w

Director: Helke Misselwitz

A close-up of Berlin coal carriers in Prenzlauer Berg. No portrayal of worker heroes or progress

here. Instead, bright deeply-felt sketches of rough men and their resolute woman boss.

RC: [15][19]

Available formats: 35mm, DCP, mp4, Kanopy

**Winter Adé (Winter adé)**

GDR, 1988, 112 min., color

Director: Helke Misselwitz

Shortly before the GDR's collapse, Helke Misselwitz interviewed East German women of different ages and backgrounds, traveling by train from one end of the country to the other. In this masterpiece, these women reveal their personal and professional frustrations, hopes and aspirations—and, in doing so, paint a portrait of a changing society.

RC: [1][3][7][8][10][13][14][15][18][19]

Available formats: 35mm, DCP, DVD, mp4, Kanopy

**Wittstock Girls (Mädchen in Wittstock)**

GDR, 1975, 20 min, b/w

Director: Volker Koepp

This is the first of a masterly chronicle of seven documentaries made over two decades. Koepp not only investigates how young women in an agricultural region become workers at a knitting factory, but also how industry changes their lives and thoughts. It features three funny and sensitive young women in a small town just north of Berlin.

RC: [1][15]

Available formats: 35mm