

A FILM BY JULIAN RADLMAIER

71st Internationaler
Festival der
Begegnungen
Encounters

BLOODSUCKERS

A MARXIST VAMPIRE COMEDY

ARRI Media

ARRI MEDIA INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS A FAKTURA FILM PRODUCTION IN COOPERATION WITH WDR/ARTE, THE POST REPUBLIC, MAIER BRÜS AND LUDWIG KAMERAYERLEIH
WITH ALEXANDRE KOBERIDZE, ULITH STANGENBERG, ALEXANDER HERBST, CORINNA HARF DUCH, ANDREAS DÖHLER, DANIEL HÖSEL, KYUNG-TAEK UH,
DARJA LEWIN CHALEMI AND MAREIKE BEYKIRCH. SCREENPLAY BY MARKUS KOOB. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: SARAH WENDT. COSTUME DESIGNER: CHRISTIAN FRITZENWANKER
PRODUCTION OFFICE: ANDREAS HILDEBRANDT. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: CHRISTIAN OBERMAIER, FRANK THOMASMANN. PRODUCED BY: BIRGIT KAMPER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL PEUTER. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: NIELS MAIER, KONUT MAIER, STEFAN LAUCHER, JULIA MISCHKINE. EDITOR: KIRILL KRASOVSKI. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JULIAN RADLMAIER



ARRI Media PRESS KIT



BLOODSUCKERS

A FILM BY JULIAN RADLMAIER

(Deutschland 2021)

Germany:

Summer 2021

Feature film:

125 minutes, 1:1.66, DCP-4K, German

Director, Script and Editor:

Julian Radlmaier

Camera:

Markus Koob

Production design:

Reinhild Blaschke

Costume design:

Sara Wendt

Make-up and Hair design:

Christian Fritzenwanker

Sound:

Andreas Hildebrandt

Sound design:

Christian Obermaier

Sound mixing:

Matthias Lempert

Music and title song:

Franui

Produced by:

faktura film

Producer:

Kirill Krasovski

In coproduction with:

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Republic, Maier Bros. Und

Coproducers:

Michael Reuter, Niels Maier,

Knut Maier, Stefan Laucher,

Julia Mishkinene

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Film-und Medienstiftung NRW,

Nordmedia

World sales:

ARRI Media

With :

Alexandre Koberidze, Lilith

Stangenberg, Alexander

Herbst, Corinna Harfouch,

Andreas Döhler, Daniel

Hoesl, Mareike Beykirch,

Kyung-Taek Lie, Darja Lewin

Chalem u. v. a.

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LOGLINE

A Marxist vampire comedy about longing and Das Kapital

SHORT SYNOPSIS

1928: Lyovuschka, a Soviet worker, is cast in the role of Trotsky for Eisenstein's latest film. His dreams of an actor's life are shattered when Trotsky falls into Stalin's disgrace and he is edited out of the film. Now he wants to try his luck in Hollywood. But at the moment he's stuck in a glamorous seaside resort in Germany where, walking the beach one day, he meets the eccentric factory owner Octavia Flambow-Jansen and her clumsy servant, Jakob. A summer romance kicks off – just too bad there are vampires around.

SYNOPSIS

August 1928. A Soviet factory worker by the name of Lyovischka is cast in the role of Trotsky by the director Sergei Eisenstein for his film 'October'. But his dreams of an actor's life are shattered when the real Trotsky falls into Stalin's disgrace and he is edited out of the film. The romantic dreamer flees his communist homeland and wants to try his luck in Hollywood. Instead, he finds himself stuck in a glamorous German seaside resort on the Baltic Sea where, pretending to be a fleeing aristocrat, he wants to rustle up the money for a passage to New York. While out checking out the area, he meets the young factory owner Octavia Flambow-Jansen, who is spending the summer months by the sea, together with her clumsy servant Jakob. The eccentric millionairess takes an interest in the mysterious refugee and offers him a hideout in her luxury manor. His cover's quickly blown and he falls in love with his dazzling host even faster – very much to the annoyance of Jakob, who has literary ambitions as well as the hots for his boss. A summer romance kicks off – just too bad there are vampires around... And worse still, Octavia's a bloodsucker herself.

BIOGRAPHY JULIAN RADLMAIER

Julian Radlmaier, born in 1984 in Nuremberg, is a German-French filmmaker and lives in Berlin. He studied film theory and art history in Berlin and Paris and finally directing at the dffb. He worked as an assistant to Werner Schroeter and has translated and published writings on the theory of film by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière. His two medium-length films, *A SPECTER IS HAUNTING EUROPE* and *A PROLETARIAN WINTER'S TALE*, as well as his full length graduation film *SELF-CRITICISM OF A BOURGEOIS DOG*, in which he also plays the lead, have screened at internationally renowned festivals (including the Berlinale, Rotterdam, Viennale, Rio, Melbourne, FICUNAM) and received numerous accolades, including two awards from the Association of German Film Critics. His latest feature, *BLOODSUCKERS*, is receiving its premiere in the Encounters sidebar of the Berlinale 2021 and has already been accoladed with the German Script Award.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Alexandre Koberidze (Lyovuschka) is a Georgian director who studied with Julian Radlmaier at the dffb and played in all his previous films. Alexandre's own film *LET THE SUMMER NEVER COME AGAIN* won the Grand Prix of the International Competition award at the FID Marseille and the Association of German Film Critics Award. His latest film, *WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE SKY*, is celebrating its premiere in the Competition section of the Berlinale 2021.

Lilith Stangenberg (Octavia) is a Berlin actress who made her theatrical debut in Zurich and then spent many years as an ensemble member at Berlin's Volksbühne, appearing numerous times in stage productions by Frank Castorf. In front of camera she has worked with the directors Alexander Kluge, Khavn de la Cruz, Nicolette Krebitz, Angela Schanelec, Christoph Hochhäusler and Michael Klier, as well as with other artists such as Paul McCarthy and Jonathan Meese. She has been accoladed with the Association of German Film Critics Award and the Ulrich Wildgruber Award.

Alexander Herbst (Jakob) is an elementary school teacher from Thuringia who, after time spent in Israel and Berlin, now lives in Warsaw. *BLOODSUCKERS* is his first acting role.

Corinna Harfouch's (Aunt Erkenrud) theatrical career was hallmarked by such luminaries as Heiner Müller, Fritz Marquardt, Frank Castorf and Jürgen Gosch. For her performance in 'The Devil's General' at the Volksbühne she was named Actress of the Year 1997. After launching her impressive film career at the DEFA studio she continued to take lead roles following German reunification. She recently won an Association of German Film Critics Award for her performance in *LARA*.

Andreas Döhler (Dr. Humburg) is an actor today with the Berliner Ensemble, previously with the Thalia Theater Hamburg and the Deutsches Theater. He has worked alongside Dimiter Gotscheff, Michael Thalheimer and Frank Castorf, to name but three. His film appearances include *DIE EINZELTEILE DER LIEBE* (director Mirjam Bliese, camera Markus Koob).

Daniel Hoesl (Bonin) is an Austrian filmmaker who started as a director's assistant with Ulrich Seidl and went on to create an international furore with the feature films *SOLDATE JEANETTE* (Tiger Award in Rotterdam) und *WINWIN*, as well as the documentary *DAVOS*. His acting credits include *ANGELO* (dir. Markus Schleiner).

Kyung-Taek Lie (Seaweed Gatherer) is a German-Korean senior citizen who also runs the ‚Dal Tokki‘ Korean restaurant in Berlin’s Wedding district. He played a lead role in Julian Radlmaier’s earlier feature, SELF-CRITICISM OF A BOURGEOIS DOG.

Darja Lewin Chalem (Rosa) is a performer and musician living in Tel Aviv. She studied at Jerusalem’s School of Visual Theater and tours the world with, among others, the band Vulkkan Entertainment.

Mareike Beykirch (Jevka) has been an ensemble member of the Munich Kammerspiele since 2019. Before then she was a longtime leading figure at the Maxim-Gorki-Theater. She was nominated twice for the Best New Actress of the Year award.

Bruno Derksen (Bruno) is a Berlin filmmaker and film teacher, who played in SELF-CRITICISM and whose latest credits are for music videos for Friedrich Lichtenstein and Kasar. He also does the cinematography for Henrike Meyer’s films. In addition, he works regularly with the camerawoman and documentary filmmaker Matila Mester (Helga), who studied with Julian Radlmaier at the dffb.

Anton Gonopolski (Eisenstein) is a Russian filmmaker and regular actor in Julian Radlmaier’s films, whom he also supports on the editing. Lately, he is also enjoying success making music and audio plays with the band Akyn Machine.

Ludwig Sporrer (Druggist) is a film curator from Munich and works for, among others, the dok.fest and Filmkunstwochen.

Michael Baute (Bauer) is an author and lecturer in, among others, film history at the dffb. Markus Nechleba (Wendehals) is also film history lecturer at the dffb and was the dramaturgical advisor on BLOODSUCKERS.

Martin Hansen (Hans) and Juan Felipe Amaya Gonzales (Franz) originate from Australia and Colombia respectively, decided to settle in Berlin and are active internationally as dancers and choreographers.

Christopher Kane (Police officer) studied with Julian Radlmaier at the dffb and works in film production. With his brother, the artist Ira Kane, he is a Julian Radlmaier regular, a Berlin version of Hergé’s Tintin’s detective twins, Thomson and Thomson.

Mex Schlüpfer (Seaman) is a Berliner Volksbühne legend of the Castorf era.

Johannes Lehmann (Schnösl) studied acting at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts and works today principally as a musician, e.g. as guitarist for Masha Qrella.

Marie Rathscheck (Princess XY) is a German-French actress and ensemble member in Leipzig.

Katja Weilandt (Druggist) is an actress who has appeared in almost all of Julian Radlmaier’s films.

Sara Summa (Tourist) studied directing at the dffb, Her film GLI ULTIMI A VERDERLI VIVERE screened in the Forum sidebar of the Berlinale 2019. Antoni Schellecks (Tourist) is studying directing at the dffb.

All other actors and actresses are from the filmmaker’s circle of friends and acquaintances.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO DIRECTOR JULIAN RADLMAIER

The film is set in 1928. Why did you choose this year, this point in time for the story?

It came about in a really weird way. I read in a biography of Eisenstein about the origin of the film ‚October‘, which had been commissioned for the tenth anniversary of the Russian revolution. Eisenstein had of course directed some scenes in which Leon Trotsky appears, but the latter had already lost the power struggle with Stalin and, as a result, had to be removed from the film. So much is known. What caught my eye was a wayward historical detail: the casual sentence, the nameless Trotsky actor who was edited out was „a kind of dentist“. What the heck’s „a kind“ of dentist? That got my imagination going and I came up with the idea for the character of Lyovuschka. That set the historical framework. Of course, this also offered up other interesting questions, which echo in today’s time: On the one hand disappointments about real existing socialism are setting in in the Twenties and are still shaping our present. On the other, fascism is appearing as a violent solution to social contradictions. Despite that, BLOODSUCKERS is not a classical historical film „about“ the Twenties. And historical parallels have to be enjoyed with caution, anyhow. I’m more interested in certain structural questions, which I investigate from a dual historical perspective, in which the present estranges the past and vice versa. So BLOODSUCKERS is most of all a film about the seductive spell of the bourgeois-capitalist subject, the difficulty of human relationships in the class society, about the compulsion of labour and the right to laziness, about the availability of one’s own time and own body, the structural function of racism, about fears of being relegated, fantasies of upward mobility and the old question, whether you can make yourself comfortable as an individual in inhospitable circumstances without becoming corrupted.

The film’s setting is not that of a historically authentic „period piece“, there are for example modern container ships on the horizon or a motorbike from the 21st century. Why did you decide on these rifts?

The 1920s is tricky territory because they were overused medially and culturally-industrially like almost no other epoch. We avoided the „Roaring Twenties“ fetish, with all the cliched images it brings, like the Devil avoids holy water, and also largely renounced the period’s typical insignias. Painstaking reconstruction in which every object means „past“, which is to say it’s meant to confirm our conception of it, puts the visible world under a museum-like veil that often prevents us from even being able to perceive precisely or think at all. For that reason we always looked for things in the scenography and costumes that interested us in their concrete appearance and are multifaceted in their referential function. In addition, there’s that maybe in this way you can be even fairer to the historical lines of force. The 1920s fascination for technology and speed, for example, is embodied by the bilious green Kawasaki Ninja, which to our contemporary eyes does it better than a historically correct jalopy.

In the film there are not only numerous references to novels, from Proust to Bram Stoker, its structuring into four chapters, each with its own narrative tone, echoes that of the novel form. How important was literature in creating the script?

Language plays an important role in my films, and that’s in a manner that doesn’t try to display typical ways of speaking naturalistically, but, rather, has literary points of reference. But the freewheeling fabulation of my plots

has literary sources of inspiration. It's not about paragons, which I want to execute concretely, rather it's about esthetic experiences that have boosted me, awakened my desire, to keep on trying in a particular direction. Viewed from this perspective, my impressions of three literary universes collide in BLOOD-SUCKERS, all from the 1920s by the way: the figure of Lyovuschka stands for me in connection with the grotesque Soviet picaresque novel by Ilya Ehrenburg ('The Stormy Life of Lasik Roitschwantz'), Octavia with Marcel Proust's depictions of aristocratic and upper-middle-class society, which oscillates between extremely subjective refinement and a class-specific form of stupidity, Jakob with the odd helpers, servants and assistants in Robert Walser's novels. The vampire motif, on the other hand, is not from Bram Stoker (I've never read it), but taken directly from Marx' „Das Kapital“. At the same time that has nothing for me to do with a collage-like „Game of Quotes“, because the attempt is to come to a formal autonomy and cohesion despite the disparity of the elements.

We already know from your previous films your work with non-professional actors and actresses, now, with Lilith Stangenberg, Corinna Harfouch and Andreas Döhler and others, you have known pros in front of the camera. What stimulated you to cast the film this way?

For me, an ideal cast has the richest possible palette of modes of acting and being. That is the central core and perhaps the democratic utopia of my film esthetic. The starting point for my casting is the non-professionals, who come mostly from my friends and acquaintances, because I find hues and tonalities here that trained actors don't have. There are many team members visible too. It's a way of bringing my own personal lived and working realities into the film. And a certain resistance. For some roles, though, it's better to have actors and actresses who have a very controlled, confident manner with their language, their appearance. That often suits characters who present themselves in a conscious manner, cultivating a social air, are associated with power. That's mostly actors and actresses I've seen onstage. When these different kinds of performer encounter one another, for me the result is something very interesting because they bring each other's specific quality into its own like complementary colors.

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Berlinale 2021 - Offizielle Auswahl in der Sektion „Encounters“

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