

THE FASSBINDER FOUNDATION



**Rainer Werner Fassbinder
Foundation**

Newsletter 2005 - 2009

Dear friends, partners, companions and supporters of the RWFF and the FF Inc.,

in December 2004, we launched the tri-lingual RWFF website and went online with news and periodic updates. At that point, it seemed unnecessary to keep sending out our newsletter. However, some Fassbinder fans missed the regular overviews of our activities, and we therefore resume the newsletter tradition. At the same time, we encourage you to follow up on our current reports at www.fassbinderfoundation.de.

Fassbinder Films: Reborn

A focal point in disseminating Fassbinder's work in the last few years was to bring the films to movie theaters again and to produce editions of high-quality DVDs. While the structures of German cinemas are narrowly defined with regards to repertory screenings, retrospectives on special occasions receive greater attention. Each year since we began our collaboration with our DVD partner, ARTHAUS/Kinowelt, in 2001 Fassbinder's oeuvre has received more attention in the German-speaking realm. As a result of this cooperation, some 28 Fassbinder titles are now available on the ARTHAUS label. Special editions further supported our presence in the market. Among them are "The BRD trilogy" box (2005) with the classics *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Lola* and *Veronika Voss*, and a special edition to commemorate the 25th anniversary of RWF's death (2007) with 10 DVDs plus extensive extras.

The special edition of *Deutscher Herbst* ("German Autumn", 2008) features RWF's contribution to the 1977 episodic *Germany in Autumn* and *The Third Generation* of 1978; films by Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta, Alexander Kluge and Reinhard Hauff are also included. This endeavor further helped to communicate the work of Fassbinder and aided in the establishment of a comprehensive overview of the 1970s and 80s, when the New German Film was particularly prolific. That Fassbinder left a definitive mark in the cinematic-political discourse is evidenced by the title "Rainer Werner Fassbinder Complex", used by the national German paper FAZ in its September 17, 2008 review of the "The Baader-Meinhof-Komplex". It is imperative that we remember the past in order to comprehend the present.

Fassbinder Films on DVD – A Global Overview

More than thirty Fassbinder films are by now available on DVD in the US, twenty-eight in France. The list of countries where Fassbinder films are released by the leading DVD-labels grows constantly. Among the most important partners are the DVD-labels in the USA (Criterion Collection, Wellspring Media, Fantomas), France (Carlotta Films), BeNeLux (Cineart), Britain (Arrow-Films), Greece (Art Free), Italy (Dolmen), Spain (Avalon, Cameo, DeAPlaneta, Vella Vision), Portugal

(Prisvideo), Brazil (Versatile Home Video), Japan (Kinokuniya), Australia (Madman), as well as Palestine (Qattan Foundation).

Our website offers the most comprehensive and updated data regarding the global state of RWF films issued on DVD: www.fassbinderfoundation.de/node.php/en/dvds

2005: The Anniversary Year

In June and July of the year in which RWF would have turned 60, the Kino Babylon in Berlin-Mitte, in collaboration with Basis-Filmverleih and RWFF, featured a RWF film program along with numerous documentaries about him. The Cologne Conference presented, in cooperation with the Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen, a cinematic evening in Cologne's Cinenova with the film classic *Veronika Voss*; Rosel Zech attended as well.

What preceded these events was a retrospective of RWF's entire oeuvre in Paris' Centre Pompidou (CGP) hailed by the French press. Inaugurated on April 13, 2005, those present included Hanna Schygulla, Margit Carstensen, Irm Hermann, Ingrid Caven, Juliane Lorenz and Harry Baer. Entitled *R.W. Fassbinder – Un Cinéaste d'Allemagne*, this comprehensive overview opened with RWF's first feature film, *Love Is Colder Than Death*, as well as an exhibition. The entire program was accompanied by the French translation of Thomas Elsaesser's book *Fassbinder's Germany – History, Identity, Subject* (Amsterdam University Press, 1996), entitled in French *R.W. Fassbinder – Un Cinéaste d'Allemagne* (Éditions du Centre Pompidou Paris, 2005). The German version, published in 2001 by Bertz/Fischer, bears the title *Rainer Werner Fassbinder*. An international symposium bore the motto *La rage de Fassbinder (Fassbinder's Rage)* and concluded the event.

Beginning at the same time as the retrospective in the Centre Pompidou, our French partner, Carlotta Films, released a commercial series with twelve films on April 6: *R.W. Fassbinder – L'Événement (Fassbinder – The Event)*, originally part of Paris' current movie program (with shows, among others, at the "MK2" chain and at "Le Champion"), later toured 30 French cities. At the same time, Carlotta released a four-part DVD-edition. On April 15, the *Collection R.W. Fassbinder – 1er partie*, part one of *Rainer Werner Fassbinder Edition*, came out. *Collection R.W. Fassbinder – 4ème partie* concludes the series that also features a numbered special edition: The "Collection R.W. Fassbinder – Nummée" box contains eighteen features and two shorts.

Despite its concentration and its simultaneity, our presence in all areas of cinematic distribution did not diminish our commercial success in France. Quite the contrary was true: The six-week long program at the Centre Pompidou was one of the most popular events in town, and the DVD editions won numerous prizes. On December 23, 2005 the "Prix des Cahiers du Cinéma" was awarded for that year's best DVD edition. The following year, the Cineteca Bologna bestowed its "Il Cinema Ritrovato DVD-Award 2006" for the best rediscovery on the numbered special edition "Collection R.W. Fassbinder".

Thanks – Merci à la France! And very special thanks to Carlotta Films and Vincent Paul-Boncour.

Apropos DVDs: A short history of materials

The basis for **all** DVD-editions and other materials used in the world today to distribute Fassbinder titles are new digital master scans we produced in the years 2001 and 2002. The scans are obtained directly from the original negative with an SD-based C-reality Wetgate-scan. RWFF covered the entire cost with its own resources. We undertook all master scans under the supervision and under the ultimate control of the original directors of photography (Michael Ballhaus, Jürgen Jürges and Xaver Schwarzenberger). Titles Fassbinder's first cameraman, Dietrich Lohmann, had shot were supervised by the original editor, Thea Eymész. Dietrich Lohmann died in 1999 in Los Angeles; he could no longer collaborate.

To this day, our most comprehensive restoration project, already realized on 2k-basis, is Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered. For the future, 2k is the best basis for historically valuable negatives, especially when the materials are a 16mm original negative or a 16mm reversal film.

Events in the Anniversary Year 2005 (a selection)

- February 10: As part of the German TV series German CVs (Deutsche Lebensläufe): *Rainer Werner Fassbinder, A Film* by Dagmar Wittmers aired on the Saarländischer Rundfunk (SR 3).
- February 17: Rainer Werner Fassbinder: *Im Land des Apfelbaums – Gedichte und Prosa aus den Kölner Jahren 1962/1963*, edited by Juliane Lorenz and Daniel Kletke, published by Schirmer Graf Verlag, Munich (early RWF poems and prose).
- April 14: Rainer Werner Fassbinder – ein Feminist, ein Philosoph, ein Deutscher, review by Verena Lueken in the FAZ about the Fassbinder-Event in the Centre Pompidou.
- April 15: Release in France of parts 1 + 2 (eight titles) of the DVD-edition Collection R.W. Fassbinder.
- May 27: "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant;" concert performance of acts 1 + 2 of the opera by Gerald Barry, National Concert Hall, Dublin.
- May 30: Hanna Schygulla reads excerpts from *Im Land des Apfelbaums – Gedichte und Prosa aus den Kölner Jahren 1962/1963* at Munich's Literaturhaus.
- June 05: *Fassbinder in Hollywood*, A film by Robert Fischer and Ulli Lommel aired on the Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR).
- June 09 to 30: Homage to the actress Hanna Schygulla at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- July 21 to 31: first comprehensive Fassbinder retrospective in Poland during the film festival ERA NOWE HORYZONTY includes 30 Fassbinder titles.
- September 16: World premiere of the opera "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant" by Gerald Barry at London's National Opera in the presence of Margit Carstensen.
- November 26: Release in France of parts 3 + 4 of the DVD-edition Collection R.W. Fassbinder.
- December 06: The European Film Academy's European Award – Discovery of the Year: Fassbinder Prize 2005 with the additional title "Fassbinder Prize", is awarded for the last time; this coincides with an Homage of the Academy to RWF.

A Reminder:

In 1997, RWFF began to award the "European Discovery of the Year – Fassbinder Prize", a prize entailing an honorarium (€ 5000), awarded to an unusual European film director and his movie during the European Film Awards Ceremony.

European Discovery of the Year. Fassbinder Prize Recipients 1997 - 2005

1997:	Bruno Dumont for "La Vie de Jésus" – "Jesus' Life" (France)
1998:	(ex æquo) Thomas Vinterberg for "Festen" – "The Celebration" (Denmark) and Erick Zonca for "La Vie rêvée des anges" – "A Life Dreamt By Angels" (France)
1999:	Tim Roth for "The War Zone" (Britain)
2000:	Laurent Cantet for "Ressources humaines" (France)
2001:	Achero Mañas for "El Bola" (Spain)
2002:	György Pálfi for "Huckle" – "Hiccups" (Hungary)
2003:	Andrei Zvyagintsev for "Vozvrashcheniye" – "The Return" (Russia)
2004:	Antonio Frazzi for "Certi bambini" – "Stolen Childhood" (Italy)
2005:	Jacob Thuesen for "Anklaget" – "Impeached" (Denmark)

Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered 2006

In order to effectively preserve RWF's film oeuvre, from 2001 to 2006 we also concentrated on the renewed distribution of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. This entailed circuitous negotiations, especially with regards to the rights for Alfred Döblin's novel. In addition, all rights for music not expressly composed for the movie including sub-rights and beneficiary clauses needed to be cleared and often had to be re-acquired.

For a better understanding: if one wants to pursue other means of distribution for a work originally produced for television, one must clear those "non-TV ends". Normally, money must be paid to obtain the rights for "new types of distribution". Thanks to many years of experience in this field, after securing the product rights in 2003, we began to cooperate with the original producer, Bavaria Media. After the financing was secured, in the middle of 2006, we began the restoration work on

Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered* as the executive producer. Xaver Schwarzenberger, the original cameraman, was the artistic director.

The Museum of Modern Art took the first step towards the financing in 2004: in a written document, it offered financial aid; the following year, the Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen offered us a letter of intent.

Once the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes, KSB) assured us of their support, the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (mbb), the Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA) and the Bavarian Film- und Fernsehförderung (FFF) joined the group of sponsors. Thanks to contributions of the cooperation partners RWFF and Bavaria Media and thanks to a RWFF-subsidy, we were able to secure the project's financing in 2006.

Events 2006 (a selection)

- February 8: The Berlinale honors Laurence Kardish, senior curator at the Museum of Modern Art, with the "Berlinale Camera". Thanks to the annual MoMA-series, *Films from Germany*, which he began in 1978, German film is regularly presented in the US. Without him, the 1997 complete Fassbinder retrospective at MoMA would have been impossible.
- February 10: The Berlinale honors Michael Ballhaus, director of photography, with the "Berlinale Camera". Fassbinder's most important eye, he began to work in the USA in the early 80s.
- July 6: Our French partner Carlotta Films is awarded "Il Cinema Ritrovato DVD-Award 2006" by the Cineteca Bologna in the category "Best Rediscovery" for its "R.W. Fassbinder – Special Edition".
- July 10: ARROW Films begins the release of its 20-title DVD edition in Britain and hosts, in cooperation with RWFF, a retrospective at London's ICA.
- July 15: The numerous tests begin for the restoration of Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered*; this is followed by subsequent scans, colormatchings and the production of a new 35mm negative, as well as 35mm copies for movie theaters.
- July 18: Munich's polytechnic high school, formerly known as FOS II – Münchner Fachoberschule für Sozialwesen und Gestaltung, is renamed as: Städtische Rainer-Werner-Fassbinder-Fachoberschule für Sozialwesen und Gestaltung (www.fossg.musin.de).
- August 26: The Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation (RWFF) was founded twenty years ago. "Looking back at twenty years of work" was the motto the RWFF team chose for its readings of unpublished works by Fassbinder in Ahrenshoop, a spa on the Baltic Sea.
- October 14: Peer Raben is awarded the World Soundtrack Award.
- December 21: Restoration work concluded on Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered* and screening of the film Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered – Notes About the Restoration* by Juliane Lorenz (35 minutes) in the ARRI-Kino, Munich.

Fassbinder Memorial Year 2007

The German premiere of Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered* on the big screen took place on February 9, 2007 in Berlin's Admiralspalast on Friedrichstraße. This came 27 years after the world premiere of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* at the Venice International Film Festival in 1980 and 25 years after Fassbinder's death on June 9, 1982.

After Dr. Bernd Neumann, German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, and the cooperation partners, Bavaria Media and RWFF, made introductory remarks, Max Raabe and his Palastorchestra presented the 1,400 guests of the premiere their program of 1920s songs and then introduced the first two parts of Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered*. Uncounted honorary guests and people involved in film from around the world had come. After the screening, Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick greeted actors and members of the Alexanderplatz team, among them Günter Lamprecht, Hanna Schygulla, Barbara Sukowa, Irm Hermann, Elisabeth Trissenaar, Franz Buchrieser, Roger Fritz, Karin Baal, Marie-Luise Marjan and Harry Baer, as well as costume designer Barbara Baum, film editor Juliane Lorenz, sound engineer Carsten Ullrich and the line producers, Wulf Gasthaus and Winfried Demus. Dr. Günter Rohrbach, at the time executive producer of the former Bavaria-Film GmbH and today an independent producer and president of the Deutsche Filmakademie also came.

On February 11 at 10AM, the mammoth screening began at the Volksbühne on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. The 800 seats were completely sold out, and even after part fourteen, the challenging and demanding epilogue, *My Dream of the Dream of Franz Biberkopf – The Death of a Child and the Birth of a Worthwhile Human Being*, ended at about 3AM the following (Monday) morning, there were still approximately 500 – mostly young viewers – present. And there was a reward to be had – champagne – for those who had so courageously stayed, among them also Günter Lamprecht and Barbara Sukowa.

At the same time, the special DVD edition, issued as part of the “SZ Premiere Edition” was released. This elaborate box with seven DVDs also includes a bonus DVD and a booklet. The result of our concerted efforts is a milestone in film restoration and an example for a successful re-release of a cinematic masterpiece. The following references are but a brief selection of publications dealing extensively with this issue:

- Tom Tykwer: “Wer in einer Menschenhaut wohnt – Gefangen im gewaltigen Steinbruch der Emotionen”, (“He who inhabits a Human Skin”) FAZ, February 06, 2007
www.fassbinderfoundation.de/en/presse_detail.php?presseid=31
- Leo A. Lensing: “Poet in a fedora”, The Times Literary Supplement (TLS), April 18, 2007
www.fassbinderfoundation.de/en/presse_detail.php?presseid=33
- Ian Buruma: “The Genius of Berlin”, The New York Book Review, January 17, 2008
www.fassbinderfoundation.de/node.php/de/news_detail/130
- D. W. Leitner: “bahnbrechend + revolutionär”, (“Cinematic Blow-Up”) digital content, 09/2007:
www.fassbinderfoundation.de/en/presse_detail.php?presseid=34

Venues for Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered in 2007

- February: Swedish TV broadcasts *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered continuously at prime time.
- April 4: complete RWF retrospective entitled *RWF mit Gruppe* at Berlin’s Arsenal cinema; the selection includes movies with his most important collaborators, either as directors or serving other directors with their profession.
- April 9: US-premiere of the films Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered – Notes about the Restoration* and *Fassbinder’s Berlin Alexanderplatz – A Mega Movie and its Story* by Juliane Lorenz with Günter Lamprecht and Barbara Sukowa at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.
- April 10 to 15: Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered premieres at MoMA.
- April 14: a comprehensive RWF retro begins at the Cinemateca Portuguesa, Lisbon. Publication in Portuguese of Christian Braad Thomson: *Fassbinder: The Life and Work of a Provocative Genius*, translation Martin Chalmers, Faber & Faber, UK, 1997 / Paperback: University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2004 (original 1991, Gyldendal, Copenhagen).
- May 24: Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered at the Museo Arte y Cultura Barcelona (MACBA), presented in tandem with a conference; speakers included Sylvie Rollet (L’Université Sorbonne II, Paris), Thomas Elsaesser and Juliane Lorenz (RWFF).
- June 10 to July 28: RWF series in Berlin’s Babylon Mitte cinema, ends with Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered.
- June 14 to 18: Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered in Cologne at the 19th Medienforum, with Günter Lamprecht present.
- July 21 to 24: the Arsenal series *RWF mit Gruppe* terminates with Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered.
- July 15: first DVD release of Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered in The Netherlands.
- August 15 to 26: Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered screened at the Edinburgh Film Festival.
- August 17: German premiere of *Fassbinder’s Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered – Notes about the Restoration* and *Fassbinder’s Berlin Alexanderplatz – A Mega Movie and its Story* by Juliane Lorenz at Frankfurt’s Deutsches Filmmuseum.
- August 17 to 19: Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered at Frankfurt’s Deutsches Filmmuseum.
- October 6, 7: Premiere in the *Grand Rex*, Paris, Europe’s largest cinema, of Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remasterisé in the presence of Gottfried John, Günter Lamprecht, Xaver Schwarzenberger, Harry Baer, Juliane Lorenz and Stephan Döblin. Followed by a discussion and a Q&A session with the public.
- October 6: First release in France of the DVD edition of Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remasterisé by Carlotta Films.
- November 5: ARROW Films releases part two of their RWF DVD edition in Britain.
- November 13: First US release on DVD of Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered by Criterion Collection. This comprehensive edition contains, apart from various bonus materials, the first (1932) film version of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* with Heinrich George and Bernhard Minetti as the leads; director: Piel Jutzki.
- November 19 to 28: The complete RWF retrospective at the Cinemateca Portuguesa ends with Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered.
- December 15, 16: Screening of Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remasterisé at the Centre Pompidou.
- December 19: Colloquium about *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remasterisé at the Centre Pompidou under the guidance of Roger Rotmann, the participants included Sylvie Rollet, Emmanuel Burdeau, Amos Gitai, Cyril Neyrat, Juliane Lorenz, and Hanna Schygulla.

Fassbinder: Berlin Alexanderplatz – The Exhibition and a Book

Another highpoint was an unusual exhibition held at Berlin's KW-Institute of Contemporary Art from March 18 to May 13 and accompanied by a book that weighed roughly five pounds. The KW-project materialized thanks to the support of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes, RWFF and Bavaria Media. The accompanying programs included, during the exhibition's duration, discussions and guided tours with film historians, scholars, journalists and Fassbinder collaborators. The exhibition coincided with the Arsenal cinema's RWF retrospective entitled *RWF mit Gruppe*. There was a steady flow of mostly young visitors.

On March 17, KW will open Fassbinder: Berlin Alexanderplatz – An Exhibition. This show presents the unusual and fascinating work in such a manner that visitors may choose different ways to view the exhibition. One part of Berlin Alexanderplatz and the Epilogue will be projected consecutively in a total of 14 separate spaces. It is also possible to view all parts chronologically in their entirety. This enables the viewers to make up their own minds how they approach Berlin Alexanderplatz. They may choose how they wish to divide up the extremely long movie, and they are welcome to visit the exhibition numerous times (tickets are valid for repeat visits of KW). Thanks to the simultaneity of the fourteen projections in one space, Fassbinder's impressive visual language as well as his artistically challenging and innovative usage of images becomes clear. One of the highlights in Fassbinder's creative process is no doubt the Berlin Alexanderplatz Epilogue. In it, he constructs collages of multi-layered image- and time levels, whereby he anticipates certain positions in the most current contemporary art production. The show also displays stills derived from all of the 224 film scenes. This is the first time that photographic excerpts and, most especially, drawings from Fassbinder's storyboard for Berlin Alexanderplatz will be shown. The tapes are a particularly personal testimony: Fassbinder recorded his screenplay on them. This show offers the public the first opportunity ever to experience them.

A catalogue (German, ca. 700 pages, 40 Euros) edited by Klaus Biesenbach with essays by Susan Sontag and Rainer Werner Fassbinder accompanies the exhibition; an extensive portion is dedicated to illustrations (ca. 650 film stills): a welcome addition to documenting the extraordinary images of Berlin Alexanderplatz. In addition, the publication contains the complete screenplay, a biography, a bibliography and a filmography.

(KW press release dated March 12, 2007)

Fassbinder: Berlin Alexanderplatz – The Exhibition at PS1

The next venue was New York's MoMA/PS1 (October 21, 2007 - February 2, 2008). At the core of Klaus Biesenbach's concept stands Fassbinder's "... collages of multi-layered image- and time levels, whereby he anticipates certain positions in the most current contemporary art production". This could be sensed in a concentrated manner throughout the PS1 space. Fassbinder's initial stimulus to transpose a novel was nearly made tangible by the location in the New York City borough of Queens, where, even today, one might encounter Döblin's characters in the streets. Thus the film might as well have been shot in Paris, near Place Clichy, or next door to PS1, beside the elevated subway tracks where trains work their way across Jackson Avenue.

One more special feature ought to be mentioned: It was the admirable citizen and art enthusiast Elena Heiss, who, in the 1970s, convinced the New York City administration to transform a former Public School, PS1, into a space where artists and their audiences might meet. And Elena Heiss turned this place into a lively center of contemporary art discourse. In the late 1990s, MoMA director Glen D. Lowry suggested that PS1 become a MoMA-"affiliate", an official branch of the well-established, venerable Manhattan museum. This was more than simply an opportunity for PS1 and its steadily increasing importance.

Since MoMA and PS1 were officially affiliated, an increasing interaction between "young" and "established" art has been established. PS1 focuses on movements that have not quite arrived in the

museums yet, but derive from the here and now. In the case of *Fassbinder: Berlin Alexanderplatz – The Exhibition* this sensation was particularly strong. Although Döblin sets his story about transportation worker Franz Biberkopf in the Berlin of 1928 and thus suggests something different, let it be said: It was here, in Queens, that his story was given concrete, contemporary life. It became a vehicle of exchange between the generations, a conveyor of European culture.

Venues for Berlin Alexanderplatz – The Exhibition 2009 / 2010

Additional venues in Argentina and Russia are being planned.

Venues for Fassbinder's Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered in 2008

- January 19: Mammoth event of Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remasterisé in Annecy, Switzerland.
- April 27: Mammoth event of Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remasterisé Le film somme et l'intégrale, cinéma Métropolis de Charleville-Mézières, France.
- May 28: Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered in Argentina in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, Buenos Aires.
- October 25: Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered at the São Paulo film festival and release of the DVD edition (Versatile Home Video).

Venues for Fassbinder's Berlin Alexanderplatz: Remastered in 2009

- April 09, 10: Yale University, USA.
- April 11, 12: Wesleyan University, USA.
- A publication with papers by Leo. A. Lensing and other speakers is planned for 2010 (to be edited by Professor Brigitte Peucker).

Apropos: Goethe-Institut and RWFF

We do want to stress our continuous collaboration with the Goethe-Institut. It began in 1992 in Berlin on the occasion of the first comprehensive Fassbinder retrospective and continued as a concrete cooperation during a subsequent Fassbinder exhibition, exclusively conceived for the worldwide Goethe-Instituts. One highpoint in our continued cooperation was definitely the first complete RWF retrospective in the USA in 1997. The Goethe-Institut coordinated the tour that lasted until the end of 1998 and included more than 50 venues throughout North America.

Our cooperation has become more intense over the last few years, most particularly in non-commercial areas, frequently organized in-situ by the respective Goethe-Institut abroad and its local partners. One simply needs to reiterate that in the early 1970s Fassbinder was a magnet when it came to events abroad, and the Goethe-Institut plays a major role in this development. Due to the changes in the Institut's projection routines, where 16mm copies are being replaced by DVDs, the Goethe-Institut has acquired ten of Fassbinder's film titles and one documentary with a total of nine different subtitle versions (English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian). The institutions abroad are using these materials for internal events and study purposes.

A word of praise needs to be said in the direction of the Goethe-Institut headquarters in Munich and the person in charge there for licenses, Hans Kohl. This is particularly true with regards to Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered.

Together with Bavaria Media, our sponsors and our supporters, we have not shied away from the money it cost to restore the film and to produce an appealing 35mm film copy. To be specific: For fifteen-and-a-half hours of film, a total of sixty-three rolls of film were produced. We did not do this because we are crazy, but because we know that one of the most outstanding examples of German cinematic history – made with traditional film – was entrusted to us and we want to make sure that it will also be possible in the future to see it as a real film. There were fierce discussions as to whether a big film festival in Latin America would be able to convey the original quality sufficiently if they were to project a DVD on a large screen. We were not confident and were able to convince GI to acquire

35mm cinema copies for big events. This shows that the physical experience of cinematic art has not been entirely relegated to the digital realm and that the Goethe-Institut is open to persuasive arguments.

Fassbinder in the Theater: A Brief Look Back

In the last years, Fassbinder's original plays are being performed, and his cinematic subjects are increasingly adapted for the stage. If we were to offer a comprehensive overview of the last 25 years, this would turn out to be a long text, too daunting for our newsletter readers. It can, however, be stated that since the 1992 retrospective in Berlin, we see an immense increase in the number of performances. We also notice that work on his theatrical opus stimulates discourse about his cinematic oeuvre. In 1996, a Fassbinder theater renaissance began in France with the French premiere of "Only a Slice of Bread", followed by new productions of "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant" (staged in Marseille in 2006 and currently in Paris, 2009).

Plays such as "Katzelmacher", "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant" and "Bremen Freedom" are works Fassbinder adapted for the movies. In addition, they have also been adapted for opera libretti. Even less-well-known plays such as "Preparadise Sorry Now", "Blood on a Cat's Neck", and "The Coffeehouse" after Goldoni are increasingly performed on German and international stages. A persistent trend is the fact that Fassbinder's films may increasingly be seen on stage. This tendency began in 1995 with "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul" (Theater am Halleschen Ufer, Berlin; director: Winni Victor), and continued with "The Merchant of Four Seasons", first performed in 1997 in Hanover (director: Erich Sidler). In the meantime, such works as "In a Year with Thirteen Moons", "The Marriage of Maria Braun", "Lola", "Veronika Voss" and "The Third Generation" have all been adapted for the stage.

Selection of the most beautiful and the most popular theatrical productions of the last years:

- "The Garbage, the City and Death" – The Hague, The Netherlands, 2002 (director: Johan Doesburg; with: Marie-Louise Stheins, Stefan de Walle, Lou Landré, Peter Tuinman, Antoinette Jelgersma, Anniek Pheifer, Nanette Edens, Pauline Greidanus, Dries Vanhegen, Ronald de Bruin, Harry de Wit, Wannie de Wijn, Orlando Mac-Bean).
- "The Marriage of Maria Braun" – world-premiere at Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, 2003 (director: Burkhard Kosuminski).
- "The Marriage of Maria Braun" – Volkstheater, Vienna, 2006 (director: Antoine Uitdehaag).
- "The Marriage of Maria Braun" – Ballhaus Ost, Berlin, 2007 (director: Uwe Moritz Eichler and Philipp Reuter; with Anne Tismer as Maria Braun).
- "Preparadise Sorry Now: Piccoli Episodi die fascismo quotidiano" – guest performance of the Italian group Motus, Berlin, Sophiensäle; performances: November 15 + 16, 2006.
- "The Marriage of Maria Braun" – Kammerspiele, Munich, 2007 (director: Thomas Ostermeier; with Brigitte Hobmeier as Maria Braun; Steven Scharf, Jean-Pierre Cornu, Hans Kremer and Bernd Moss). Invited to Berlin's Theatertreffen 2008, since then performances on tours in Moscow and Prague.
- "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant" – Deutsches Theater, Berlin, 2007 (director: Philip Preuss; stage: Giulia Paolucci; fashion and costumes: Bernhard Wilhelm, Jutta Kraus, Wiebke Warskulat; with Barbara Schnitzler as Petra von Kant, Ursula Staack, Elzemarieke de Vos, Simone von Zglinicki, Birgit Unterweger and V. Tscheplanowa as Marlene).
- Songs "Ich bin, was Du vergessen hast" on the 25th anniversary of RWF's death: *Valery Tscheplanowa sings Fassbinder / Raben*.
- "L'Anarchie en Bavière" ("Anarchy in Bavaria") – Compagnie Théâtre en Question, premiere Théâtre de la Reine Blanche in June 2006 with subsequent venues in France, (director: Stéphane Arnoux).
- "In a Year with Thirteen Moons" – Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg, 2008 (director: Andreas Bode; Jürgen Uter is the extraordinary lead Erwin / Elvira).
- "Water Drops on Burning Rocks" – Berlin-Kreuzberg, Production: Oper Dynamo West, staged in an abandoned supermarket, 2008 (director: Franziska Seeberg; actors: Franziska Dick, Sabine Hill, Dominik Kleinen and Walter Sprungala; singer: Stefan Paul and Ernestine Tzavaras).
- "Love is Colder Than Death" – Beijing-premiere in 2008 (director Meng Jinghui). Goethe-Institut Beijing celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008. This occasioned a comprehensive program of exhibitions, panel discussions, and theater- as well as film performances in Beijing's art quarter "Art Space 798".

Archive of Fassbinder's Writings

We must not forget to mention the work of Dr. Daniel Kletke, our curatorial team member and long-time head of the RWF archives that contain Fassbinder's handwritten manuscripts. Over years,

he has catalogued and inventoried, digitized and annotated Fassbinder's written oeuvre and implemented systems, including strict climate control, to store and to identify the multiple materials kept in our archives. Without this thorough foundation, evidenced by an elaborate database, most scholarly research would have been impossible, and source materials used for numerous purposes could not have been consulted.

It is our task to produce a scholarly-critical edition of the writings – including unpublished materials – in the coming years. In order to accomplish this, we will have to find public and private financial aid. Given the scope and the importance of this undertaking, we envision that this will take some time.

Scholarly Contributions

Apart from keeping, preserving, and conveying Fassbinder's ideas, RWFF continuously supports scholars and students of the artist and his oeuvre in their work. The estate archives offer the authentic source for all scholarship. Extensive RWF-relevant press clippings derived from the realms of biography and film supplement the primary sources. Thanks to an abundance of materials collected over almost forty years, the work's changing reception in the press's cinema and art-and-leisure sections can be most impressively documented.

The majority of scholarly works focus on the *BRD trilogy* and its inherent motifs including post-war Germany and the changing image of women. Another focus is the literary adaptation *Effi Briest* with its diverse vantage points variously reconsidered for the current discourse. Investigations of Fassbinder's melodramas prove to be preferred subjects for comparative studies with works by Douglas Sirk, who was a model for many of them. In numerous German departments of leading international universities such as the Sorbonne in Paris, Yale University or the University of Cambridge, dissertations have been completed and later published as books.

Selection of scholarly publications on RWF in various fields as well as RWFF-projects:

- Understanding Rainer Werner Fassbinder: Film as Private and Public Art, Wallace Staedman Watson, 1996.
- Bilder Lesen: Visionen von Liebe und Politik bei Godard und Fassbinder, Anne Marie-Freybourg, 1996.
- Film als Geschichtsschreibung bei Rainer Werner Fassbinder – Darstellung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland anhand ausgewählter Frauenfiguren in der "BRD-Trilogie:" Die Ehe der Maria Braun (1978), Lola (1981) und Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss (1982), Sabine Pott (2002).
- Der deutsche Science-Fiction-Film – Annäherung an ein vernachlässigtes Genre, Bernd Perplies, 2003 (about *World on a Wire*).
- Modelle der Literaturverfilmung im neuen deutschen Film: Fassbinders "Fontane Effi Briest" und Schlöndorffs "Homo Faber", Helmut Wagenpfeil, 2003.
- Vom literarischen zum filmischen Diskurs: Fassbinders Berlin Alexanderplatz als Beispiel einer Neuschöpfung, Andreas Adebahr, 2003.
- Unnatural Acts: Sexuality, Film and the Law, Andrew Webber, 2004.
- Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German Theatre, David Barnett, 2005.
- Transgression und Trauma bei Pedro Almodóvar und Rainer Werner Fassbinder: Gender – Memoria – Visum, Bernhard Chappuzeau, 2005.
- Das Thema der Freiheit in Rainer Werner Fassbinders Theater, Benoît Ellerbach, 2006.
- Personal Experience and the Media, Klaus Ulrich Militz, 2006.
- Desiderata in the archives of the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation – implementation of a press documentation for the entire oeuvre; example chosen: the film *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Bastian Follmann, 2007.
- Das Identitätsproblem in den Melodramen von Rainer Werner Fassbinder – Aus der Sicht interaktionistischer Sozialisations-theorien, Stefan Hans-Ludwig Pulster, 2008.
- Wunderknabe – Sudelkind? Öffentliche Meinung in Leben und Werk von Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Theresa Valentin, 2008.

New Projects 2008 - 2010 – World on a Wire: New Master

2010 will be marked by two jubilees: RWF's 65th birthday and Michael Ballhaus's 75th. This occasion gives rise to rediscover an early, by now largely forgotten work they completed together in 1973: the two-part science fiction film *World on a Wire*, realized for the German TV station WDR. The movie is based on US-writer Daniel F. Galouye's novel "Simulacron 3" (1964). He is unanimously

viewed as the first person to describe “virtual reality”, in which he bases his thrilling parable about our world with special emphasis on society and politics.

Even though seemingly “just” a TV-production, *World on a Wire*’s significance for the history of German film and Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s entire oeuvre is multifaceted and can hardly be overestimated. *World on a Wire* is one of the early works for the WDR and without doubt – beside *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Eight Hours Don’t Make a Day* – among his most important works for TV.

Back in 1993, the WDR loaned RWFF the original reversal film. This enabled us to preserve the faded original material by producing a 35mm internegative directly from the 16mm original material. Meanwhile, we have acquired the novel rights and are able to explore the film in all medias, except for German TV. We have clarified other subsidiary rights and we have been able to address the financing of the digital master. We are optimistic that we can complete this project. We want to express our gratitude to these partners for their promise of financial aid and for their ongoing support and loyalty: The Museum of Modern Art, Carlotta Films, and the medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg.

We will share upcoming news regarding all further activities on our website.

Instead of an Epilogue

Much has happened since we founded RWFF in 1986: Not only are we subjected to the statutes of a not-for-profit foundation in our tasks, goals and our responsibilities; new developments always present themselves as challenges.

Although the years 2005 to 2008 were special in every way, they were also years of trial. For one thing, Annemarie Abel, now nearly fourteen years at RWFF’s side, overcame an unpredictable physical impediment in the bravest possible manner; then, there were irritations, dissent and contrary views regarding our work just three months after the release of Fassbinder’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: Remastered in 2007. Whereas the trigger for the irritations was unfair, and the charges untrue, the ensuing discussions were extensive and ultimately fair and resulted in broad public attention. We began to realize that the fruits of our work and the support we get from around the world cannot always be communicated at the right moment. This is especially true when success is greeted by uncontrollable envy. It is indeed a human weakness but a rather odious one with regards to its effects.

Therefore, the following email, dated July 31, 2008, was particularly touching to us:

Hello ... I just arrived in Germany yesterday and they told me about a letter (...) that supposedly circulated; they said that I was among those who signed it. Neither do I know such a pamphlet nor did I ever sign or support something negative about you. As you know, I have been living in Los Angeles for thirty years now. I think your work for the Fassbinder Foundation is terrific, and my feeling is that our relationship is 100% amicable and always only positive. All my love ULLI LOMMEL

All my very best regards to all of you,
Juliane Lorenz
and the RWFF Team,

Berlin / New York, February 2009

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