

Developed by
Carol Anne Costabile-Heming
(Univ. of North Texas) and
Juliane Schicker (Carleton College)



THE ARCHITECTS

The Architects

ORIGINAL TITLE: **Die Architekten**
GDR, 1990, Dir. Peter Kahane,
102 min., color, EN ST

DIRECTOR: Peter Kahane
SCRIPT: Peter Kahane, Thomas Knauf
DRAMATURG: Christoph Prochnow
CAMERA: Andreas Köfer
MUSIC: Gerd Halbach, Tamás Kahane,
Herbert Keller, Hans Naumilkat,
Gerhard Siebholz
ACCORDION: Kathrin Pfeifer
CAST: Kurt Naumann, Rita Feldmeier,
Judith Richter, Jürgen Watzke,
Ute Lubosch, Catherine Stoyan,
Andrea Meissner, Jörg Schüttauf,
Uta Eisold, Werner Dissel,
Christoph Engel, Wolfgang Greese,
Hans-Joachim Hegewald,
Karl Ernst Horbol

Please note: DEFA Film Library teaching guides are meant to give teachers information and ideas for how they can use a film in an English-language classroom. (They are not meant to be detailed lesson plans.) Those who would like to adapt some of these ideas for a German-language classroom may be interested in our Guide to Teaching DEFA Films in German.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Recommendations	3
Summary.....	4
Context	4
About the Film	7
Biographies	14
Teaching Activities	15
Resource Materials	22
Selected Scholarship and Reviews.....	23



CONTACT

DEFA Film Library | 502 Herter Hall | UMass Amherst
161 Presidents Drive | Amherst, MA 01003
umass.edu/defa | defa@german.umass.edu | ☎ (413) 545-6681
📷 @defafilmlibraryamherst | 📘 @defafilmlibrary

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Architects focuses on the bureaucratic political system and planned economy that stifled creativity and stalled progress in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). This makes it particularly useful in educational contexts that are exploring the period around the end of the Cold War and reasons why the governments of individual countries and the Eastern Bloc as a whole collapsed. Using architecture as a metaphor, the film addresses personal and political limitations, the attempts of individuals to liberate themselves from those limitations and the consequences of such attempts. It exemplifies, in particular, the crisis of the generation born in the late-1940s and early-1950s by depicting a group of young architects that comes into conflict with a government apparatus that inhibits their creativity and desire for change. Their parents' generation—represented by superiors, mentors and professors in the film—still holds the country's destiny in its hands. Set in the late 1980s, the film captures moments of crisis in the lives of the young architects and their families, in a moment when the GDR was spiraling to its demise. *The Architects* exemplifies the day-to-day struggles of ordinary people who had been promised improved living conditions—promises that never came to fruition—and highlights the desire of individuals for community and a sense of *Heimat*, a feeling of belonging not only to a country and region, but also to a certain community. Many of the young architects in the film—who all know each other from their studies at the Weimar Hochschule für Bauwesen und Architektur (College of Architecture and Civil Engineering, now Bauhaus University)—had been trying to cope with the limited opportunities available to them, but eventually would give up on their profession. The characters' frustration with infinitesimal, slow change and bureaucratic interference in the creative process spills over into their private spheres, laying bare generational divides and gender conflicts.

Keywords: East Berlin, East Germany, socialist cities, architecture in socialism, *Plattenbauten*, *Neubauten*, everyday life in the GDR, generational conflict, gender equity, women in the GDR, the role of the artist in society, art in the GDR, censorship, female emancipation, FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*, or Free German Youth), the Wende, last or fourth generation, planned economy.

Ideal audiences and courses: Adult audiences. Film & Media Studies; German Language, German Studies; History; Women and Gender Studies; Architecture; Design.

Topic areas: German history; German cinema; life under socialism; socialist family life; gender roles; architecture, design.

Content warning: nudity and sexual intimacy (00:21:45–00:22:00; 00:38:45–00:40:05; 00:50:20–00:51:12; 01:14:55–01:15:52). *The time codes here and throughout the Teaching Guide are based on the film's version on kanopy.com.*

SUMMARY



Original 1990 poster.
Designer Kitty Kahane

CONTEXT

Tasked with the first significant commission in his career in the late 1980s, architect Daniel Brenner selects a team of six young, progressive colleagues from his student days to design a cultural center for a *Neubaugebiet* (satellite town)¹ outside of East Berlin. The group's plans for a modern yet functional, practical yet appealing, and environmentally conscious design clashes with the expectations of the officials responsible for the efficiency and cost containment of the GDR's large-scale building projects. The film also features Daniel's family life and relationship struggles. His wife Wanda, a physiotherapist, suffers from her multiple responsibilities as a worker, mother, and head of household. She languishes in the satellite town, far removed from their old cultural and social life in the city. Daniel's excitement about his new project motivates him to work long hours, and he often brings work home. He engages less and less with Wanda and their daughter Johanna. As the distance between them grows, Wanda begins a relationship with a Swiss visitor and ultimately asks for a divorce. After the divorce is finalized, Wanda takes Johanna to Switzerland, which, because of the GDR's travel restrictions, is unreachable for most citizens. The departures of his wife and daughter, coupled with project setbacks and the pressure to compromise his designs, result in Daniel's disillusionment: he has failed in both his professional and private lives. Eventually Daniel is permitted to restart the project; but concessions demanded by the officials force him to sacrifice most of the group's ground-breaking and environmentally-conscious innovations. Many of his teammates leave in response. Despite his nominal success, Daniel cannot reanimate his former enthusiasm and idealism.

Inherent in the GDR's official name, *Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat* (Workers' and Farmers' State), was the aspiration that everyone, including architects, would conform to the ideology of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (SED, Socialist Unity Party of Germany). As the national anthem of the country stated, the GDR was "risen from the ruins" in a metaphorical and literal sense, and was now facing "the future,"² one that depended on the people to help build a renewed and socialist country.

In this context, architecture was supposed to reflect the achievements of "socialist production" and the "socialist qualities of people's lives, their social connections, relations, and behavior patterns," as well as affect the lives of the people directly, as GDR architectural scholar Bruno Flier expressed it at the time.³ Emily Pugh proposes that the *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic)

¹ *Plattenbauten* and *Neubauten* both refer to prefabricated, cast concrete buildings. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the text.

² The first stanza of the GDR's national anthem reads as follows: "Auferstanden aus Ruinen/ Und der Zukunft zugewandt" (Risen from the ruins and facing the future). "Nationalhymne der DDR." *Lebendiges Museum Online*, not dated. <https://www.hdg.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/druckgut-nationalhymne-der-ddr.html>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

³ Flierl, Bruno. *Architektur und Kunst. Texte 1964–1983*. Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1984. 98.

CONTEXT

in East Berlin, for instance, offered reflections on the ideas of unity, openness, and visibility.⁴ These observations point to a vision of a humane architecture—an architecture that considers the needs of the people.⁵ When it comes to Daniel and his team, however, such a vision remains unsupported and unrealized. As *The Architects* shows, the project of a humane architecture that considered the needs of the people could not be easily implemented.

Another example of architecture that failed humanity was the Berlin Wall. Called *antifaschistischer Schutzwall* (anti-fascist protective barrier) and meant to seemingly protect GDR citizens from the so-called enemy in the capitalist West, it was designed to keep East German people inside the country. The physical seclusion and separation of GDR citizens in many cases destroyed families, careers and individuals. For some, the GDR was their chosen Heimat (home or homeland) and remained so until (or even longer than) the end of state socialism in the GDR and the unification of East and West Germany. For others, this Heimat was forced upon them by fortified borders and restrictions on personal freedoms. The goal of political officials to keep the country as intact as possible by forcing its citizens to remain within the socialist bloc, thus, ultimately failed.⁶ In *The Architects*, the Wall serves not only as a symbol for the shattered ideal of family, it also embodies the oppressive policies of SED officials and the shattered ideals of state socialism.

Instead of architecture serving as a symbol of progressive socialism, in this film it represents the limits the GDR state placed on creativity—limits that caused existential crises in the lives of the protagonists and symbolically called the survival of the entire system and country into question. *The Architects* was not the only film made by DEFA (*Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft*), East Germany's state-owned film studio, to address these themes. Through its female protagonist Franziska Linkerhand, *Unser kurzes Leben* (*Our Short Life*, dir. Lothar Warneke) had already addressed the fact that architecture in the GDR was a space of restrictions, frustrations and limitations in 1980.⁷

Like architecture, cinema was officially expected to communicate the Party's

⁴ See Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014. 170.

⁵ Klaus von Beyme defines architecture "for the people" as projects where architects consult the "needs and wishes of the people" before they construct buildings that then serve those expressed needs, for example adequate housing for the poor. See von Beyme, Klaus. "Architecture and Democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany." *International Political Science Review*, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1991): 137–147. 138.

⁶ Since 1952, the border between East and West Germany had been officially closed. Even before that closing, more than 125,000 people fled the Soviet Occupation Zone to go and live in West Germany. By 1961, more than 2.5 million citizens (most of them young) had left the GDR. The Berlin Wall and other border fortifications were built around West-Berlin in 1961 to prevent more GDR citizens from leaving. By closing the inner-city border overnight from August 12 to 13, 1961, the SED turned West Berlin into a capitalist island inside the socialist GDR. The fatalities connected with the Wall run between 86 and 227 (see Grieder, Peter, ed. *The German Democratic Republic*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). In 1989, pressured by the political changes in the socialist bloc, East German politician Günter Schabowski announced that East Germans could now travel freely to the West, which caused a rush at the various checkpoints at the Berlin Wall. Overwhelmed by the masses of people, GDR border guards eventually let people pass unrestricted, which culminated in the fall of the Wall and the final unification of the two Germanys.

⁷ This film is a screen adaptation of Brigitte Reimann's unfinished eponymous novel written in the 1960s and published posthumously in 1974.

CONTEXT

values and tackle problems.⁸ Despite freezes and thaws in cultural policy, expectations and restrictions on filmmaking gradually loosened over time, allowing for some surprisingly critical films to be made. *The Architects* was one of the last feature films produced by DEFA. It sought to present issues East Germans were facing in their daily lives, which the filmmakers perceived as having not yet been adequately addressed, including the failures of the planned economy, the lack of freedom of movement and speech, the stifling bureaucracy and gender inequalities.⁹

In 1988, screenwriter Thomas Knauf wrote a script inspired by the true story of eighteen architects who were unable to fulfill their ideas in designing a cultural and gastronomic center for Marzahn, a satellite town outside of Berlin. These buildings had been commissioned by the Free German Youth organization, which also became the case for Daniel's team project in *The Architects*.¹⁰ Director Peter Kahane, who was interested in making more serious films than his previous DEFA comedies, chose Knauf's script and pushed for it to be approved for production, despite initial resistance from DEFA management.¹¹ Kahane convinced Knauf to focus on a single architectural project as a way to emphasize the everyday struggles that East German people were facing. DEFA approved the script in 1988, but because of continued discussions about controversial scenes, technical difficulties and equipment delays, filming did not start until October 3, 1989—only one month before the Berlin Wall would fall, triggering the dissolution of the GDR a year later. Over the summer, thousands had left the GDR illegally; peaceful Monday demonstrations had started in September 1989, with citizens protesting against GDR government policies, demanding more freedoms and the opening of the borders; the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989. Kahane and his team continued filming *The Architects* until February 1990, witnessing the end of the GDR behind and in front of the cameras.

While the film had begun with the intention of pointing out some of the shortcomings of East German state socialism, by the time it reached theaters in the early summer of 1990 its critique seemed obsolete. Rapidly changing societal conditions, currency reform and the rush to unification were foremost in the minds of many East and West German citizens. Meanwhile, Kahane made the film as he had planned. Doing so involved challenges during filming the scenes that feature the Wall, especially at the Brandenburg Gate, as it was already being dismantled. Although Germany was in the midst of a historic transition, *The Architects* succeeds in vividly representing scenes that took place in East

⁸ McGee, Laura Green. "'Ich wollte ewig einen richtigen Film machen! Und als es soweit war, konnte ich's nicht!'" The End Phase of the GDR in Films by DEFA *Nachwuchsregisseure*." *German Studies Review* vol. 26, no. 2 (May 2003): 315–332. 319.

⁹ Reinhild Steingröver emphasizes that Kahane's earlier films had also focused on generational struggles that exposed contradictions between individual priorities and those of the state. See Steingröver, Reinhild. *Last Features: East German Cinema's Lost Generation*, Rochester: Camden House, 2014. 11.

¹⁰ Hametner, Hannes. "Thomas Knauf: Finding the Good in the Bad." *DEFA Film Library*, 2011, <https://ecommerce.umass.edu/defa/memories/6401>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

¹¹ Ibid.

CONTEXT

German lives, including the emigration of its female protagonist Wanda and her daughter Johanna at the Friedrichstraße checkpoint, an official exit point in central East Berlin for people leaving for West Berlin. As Reinhild Steingröver puts it: “Although it was filmed during the dismantling of the GDR, *The Architects* is not a film about the end but a film that explains why the end came so late.”¹²

Another issue highlighted in *The Architects* is the question of gender inequality, particularly when it comes to the relationship between Wanda and Daniel. Wanda originally studied medicine but had to give it up and resort to physiotherapy—as Daniel says, because there was no other way (“es ging nicht anders”). He is alluding to the fact that their daughter’s birth derailed Wanda’s career (though not his own), leading to Wanda’s struggle to gain respect and recognition for her professional and private efforts. Gender equality was guaranteed in the East German constitution and women in the GDR were indeed closer to reaching equality with men than in, for example, West Germany. As the East German economy needed workers to rebuild after the war, the government supported women entering traditionally male fields of work, such as engineering or the chemical sector, and provided access to daycare for children—mostly free of charge—at least in the latter decades of the country’s existence. As a consequence, more women were indeed employed outside the home, which meant they received monetary compensation for their work—in contrast to the “free” work they did at home. This made women in the GDR possibly more financially independent than in any other country at the time (and today). At the same time, women—like their counterparts in capitalist societies—had to adapt to a male-dominated and male-defined society. True gender equality was not present. East German women were not only expected to work and keep educating themselves, but also to be mothers, to take care of the household, and to be caring wives to their husbands. Policies that were seen as promoting gender equality—such as laws to regulate occupational safety for mothers, sick leave, reduced working hours, the monthly *Haushaltstag* (household chores day), and more—were not geared toward men, so the burden of women’s economic freedom fell mainly on women themselves. The policies, while well-meaning, remained pro-natalist.¹³ The myth of the emancipated East German mother, who could easily juggle her job, children, household, and relationship, was just that—a myth.¹⁴

ABOUT THE FILM

Various factors inhibited the creativity of architects in the GDR, for example: the bureaucracy, censorship by political officials, lack of access to or shortages of new technologies and materials, unrealistic expectations due to the East

¹² Steingröver, *Last Features*, 209.

¹³ Kaminsky, Anna. *Frauen in der DDR*. Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin: 2016. 10. Kaminsky’s book offers more information about policies relating to maternity leave and childcare. Access to free childcare, for example, was not guaranteed when there were no centers with a free spot (numbers range from 60-80% of children under three years old who were able to attend daycare over the years). Leave policies changed over time, too. In 1976, new legislation granted mothers of two children who worked a forty-hour workweek 26 weeks of maternity leave (an increase of six months from the years before). The 52-week “baby year” was only given after the second pregnancy at the time. Only after 1986 were all mothers allowed to take a year of paid maternity leave after having a child. Legislation at the time did not address paternity leave.

¹⁴ Kaminsky, *Frauen in der DDR*, 11. For a more detailed examination of this problem see more of Anna Kaminsky’s *Frauen in der DDR* that sheds light on the complex situation of women and their children in the GDR.

ABOUT THE FILM

German planned economy, and an older generation of architects that resisted new trends and was trying to hold on to their professional power. In *The Architects*, this environment of multiple stressors impedes not only the professional but also the personal development of the film's protagonists. Daniel Brenner, who represents the younger generation of architects in the GDR, is thirty-seven years old and a graduate of the prestigious architecture academy in Weimar, who so far has only contributed to minor architectural projects. He has had little opportunity to bring creativity to his assignments, having only been allowed to design five bus stops, three transformer stations and two receiving stations for recyclable bottles—all necessary but mundane projects.

Daniel now receives an FDJ commission to design a vibrant community center for the recently built housing development outside of East Berlin where he lives with his family. It is similar to the satellite town of Marzahn that Knauf thematized in his original exposé. Daniel and his team of young architects, the so-called *Jugendkollektiv* (youth collective), design a modern, practical, environmentally conscious and community-oriented center.¹⁵ The young architects envision enjoyable spaces, human proportions, buildings where young families and others in the satellite town will be able to meet and engage in leisure activities. The young architects also want their design to express diversity and a new, provocative sense of aesthetics. Their environmental consciousness is geared toward providing natural paths for airflow, such as windows and courtyards. In short, they are striving to create the humane architecture envisioned for socialism.

They also try to work humanely within their team. The women architects are treated with the same respect as the men on the team, and all strive to support each other in articulating their creative ideas and freeing themselves from self-censorship. In contrast to the staged idea of the collective promoted by SED officials, they envision the new buildings arising from a true collective, where everyone plays an equal part and is in solidarity with one another.

But the team's plans are rejected by the building commission, which points to cost overruns that the new ideas would incur. In response to the significant housing shortage after World War II, the GDR had committed itself to the *Plattenbau* system that used prefabricated concrete cast construction that could be built quickly and cheaply, but that was also inflexible and uninspired in its design. The housing projects shown in the film are practical in the eyes of the officials, but they are also lifeless, even conducive to social injustice and violence, as becomes clear in another film, Lothar Warneke's *Our Short Life* (1980), where the female architect Franziska blames the anonymity of the concrete high-rises and lack of a true

¹⁵ When offered the project, Daniel demands permission to select his own team, which is grudgingly granted. Soon, however, the political officials assign one of their own architects to join the group, a member of the Ministry of State Security (Stasi). Steingröver describes this as "a transparent message that the group's work is not only always controlled from above but also openly observed by placing a Stasi informant right in the team." (*Last Features*, 212)

ABOUT THE FILM

community for the rape of a woman. By the time *The Architects* was filmed, this *Plattenbau* system had become the measure for what was (and should be) considered possible, not only financially but also creatively. In this context, building a supermarket that used natural airflow to regulate its temperature would have been creative as well as economically and environmentally sustainable but—according to the officials in the film—more expensive to build than installing an HVAC system in a prefabricated *Plattenbau*. The older generation of architects in the film thus clearly views certain elements of the youth collective’s plans—such as a shopping center utilizing natural airflow instead of central air conditioning—as not only cost prohibitive, but also absurd and too innovative.

In addition to imposing such limitations, the commissioners announce that part of the original plot of land is now needed for more apartments, and the planned arcade and bowling alley are put on hold. While the commissioners like the idea of a Vietnamese restaurant, they deem that building one is infeasible, with no reason given. In its place, they suggest a “sports bar” with “beer and snack stands.” Finally, they decide that the planned movie theater must be changed into a multi-function structure with a meeting space for local organizations, in line with the standard expectations for such spaces in 1980s East Germany.¹⁶ These changes downgrade the project and transform it into a functional but provincial and lifeless design—a mere shadow of the young architects’ dreams and creative vision. The project is destined to become mundane and lifeless like other such centers; the architects’ imagination and unique building innovations must give way to uniformity. At the end of the film, Daniel realizes that he has a choice. He can either be professionally successful by designing anonymous, dull buildings that are not conducive to community life; or he can be denied the approval to build anything of any significance at all.

While Daniel is preoccupied with his new project, his wife Wanda has to manage a triple burden. She has a full-time job as a physiotherapist, does most chores at home and takes care of their school-aged daughter, Johanna. Wanda expresses the frustrations and resentment that come with these burdens, which her husband does not share equally. The film depicts Daniel performing domestic tasks only when Wanda is away or when he is with his collective. Wanda’s dissatisfaction—with her home life, the growing distance between her and Daniel, her demanding work schedule, her inability to travel and her lack of leisure time—eventually lead her to seek comfort in another relationship. Because Wanda’s new partner lives in Switzerland, she emigrates with Johanna to join him after filing for divorce. Travel restrictions in the GDR prohibited visits to Switzerland and other capitalist countries for common citizens. Without the social status or professional reasons to be granted a travel visa, this effectively

¹⁶ Especially spaces for cultural entertainment, such as the *Kulturpaläste* (venues for cultural events), were expected to offer large halls that could be used for various events, such as orchestra performances, political meetings or film screenings. For other examples, see Hartung, Ulrich. *Arbeiter- und Bauerntempel. DDR-Kulturhäuser der fünfziger Jahre—ein architekturhistorisches Kompendium*. Berlin: Schelzky & Jeep, 1997.

ABOUT THE FILM

means that Daniel faces a permanent separation from his daughter.

While the Berlin Wall represents a physical border for both Wanda and Daniel, leaving the GDR offers Wanda a way out of her personal crisis—but it leaves Daniel boxed in. The only time that Johanna appears in the film after her departure is in a scene where the Berlin Wall separates her from her father. While on a class trip to West Berlin, Johanna calls Daniel and asks him to come see her at the Brandenburg Gate. Johanna stands on a visitors' platform on the Western side, and Daniel on the street on the Eastern side of the Wall; neither of them can see the other, as the distance is too great and their clothing too inconspicuous. This architectural bulwark thus depicts both hope and pain, not only for Daniel and his family, but for GDR society as a whole.

The concrete high-rise buildings in the satellite town where Daniel lives communicate shattered ideals similarly to the Berlin Wall. Few truly celebratory moments are shown in the Brenners' apartment. The delicious meal that Daniel cooks for his daughter and himself is eaten without the mother present, and despite Daniel's efforts to explain the situation, Johanna is so sad that she starts to cry. Fights between mother and father fill many evenings and the audience rarely sees the family laughing together. The hundreds of single, lit windows in these buildings illustrate the loneliness of each family in this area, cooped up in its own little apartment, without meaningful contact with neighbors and, possibly, similar problems to the Brenners. During the day, the *Neubauten* stand gray next to a drab wasteland, which will soon be turned into gray construction sites to build even grayer high rises.

The film does not always represent the new architecture as gray and gloomy, however. The many lights that the Brenners can see outside of their windows each night also seem to at least indicate a desire for warmth. When Daniel visits his former architecture professor, Vesely, they look out of his high-rise apartment window and see the sunset reflecting warmly off a neighboring glass façade. This view looks almost idyllic and inviting, very much like many shots of the old city, with which the new, satellite towns are contrasted. These shots include green trees, lush waterfronts and colorful, albeit dilapidated buildings. In the old city, people mingle at parties and seem to have a good time; indeed, Wanda yearns to return to the old city in order to enjoy a social life again.

But this old part of the city can also be gray and under construction, as seen in the photographs taken by one of Daniel's team members, the young architect Martin Bullat, who documents the decay of old Berlin.¹⁷ The livability of a particular space shown in the film does not seem to depend on its location in

¹⁷ Bullat's character is inspired by Ulrich Wüst (<https://ulrichwuest.de>). Wüst studied at the College of Architecture and Civil Engineering in Weimar to become an urban planner, but later worked as an urban photographer because of disappointments in his profession.

ABOUT THE FILM

either the old or the new part of the city, but rather on the humans who inhabit it. Even though the buildings in old Berlin are decaying and do not offer comfortable amenities (toilets were often outside the apartment in the stairwell), people are having a good time celebrating in the courtyards. Despite the relative “luxury” of the Brenners’ apartment (with central heating, a clean façade and bathrooms in the apartment), not a lot gets celebrated there and a communal feeling seems to be missing. The vision of Daniel and his young team seeks to combine the community feeling of the old town with the modern amenities of the satellite town: new architecture should stimulate human interaction and human interaction should inform the use of this architecture.

One social issue that Daniel’s architectural team attempts to address in their design is, in fact, the stressors on family life in socialism. A sculpture they commission for the new project captures this theme aptly: *Familie im Stress* (Family under Stress) shows a mother and father, hurrying to get to work, turned away from each other, with a naked child seemingly lost in the middle and distanced from the parents; none of the figures have faces. The actual artwork used in the film was designed by two well-known GDR sculptors, Rolf Biebl and Susanne Rast, whom we also briefly see on screen. In the film, the building commissioner rejects the sculpture, however, saying it belittles the importance of family in socialist society and is unworthy of inclusion. Instead, the officials suggest a different monument entitled *Familie im Sozialismus* (Family in Socialism). Daniel and his team comply with this request, renaming the existing sculpture without making any changes to the work itself. The renaming glosses over any criticism implicit in the sculpture, making it an ironic and deeply sad commentary on life in the GDR, where socialist family life equates to a family life under stress. Biebl and Rast also designed two more sculptures that are to be placed in the new center: *Das Denkmal für die Bauarbeiter* (Monument to Construction Workers) and *Gefallener sowjetischer Soldat* (The Fallen Soviet Soldier). Like *Family under Stress*, Daniel’s superiors reject both pieces because of their modernist aesthetics and presentations of the worker and the soldier that do not conform to the official ideal of heroism and honor. This scene divulges the extent to which state officials aimed at controlling all aspects of building projects and often succeeded in censoring them; their steadfast adherence to outdated ideals served to stifle any creativity and critique.

The failure of GDR society to simplify the lives of East Germans with the construction of new living quarters is especially visible in Daniel’s family. Johanna seems to go to school in the satellite town where the family lives, and Wanda is able to shop in grocery stores in the neighborhood, so that her commute is short and amenities of everyday life are readily available. Such conditions, however, only became generally available to people living in these suburbs in the late 1980s. It was much more common for mothers to have very long days filled with dropping off children at daycare centers on the other side of town,

ABOUT THE FILM

or waiting in long lines at the very few stores available.¹⁸ To ease the housing crunch and provide modern amenities to families, the later infamous high-rise *Plattenbauten* had been erected quickly, especially after the 1973 East German Housing Program came into effect,¹⁹ but often without general use buildings, such as daycare centers, entertainment venues and restaurants—a fact that *Our Short Life*, mentioned above, addresses as well. As a result, time for leisure activities and personal fulfillment, especially among women, was rare.²⁰ Wanda bemoans the sense of stagnation she experiences and desires nothing more than her old social life. She eventually commutes long distances into the city center to enjoy cultural and entertainment venues again, without Daniel. As a result, she is now the one spending a significant amount of time away from home and the roles of father and mother are reversed: Daniel starts cooking meals and spending time with Johanna, while Wanda becomes the absent parent.

As Wanda starts to spend more time away from her family and eventually leaves Daniel and emigrates to Switzerland with her daughter, Daniel's architectural team starts to dissolve. Upon learning that the original design of their project has been rejected and must be starkly modified to meet the demands of the commission, one of the architects, Martin, quits to pursue his photography projects. Another, Barbara, leaves when she learns she is pregnant. After the original project gets completely shut down, Daniel voices his discontent to the FDJ. He does so not because he expects any changes to his own circumstances, but to spare future young architects similar frustrations and fates. Ultimately, Daniel's project is reinstated, albeit with new demands for considerable changes and design concessions. Daniel succumbs to the will of the commissioners and makes those changes, losing all of his architectural colleagues except for Renate in the process. Eventually, he wins a state-sponsored award for his design, much to the disappointment of most of his former colleagues, who cannot imagine giving up their visions for a project that wins an award yet is replete with compromises.

The Architects can also be understood as a parallel depiction of what was happening in the film industry in the GDR at the time. SED functionaries in the film behave similarly to some DEFA officials in real life, and just as architects found it difficult to design the buildings the way they wanted to, many directors ran into limitations when they wanted to make films.²¹ Despite their financial security, directors often found their ideas were met with suspicion, bureaucracy slowed down progress and, especially in the 1980s, the older generation of officials within the studio imposed their aesthetics on younger artists.²² Director

¹⁸ Kaminsky, *Frauen in der DDR*, 102.

¹⁹ The SED committed to a major housing construction project on October 2, 1973, with a goal to solve the GDR's housing shortage by providing every East German with a modern and comfortable dwelling by the year 1990. See Rubin, Eli. *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 28.

²⁰ Kaminsky, *Frauen in der DDR*, 103.

²¹ See McGee, "'Ich wollte ewig einen richtigen Film machen!'"

²² For details about state control of the filmmaking process see Berghahn, Daniela. *Hollywood Behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. 11–54.

ABOUT THE FILM

Peter Kahane belonged to a group of approximately eighteen *Nachwuchsregisseure* (junior directors) born between 1949 and 1963, who had completed their education in the late 1970s and early 1980s and struggled to realize their creative potential within a restrictive studio atmosphere. As Steingröver has shown, many of these directors either focused their energy on promoting change within the DEFA studios or accepted other assignments from the studio in order to be involved in filmmaking in some capacity, a reality that *The Architects* closely parallels.²³ Many of these directors had been prevented already as students from addressing the flaws of real-existing socialism in the GDR in their films. As Steingröver writes, the GDR's founding generation generally viewed the younger generation with skepticism and mistrust because they had not experienced WWII, and repeatedly tested "their loyalty to the ideals of the state and party ideology.... [They were] kept in a perpetual state of dependent immaturity."²⁴ Nonetheless, younger directors were committed socialists in that they believed in the general goals of socialist ideals, if not necessarily the SED. Often, they wanted their filmmaking to highlight the inconsistencies between Party dogma and everyday reality as a means to improve their society.²⁵

The Architects presents its characters in similar interstitial positions within the socio-political context,—positions that were much more prevalent among GDR citizens than extreme dissidence or loyalty. Believing in the goals of socialism but disagreeing with the implementation of these goals by the SED, Daniel sits at the crossroads between these extremes. Through most of the film he has ideals that he wishes to turn into reality, even if he complies with the rules; only the restrictions he confronts make it impossible to enact these ideals and ultimately force him to choose. Wanda's situation could have been portrayed as a sign of emancipation and progress, but instead, Wanda only wants to escape and set herself free from social and interpersonal constraints. Daniel is aware of the constraints inherent within the system and tries to improve them before finally resigning himself to them; Wanda believes it is hopeless and escapes the constraints by leaving the country. The portrait of Daniel reflects Mary Fulbrook's observation that many East Germans lived in a "niche society," under "*freiwilliger Zwang*—'voluntary coercion'" and used "*bequemes Schweigen*, having an easy life by keeping quiet" in order to cope.²⁶ While Daniel voices his concerns in the beginning, he succumbs to "Schweigen" in the end. The facts that Daniel starts by voicing his criticism to his superiors and that the generational power conflict is so clearly depicted in the film make *The Architects* one of the most critical DEFA films produced in the GDR. But, then again, in 1988 and 1989 criticism of the state was much more possible and common than it had been in earlier decades.

²³ Steingröver, *Last Features*, 4.

²⁴ Ibid, 207.

²⁵ See more in McGee, "Ich wollte ewig einen richtigen Film machen!"

²⁶ Fulbrook, Mary. "The Creation of a Niche Society? Conformity and Grumbling." *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 149.

BIOGRAPHIES



Peter Kahane, Director and Scriptwriter (b. 1949)

Peter Kahane studied at Humboldt University in East Berlin, where he earned a teaching certification in 1971. After completing his military service in the National People's Army from 1974 to 1975, he began studying at the Academy for Film and Television (now Film University) in Potsdam-Babelsberg. After completing his studies in 1979, Kahane worked as an assistant to directors such as Heiner Carow and Egon Schlegel. His debut film *Weiberwirtschaft* (*Women's Work*) appeared in 1983. The ensuing years were some of the most productive and critically successful in his career, marked by one of his best-known films, *Ete und Ali* (1984, *Ete and Ali*), a coming-of-age story. His subsequent film, *Vorspiel* (1987, *Ready for Life*), was similar in its focus on daily life and was equally well received. *Die Architekten* was the most critical and politically engaged film Kahane made in the GDR. It was awarded the Special Prize at the GDR's National Feature Film Festival and the Prize of the Catholic Film Commission. For more, see Kahane's page on the DEFA Film Library website.



Thomas Knauf, Scriptwriter (b. 1951)

Thomas Knauf was born in Halle/Saale and worked in various jobs until he joined East German television as an assistant director in 1971. In 1976, he enrolled in the Academy for Film and Television in Potsdam-Babelsberg. Knauf worked as an assistant to the director István Szabó on *Mephisto*, which won an Academy Award. Shortly thereafter, he began screenwriting for the DEFA Studio for Feature Films, where he continued to work until 1990. Among his best-known films from this time are *Rabenvater* (1986, *Bad Father*), *Treffen in Travers* (1989, *Meeting in Travers*), *Vorspiel* (1987, *Ready for Life*) and *Die Architekten*, the last two of which he made with Kahane. Knauf has taught scriptwriting at the Konrad Wolf Academy for Film and Television (now Film University) in Potsdam-Babelsberg, at the Ernst Busch School for Performing Arts in Berlin and at the German Academy for Film and Television in Berlin. For more, see the written interview with Knauf (see *Resource Materials below*) and Knauf's page on the DEFA Film Library website.



Kurt Naumann, Actor (Daniel Brenner) (1948–2018)

Kurt Naumann grew up in Halberstadt and studied acting at the Hans Otto Theater School in Leipzig. The character Daniel Brenner in *Die Architekten* was his first big movie role, but he was best known for his work on stages in Berlin and Potsdam. He appeared as a guest in the ensemble of the renowned Berlin *Volksbühne*, recognized internationally for its modern German theater. He also played in a variety of spectacular productions by directors such as Frank Castorf (*The Obscene Work: Caligula*, 1999; *Neustadt: The Idiot*, 2002; *The Master and Margarita*, 2002; *Cocaine*, 2004) and the provocative Christoph Schlingensief (*Kühnen 1994—Bring Me Adolf Hitler's Head!*, 1993). For more, see Naumann's page on the DEFA Film Library website.

BIOGRAPHIES



Rita Feldmeier, Actor (Wanda Brenner) (b. 1954)

Rita Feldmeier was born in 1954 in Rostock. She attended the acting school there from 1970 to 1973 and then debuted at the *Volkstheater* in Rostock. Since 1976, she has been a company member of the Hans Otto Theater in Potsdam. She has also made guest appearances at theaters in Essen, Berlin, Braunschweig, Brandenburg, Anklam and Dresden. In addition to performing on stage, Feldmeier has played in many film productions, including *Die Architekten*; *Dizzy, lieber Dizzy* (1995, *Dizzy, dear Dizzy*); and *Vergiss Amerika* (2000, *Forget America*) as well as in numerous television series. She was awarded Potsdam City's Theater Prize in 2002. For more, see Feldmeier's page on the DEFA Film Library website.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Please note:

The following activities are designed to accompany the screening or viewing of *The Architects*. They are divided into those that can be used before, during and after viewing the film. Please note: They are suggestions and not necessarily meant to be scaffolded to build on each other.

Pre-screening activities

Depending on course topics, helpful background knowledge might include the resolution of World War II, the division of Germany, ideological differences between East and West in the Cold War, life under socialism, etc.

- 1 Have students brainstorm in small groups about the film title *The Architects*.
 - a) What are the students' expectations for a film with this title? What topics might this film present? What kind of protagonists do the students expect?
 - b) What message might the film want to communicate to its audience? Why do the students think so?
 - c) Have students write their ideas on poster paper and save these. After viewing the film, have students reflect on these questions again. Note what changes occurred in their perception of the film.
- 2 Have students research and create a small glossary of important terms and concepts you have chosen, such as: GDR (German Democratic Republic, or East Germany), FRG (Federal Republic of Germany), SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*), Stasi (Ministry of State Security), *Plattenbau* (prefabricated building), socialism, real-existing socialism, Berlin Wall, Wende, censorship. Add terms as you see fit. This glossary can be created online so students can link terms and definitions to uncover connections.



North American
DVD release (2004).

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- 3 Prior to watching the film, assign students Peter Grieder's text, "Collapse, 1989–90, The end begins" and Hannes Hametner's interview "Thomas Knauf: Finding the Good in the Bad." Discuss what role the timing of the film's production might have played for the release of and audience reaction to *The Architects*, especially when it comes to the connections to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification process of the two Germans.
- 4 Show students one of two screenshots: 00:01:15—empty lot with buildings in background; or 00:15:32—the architects peering down at the site they are to design. Ask them to write a list of adjectives describing the site and a list of ideas for what the architects could potentially construct there.



- 5 Brainstorm with students in class about different types of housing. Discuss what is typical for your area and where students are from. What effect does housing have on quality of life? Then show some images of different housing projects in the GDR and elsewhere on the globe. Have students discuss what they see.
- 6 Have students research what housing and living conditions were like in the GDR. Use, for example: Rosemary Wakeman's "Was There an Ideal Socialist City? Socialist New Towns as Modern Dreamscapes;" Danielle Pensley's "The

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Socialist City? A Critical Analysis of the *Neubaugebiet Hellersdorf*,” Sebastian Heiduschke’s “Passed by History: Dystopia, Parable, and Bookend: Die Architekten (The Architects, Peter Kahane, 1990)” or Simon Ward’s “Obsolescence and the Cityscape of the Former GDR.”

- 7 Assign students to read “The East German Film Industry and the State” (Chapter 1 of Daniela Berghahn’s *Hollywood Behind the Wall*) and watch Betina Kuntzsch’s *All und Alltag - eine Kurzbiographie der DEFA* (2018, *Outer Space and the Everyday. A Short History of DEFA*). Have students discuss in small groups: What expectations did different East German constituents (politicians, film producers, directors, audience members, etc.) have for feature films?

Activities for during the screening

- 1 Have your students write a “viewing log,” with timestamps, during their first viewing of the film. Students may take notes about characters, events and themes they deem important and interesting during the screening. They should also write down any questions they have.
- 2 Create small groups of students interested in the following five themes: gender roles; parenting and partnership; socialist architecture; creativity and censorship; generational conflicts. Students in each group should focus on their particular theme while watching the film. Then, after the screening:
 - a) Each student should select and present one short clip to their group that they think best illustrates the theme.
 - b) The groups can then discuss and come to a consensus about which clip best illustrates their respective theme.
 - c) Each group may then show its clip to the whole class and explain how the clip is illustrative of its theme.

Post-Screening Activities

Discussion Activities

- 1 Assign students to read background information about socialism in the GDR, such as Mary Fulbrook’s “The Creation of a Niche Society? Conformity and Grumbling.” Then have students engage in a discussion about the differences they perceive between real-existing socialism and ideal socialism in the GDR. As a next step, have students consider the characters in *The Architects*: Why were some people content with and others opposed to the socio-political landscape in the country? If students are comfortable sharing their own experiences, they can discuss how people in their immediate surroundings oppose or are content with their socio-political landscape. Can they find discrepancies between real-existing and ideal conditions in their own experience?

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

18 THE ARCHITECTS

- 2 Have students read Laura McGee's article "Revolution in the Studio? The DEFA's Fourth Generation of Film Directors and Their Reform Efforts in the Last Decade of the GDR." Then have them discuss how *The Architects* serves the expectations for films in the GDR that McGee describes.
- 3 Watch the short interview *A Regular DEFA Film?* with Peter Kahane. Discuss with your students what power mechanisms inside the GDR and shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall Kahane addresses. How did he envision his film engaging with these dynamics?
- 4 Have students discuss in small groups how the film shows living conditions in an Altbau (old building) and a *Neubau* (also *Plattenbau*, prefabricated modern high-rise) when it comes to amenities, comfort, price, commute, social life, community, etc. Which option would students have preferred, had they been a) a teenager; b) a single 20-year-old; c) a member of a family with a young child?
- 5 The GDR officially guaranteed equal rights for women and propagated to actively engage women in the workforce and in SED leadership. Indeed, more than 80% of women worked in the 1970s and more than 90% in the 1980s, which no other country has topped until today. Have students research gender dynamics in the GDR, for example with Donna Harsch's introduction to her book *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic*, or Susanne Kranz's "Women's Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State's Policy." Have students brainstorm in small groups: What do *they* think equal rights for women mean, especially when it comes to professional and home life?
- 6 Voicing criticism or dissent in the GDR came in various forms and was often complicated. Have students discuss whether the society they live in opens up spaces for criticism of the socio-political system. If so, how?
- 7 If your students read the ample secondary literature about the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and the GDR in general, they would learn that the country's government, among other things, restricted freedom of movement within the Eastern Bloc as well as to so-called "capitalist foreign countries," curtailed freedom of speech and assembly, the right to a fair trial, and prosecuted and abused people emotionally and physically because of their political orientation or dissident views emotionally and physically. Discuss in class a scenario where students imagine themselves living in such a society.
 - a) What options do students think a person who disagrees with a government's politics may have in a country where the government imposes such restrictions?
 - b) Around four million people left the GDR between 1949 and 1990, but many more stayed. What decisions may a person have to make who disagrees with the country's politics? What motives may they have for

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

19 THE ARCHITECTS

- their actions? Does a person who stays in a country endorse government politics? Is a person who leaves not interested in change?
- c) Have students consider other moments in history where human rights were or are at stake, such as the Russian war in Ukraine in 2022, the Nazis, WWII and the Holocaust in Germany, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the global migration movement, etc.

- 8 Have students imagine Wanda sitting with a long-lost friend together over coffee in Switzerland. Her friend grew up in the GDR but fled to the West a long time ago. They have not seen each other for years and Wanda has to catch her friend up on her life. What does she share about her private and professional background? How would she describe her dream profession and her inability to pursue it? What is her image of “the West”? Would her friend, who has lived in the West for a while now, agree with her about the historical living conditions at the time, especially when it comes to the gender equality that Wanda craves?

Research Activity

- 1 Have students write an essay focusing on one of the following: a) questions of gender and gender equality; b) censorship and creativity or c) the historical parallels between the film and the last years of the GDR. Suggested resources include:
- a) Donna Harsch’s *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic*; Elizabeth Heine-man’s “Who’s More Emancipated: Feminism, Marital Status, and the Legacy of War and Political Change” or Susanne Kranz’s “Women’s Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State’s Policy.”
 - b) Daniela Berghahn outlines GDR power structures in her chapter “The East German film industry and the state.” With this background knowledge, have students reflect on explicit and subtle ways that the creativity of both architects and artists was censored by various officials.
 - c) Seán Allan’s “1989 and the Wende in East German Cinema: Peter Kahane’s *Die Architekten* (1990), Egon Günther’s *Stein* (1991) and Jörg Foth’s *Letztes aus der Da Da eR* (1990);” Marco Bohr’s “The Collapse of Ideologies in Peter Kahane’s *The Architects*,” and Peter Grieder’s “*Collapse, 1989–90, The End Begins.*”

Writing Activities

- 1 Have students read Daniela Berghahn’s chapter “The East German film industry and the state” to learn more about the existing power structures in the country. Then have them write a reaction paper about the scene when architect Martin Bullat says, “Nobody has to forbid us anything. We do that all by ourselves” (00:16:17). They can then react to the quote with the help of

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

the following questions: What do they think about this statement? What do they know about censorship in the GDR and how can they contextualize this statement? Why would people censor themselves even though they may not have faced immediate punishment?

- 2 Have students write a reaction paper about the metaphorical use of architecture in the film. They should first re-watch the film and pay attention to how architecture is presented.
 - a) What colors do they see? What associations do people make with architecture? How does the film's cinematography present architecture?
 - b) What does architecture represent in the film? What could it allude to that lies outside of architecture itself?
 - c) How do the different characters behave in different places? How does space determine a person's behavior? Are there differences in gender, age, professional standing?
- 3 Assign students to watch the short film on Peter Kahane titled *A Regular DEFA Film*? In a short argumentative essay, have them respond to the following questions:
 - a) How does Kahane characterize his own film? What emotions did he experience during filming as the GDR was also crumbling? Reassess your own observations about the end of the GDR after watching this film. Do you still hold your original opinion?
 - b) You could also ask students to imagine they had the opportunity to interview director Peter Kahane today. Have them formulate three questions that they would like to ask him. If you wish: Have students form groups and discuss possible answers to these questions.

Scene Analysis

- 1 Analyze the scene about the sculpture *Family under Stress* (00:40:09–00:41:21).



- a) Have students re-watch the scene. Ask them to describe what they see. How do the images conveyed through different camera angles

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

and shots communicate certain messages? What do students hear? How are words and silences used to communicate in the group? Have students share their findings with other members of the class. What details did they notice?

- b) One central point of Marxist thought is the sense of “alienation” that capitalism brought about and socialism/communism could heal. Have students research the concept of alienation, for example in the introduction to Michael W. Howard’s book *Socialism*. Then, have them relate the concept back to the sculpture. How can they see alienation in each of the sculpture’s characters? Which protagonists in the film fit a certain character represented in the sculpture? Where and how do the film’s protagonists experience alienation? Have students compare and contrast the various protagonists and determine how the concept of alienation affects their lives.
- c) In Article 7 of its constitution, the GDR proclaimed that it had reached gender equality. Have students use their research about this topic from the pre-screening activities and relate them to the sculpture. How does the sculpture present family and gender issues? What would a woman in the GDR who encountered this sculpture think about the realities around her? Students can discuss what they would think about had they been a child in this portrayed relationship. How would the concept of alienation discussed above play into this relationship? Students should discuss their findings with a small group. What expectations do they and the other group members have about family life? How would a sculpture look that students design together in the group?

② Analyze the scene with Wanda and Daniel in the restaurant (00:59:38–01:03:48).

- a) Play this scene in class without sound. Have students pay close attention to the camera work. How are close ups and long shots built into the scene? Then replay the scene with sound and ask students to analyze how the camera angles underscore the dialogue and situation. The final shot in the scene is a long shot that shows the city outside of the window. How does this shot relate to the strained relationship between Wanda and Daniel?
- b) Have your students re-watch the scene. What does Wanda say about her problems, what does Daniel say? What do they think of each other’s problems? How does the audience experience the discussion, considering the environment the couple is in? Have students reenact the scene in their own words. What other arguments could the characters bring up for their respective points of view?
- c) Have students discuss in a large group after the replay: How do they interpret the scene given their background knowledge based

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

on reading Mary Fulbrook's chapter? Which characteristics of East Germans that are portrayed in the chapter can be found in Daniel and Wanda? How do either Daniel and/or Wanda express the "grumbling" or conformity Fulbrook addresses?

- d) In your opinion, is it better to leave a country (like Wanda) and search for a new home when you cannot seem to change the environment you live in, or stay in the country (like Daniel) because you think you can be part of progress? What do you think about this dichotomy in today's United States? What about other places and other moments in history?

Possible related research topics

The film *Unser kurzes Leben* (1980, *Our Short Life*) is another DEFA production that focuses on gender roles, social ideals for architecture and creative approaches to build spaces. Compare the two films by examining questions like:

- What ideals do the architects depicted in the two films ascribe to?
- How do the films depict people—e.g., families, children—living in high-rise apartment complexes, versus in older buildings in the town or city center?
- How are men, women and gender equality depicted in the films? How are relationships between men and women presented in each film? What do these presentations tell you about views on these topics in the GDR?
- How do the protagonists of *The Architects* and *Our Short Life* behave in different settings, e.g., their homes, their work environments, private gatherings such as parties and in other public places? What do their behaviors say about their (perceived) places in society?

Another DEFA film that highlights the experience of families, and especially children living in the GDR's suburban high-rise complexes, is *Insel der Schwäne* (*Swan Island*, 1982, dir. Herrmann Zschoche). Though it does not focus on architects, many of the same comparisons and questions could productively be explored for this film as well.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bonus Films (in German with English subtitles featured on the DVD and Kanopy):

Fleischer, Uwe. *A Regular DEFA Film? (Ein ganz normaler DEFA-Film?)*, Germany, 2004, 16 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2004. (Also on Kanopy)

Kuntzsch, Betina. *Outer Space and the Everyday: A Short History of DEFA (All und Alltag—eine Kurzbiografie der DEFA)*, Germany, 2018, 17 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2018. (Also in DEFA Film Library's Filmbox)

Ralf Schenk Interview with Peter Kahane (Germany, 2004, 30 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2004. (Also on Kanopy)

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Texts on the DVD and the DEFA Film Library website:

Stern, Ralf. "A Dream in Ruins: *The Architects*." Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2004.

Trampe, Wolfgang. "Storytelling for Film: Excerpts from an Interview with Scriptwriter Thomas Kauf." Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2004.

Hametner, Hannes. "Thomas Knauf: Finding the Good in the Bad." Amherst: 2011. *DEFA Film Library*, 2011. <https://ecommerce.umass.edu/defa/memories/6401>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

"Our Short Life." Amherst: no date. DEFA Film Library, no date. <https://ecommerce.umass.edu/defa/film/5084>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

Related Films on the DEFA Film Library website:

Carow, Heiner. *The Legend of Paul and Paula* (*Die Legende von Paul und Paula*, GDR, 1972, 106 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 1999. (Also on Kanopy)

Tetzlaff, Kurt. *Memory of a Landscape—For Manuela* (*Erinnerung an eine Landschaft—für Manuela*, GDR, 1983, 84 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2021. (Only on Kanopy)

Warneke, Lothar. *Our Short Life* (*Unser kurzes Leben*, GDR, 1980, 109 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2015. (Also on Kanopy)

Zschoche, Herrmann. *Swan Island* (*Insel der Schwäne*, GDR, 1982, 88 min., color, EN ST). Amherst: DEFA Film Library DVD, 2016. (Also on Kanopy)

SELECTED SCHOLARSHIP & REVIEWS in English

Allan, Seán. "1989 and the Wende in East German Cinema: Peter Kahane's *Die Architekten* (1990), Egon Günther's *Stein* (1991) and Jörg Foth's *Letztes aus der Da Da eR* (1990)." 1949/1989: *Cultural Perspectives on Division and Unity in East and West*, edited by Clare Flanagan and Stuart Taberner, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 231–244.

Berghahn, Daniela. *Hollywood Behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.

Bohr, Marco. "The Collapse of Ideologies in Peter Kahane's *The Architects*." *Frontiers of Screen History: Imagining European Borders in Cinema, 1945–2010*, edited by Raita Merivirta, Kimmo Ahonen, Heta Mulari, and Rami Mähkä, Bristol: Intellect, 2013. 65–90.

Brock, Angela. "Producing the 'Socialist Personality'? Socialisation, Education, and the Emergence of New Patterns of Behaviour." *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, Oxford, New York: Berghahn, 2009. 220–252.

Fulbrook, Mary. "The Creation of a Niche Society? Conformity and Grumbling." *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989*, edited by Mary Fulbrook, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 129–150.

Grieder, Peter. "Collapse, 1989–90, The End Begins." *The German Democratic Republic*, edited by Peter Grieder. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012. 122–138.

Grieder, Peter, ed. *The German Democratic Republic*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

Guenther, Katja M. *Making Their Place: Feminism after Socialism in Eastern Germany*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Harsch, Donna. *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Heiduschke, Sebastian. "'Das ist die Mauer, die quer durchgeht. Dahinter liegt die Stadt und das Glück.' DEFA Directors and their Criticism of the Berlin Wall." *Colloquia Germanica* vol. 30, no. 1 (2007): 37–50.

Heiduschke, Sebastian. *East German Cinema. DEFA and Film History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Heiduschke, Sebastian. "Passed by History: Dystopia, Parable, and Bookend: Die Architekten (The Architects, Peter Kahane, 1990)." *East German Cinema: DEFA and Film History*, by Sebastian Heiduschke. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 123–129.

Heineman, Elizabeth. "Who's More Emancipated, Feminism, Marital Status, and the Legacy of War and Political Change." *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany*, edited by Elizabeth Heinemann, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. 239–246.

Howard, Michael W. *Socialism*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001.

Kranz, Susanne. "Women's Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State's Policy." *Journal of International Women's Studies* vol. 7, no. 1 (Nov. 2005): 69–83.

McGee, Laura Green. "'Ich wollte ewig einen richtigen Film machen! Und als es soweit war, konnte ich's nicht!'" *The End Phase of the GDR in Films by DEFA Nachwuchsregisseure*." *German Studies Review* vol. 26, no. 2 (May 2003): 315–332.

McGee, Laura. "Revolution in the Studio? The DEFA's Fourth Generation of Film Directors and Their Reform Efforts in the Last Decade of the GDR." *Film History*, vol. 15, no. 4 (Jan. 2003): 444–64.

Morton, Jim. "The Architects." *East German Cinema Blog*, 2011. <https://eastgermancinema.com/2011/05/23/the-architects/>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

"Nationalhymne der DDR." *Lebendiges Museum Online*, not dated. <https://www.hdg.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/druckgut-nationalhymne-der-ddr.html>. Accessed June 14, 2022.

O'Brien, Mary-Elizabeth. *Post-Wall German Cinema and National History: Utopianism and Dissent*. Rochester: Camden House, 2021.

Pensley, Danielle. "The Socialist City? A Critical Analysis of the *Neubaugebiet Hellersdorf*." *Journal of Urban History* (July 1998): 563–602.

Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014.

Rubin, Eli. *Amnesiopolis: Modernity, Space, and Memory in East Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Steingröver, Reinhild. *Last Features: East German Cinema's Lost Generation*. Rochester: Camden House, 2014.

Ward, Simon. "Obsolescence and the Cityscape of the Former GDR." *German Life and Letters*, vol. 63, no. 4, (2010): 375–97.

Wakeman, Rosemary. "Was There an Ideal Socialist City? Socialist New Towns as Modern Dreamscapes." *Transnationalism and the German City*, edited by Jeffrey M. Diefendorf and Janet Ward, New York: Palgrave, 2014. 105–124.

SELECTED SCHOLARSHIP & REVIEWS in German

von Beyme, Klaus. "Architecture and Democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany." *International Political Science Review*, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 1991): 137–147.

Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. *Parallelwelt: Film Einblick in die DEFA*. 2006. <https://www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/33933/parallelwelt-film>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

"Familiengesetzbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik." *Verfassungen*, 20 Dec. 1965. <http://www.verfassungen.de/ddr/familiengesetzbuch65.htm>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

Flierl, Bruno. *Architektur und Kunst. Texte 1964–1983*. Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1984.

“Flucht aus der DDR: Geschichten von Risiko und Freiheit.” *NDR*, not dated. <https://www.ndr.de/geschichte/schauplaetze/Flucht-aus-der-DDR-Geschichten-von-Risiko-und-Freiheit,flucht516.html>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

“Fluchten.” *Chronik der Mauer*, not dated. <https://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/fluchten/>. Accessed June 14, 2022.

Kaminsky, Anna. *Frauen in der DDR*. Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin: 2016.

Löser, Claus. “Blick zurück im Zorn? Bemerkungen zum finalen Zustand der DEFA zwischen 1989 und 1992.” *filmdienst* 2 (1999): 35–39.

Mathes, Bettina. “Mit der ‘Heimat’ verheiratet? Die Architekten von Peter Kahane.” *Die Imaginierte Nation: Identität, Körper und Geschlecht in DEFA Filmen*, edited by Bettina Mathes, Berlin: DEFA-Stiftung, 2007. 42–71.

Reimann, Brigitte. *Franziska Linkerhand*. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1974.

Schenk, Ralf. “Keine Stadt der Zukunft. Zu Peter Kahanes Film ‘Die Architekten’.” *filmdienst*, vol. 59, no. 10 (2006): 45. <https://www.defa-stiftung.de/defa/publikationen/artikel/sh2006-keine-stadt-der-zukunft/>. Accessed 14 June 2022.

Staiger, Michael. “Endzeit in der Stadtheimat, Peter Kahanes Die Architekten (1990) und das Erbe der DEFA.” *Der Deutschunterricht* vol. 4 (2014): 58–68.

Wolle, Stefan. *Die heile Welt der Diktatur. Herrschaft und Alltag in der DDR 1971–1989*. Berlin: Christoph Links, 2013.

Wolle, Stefan. “Der Palast der Republik als erträumte DDR.” *Kulturgeschichte Preußens—Colloquien* 5, 2017. No pages. https://www.perspectivia.net/receive/ploneimport_mods_00010450. Accessed 14 June 2022.

IMPRINT

© 2022 DEFA Film Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

All rights reserved.

Images: DEFA-Stiftung, Christa Köfer and screenshots

Texts: Carol Anne Costabile-Heming (University of North Texas), Juliane Schicker (Carleton College)

Editor: Mariana Ivanova (DEFA Film Library)

Design: HELMBOLD-Design, Berlin

This *Teaching Guide* was supported by the DEFA Foundation, Berlin.