

 61 [■] Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

THE FATHERLESS

a film by
marie kreutzer



the fatherless



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■ short synopsis

They never expected Kyra to turn up again. The two brothers and their sister, brought together when their father dies, are stunned by the appearance of their sister Kyra, who vanished over twenty years ago during the breakup of the hippie commune where they were all born. She is like a stranger to them now... but when she discovers that her very existence has been kept secret, she starts to uncover old mysteries. And soon all the brothers and sisters find themselves unearthing the roots of their childhood memories they had suppressed in order to survive.

In her debut feature film Marie Kreutzer embarks upon an intriguing and disturbing journey into the past, a gripping study of belonging and solitude, bonds and freedom.

A production of

Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion GmbH

Witcraft Szenario OG - Robert Buchschwenter / Ursula Wolschlager

In co-operation with KGP – Kranzelbinder Gabriele Production GmbH

Featurefilm: Austria 2011
Genre: Drama
Format: 35mm / color / 1:2,35
Language: German
Sound: Dolby Digital
Length: 104 min

World Premiere: 13. February 2011, 61. International Filmfestival Berlin, Section PANORAMA SPEZIAL

Release Austria: 8. April 2011

With financial support of:



synopsis



■ the fatherless

A large, dilapidated house somewhere in the country. Hans (Johannes Krisch), who is being nursed by his much younger partner Anna (Marion Mitterhammer), is dying. His son Niki (Philipp Hochmair), a doctor who lives in Munich, arrives at Hans' deathbed just in time. But Niki does not get what he had expected from Hans: a belated expression of approval and love.

Shortly after Hans dies, his other children, who are now grown up, arrive: Vito (Andreas Kiendl), an extrovert and rather directionless idealist; the much younger Mizzi (Emily Cox) who suffers from a neuro-physical disorder; and someone nobody had expected to see: Kyra (Andrea Wenzl), Hans' daughter, born in the heyday of the alternative living/life/love community. Niki and Vito haven't seen each other since the "hippies with the vegetable patch" – as the second generation refer to their parents – fell out 23 years ago, leading to the break-up of the living community. Kyra was eight years old at the time and was thrown out with her mother, whose presence had become undesirable. This was shortly after Mizzi, Hans and Anna's daughter, was born. Now Kyra finds out that her younger half-sister was never told about her existence.

As her dead father cannot answer any of her questions – why he never replied to the many letters she wrote him, for example – Kyra wants to leave immediately and get away from this place of denial and rejection. However, her curiosity about the living part of her past leads her to change her mind and stay: she wants to learn more about her estranged sister and spend time with the brothers she has not seen for so many years.

Meeting Niki again particularly awakens a feeling of deep attachment in Kyra, an attachment that ended suddenly as their carefree childhood relationship was broken apart. However, the cautious tenderness developing between them is overshadowed by Niki's role in Kyra's expulsion years ago, a responsibility that is never discussed openly. And by a secret that, for various reasons, none of the siblings want to talk about – something that happened at the same time as the commune was breaking up.

Everybody refuses to speak about why Kyra has been erased from the family's collective memory – and this entices Mizzi to dig into the family history in search of clues. Her questions disturb the fragile group structure and unearth memories: the subjective echoes of their childhood bear testimony to wild freedom on the one hand, and a longing for love and closeness on the other, as well as the ambivalent nature of the relationships between the children. Mizzi's questions gradually reveal a fateful incident that happened shortly after Mizzi was born and still has a traumatic effect on her sister and brothers.

By telling the story on two different time levels, THE FATHERLESS paints the picture of a threadbare family structure and deals with the question of how to define relationships when family is not a predefined notion, examining what it is like to be torn between closeness and distance, commitment and estrangement.

the team



■ cast

Vito	Andreas Kiendl
Kyra	Andrea Wenzl
Mizzi	Emily Cox
Niki	Philipp Hochmair
Anna	Marion Mitterhammer
Miguel	Sami Loris
Sophie	Pia Hierzegger

and Johannes Krisch as **Hans**

Ossi	Axel Sichrovsky
Kyra's mother	Seraphine Rastl
Vito's mother	Susanne Weber
Niki's parents	Hille Beseler Daniel Doujenis
Kyra as a child	Kitty Khittl
Niki as a child	Nikolaus Wabitsch
Vito as a child	Alexander Wychodil
Commune members	Sabine Friesz Markus Hamele Tom Hanslmaier Sandy Lopicic Doris Schretzmayer Dominik Warta
Mr Wippel Sr.	Rupert Lehofer

■ crew

Script writer & director	Marie Kreutzer
Director of photography	Leena Koppe
Production design	Martin Reiter
Costume design	Veronika Albert
Make-up/hair stylist	Sam Dopona
Editing	Ulrike Kofler
Casting	Rita Waszilovics
Sound & sound design	Odo Grötschnig

Music	David Hebenstreit
Sound editing	Howard Bargroff
Production manager	Gottlieb Pallendorf
Line producer	Johanna Scherz
Co-producer	Gabriele Kranzelbinder
Producers	Franz Novotny Alexander Glehr Ursula Wolschlagler Robert Buchschwenter

director



■ marie kreutzer / writer & director

Born in 1977, in Graz, Styria (Austria), lives and works in Vienna

biography

secondary school in Graz, an alternative school with a focus on the arts

Studied Scriptwriting & Dramaturgy at the Vienna Film Academy under Professor Walter Wippersberg; graduated with honours, degree thesis on "The Dramaturgy of the Short Feature Film"

Script & continuity supervisor for several movie and TV productions

- 2003-2007** Script editor for "Sendung ohne Namen" (ORF/Neue Sentimental Film)
2005 Cine Styria Grant for the script "Die Vaterlosen" (THE FATHERLESS)
since 2007 Board member of the Drehbuchverband Austria and Drehbuchforum Vienna
since 2008 Member of the Austrian Film Institute's advisory board for script development

films (writer & director)

- 2011** "Die Vaterlosen" ("The Fatherless"), feature, 104 min
2009 "Ingrid", short feature film, 12 min
2008 "Punsch noel", short, 10 min, Diagonale 08, Vienna Independent Shorts
2007 "Weihnachtsdienst", documentary, 25 min, "Kreuz & Quer"/ORF, Metafilm
2006 "White Box" feature, 27 min, based on a story by Siri Hustvedt; Diagonale 07: Thomas Pluch Script Grant; Premiers Plans Angers 08
2005 "7 Todsünden/Trägheit" documentary, 25 min, "Kreuz & Quer"/ORF, Metafilm
2002 "un peu beaucoup", feature, 34 min, Diagonale 03, zscreened at numerous festivals,
3rd Prize: short cuts cologne 03, arte, 3sat
2000 "Cappy leit" feature, 17min, Diagonale 01, screened at numerous festivals,
1st Prize: Kids & Youth competition at the Short Film Festival Oberhausen 01
1st Prize: the Students' Script Competition, Vienna Film Academy, ORF-Kunststücke, arte, 3sat

Films (script writer, selection)

- "Das Fräulein" (feature film, Switzerland/Germany 2006, directed by Andrea Staka; Golden Leopard for Best Film, Locarno 2006; Swiss Film Prize for Best Screenplay), script co-writer
- "Doof" (feature film, Germany 2009, directed by Ulrike Kofler), script
- "Cure" (feature, project development, directed by Andrea Staka), script

director

■ director's statement

For me THE FATHERLESS is an authentic and very personal story told in lively and colourful pictures. This colour represents renewal, even though the film starts with a dying man. The narrative focuses very closely on the characters and is based on their experiences and their points of view.

After the death of their father, the four main characters embark on a short but rather disturbing journey into their common past: a mosaic of emotionally tinted and ambivalent memories of their father, the dominant figure in a rather unusual family structure, who both held everything together and tore the community apart. The content, the atmosphere and the visual elements of the film deal with these opposites: community and estrangement, relationship and freedom.

The process of realising the project was a constant search for a balance between melancholy and cheerfulness, both in visual terms and when working with the cast.

The most challenging and intriguing aspect about making this film was working with such a large and wonderful cast and creating the authentic and vivid picture of the unconventional family that is portrayed in the film.

THE FATHERLESS begins with a loss and ends with a new beginning. Family is not only a legal entity or a biological bond. Family is what you create.

Marie Kreutzer, January 2011



main cast



■ andreas kiendl

as "vito"

Born in Graz, Austria, Andreas Kiendl studied at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. From 1996 he had engagements at the Theater im Bahnhof (TiB) in Graz, the steirische herbst festival and Landestheater Linz. He made his film debut in 2003 in "Die Verhaftung des Johann Nepomuk Nestory", and since then has acted in a variety of films including "Nacktschnecken" (directed by M. Glawogger), "Antares" (directed by G. Spielmann), "Slumming" (directed by M. Glawogger), "Kotsch" (directed by H. Köpping), "Dead in 3 Days" and "Dead in 3 Days 2" (directed by A. Prochaska), "Die unbeabsichtigte Entführung der Frau Elfriede Ott" (directed by A. Prochaska) and "Furcht & Zittern" (directed by R. Schwabenitzky). Most people recognised him from his appearances in the TV series "SOKO Kitzbühel" where he plays Inspector Klaus Lechner.

■ andrea wenzl

as "kyra"

Andrea Wenzl was born in Styria, Austria, and studied performing art at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. Since graduating she has mainly worked at the Schauspielhaus Graz where she performed in the plays "Verbrennungen" (directed by A. Badora), "Lilom" (directed by V. Bodó) and "Imperium" by Götz Spielmann. Since 2003 she has performed over 30 roles, and in 2008 she was nominated for the Nestroy Award for Best Actress for her portrayal of Alice in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" (directed by V. Bodó). Her first film appearance came in the Jakob M. Erwa film "Heile Welt", which won the Grand Prize of the Diagonale Film Festival in 2007. Wenzl has been living in Vienna since autumn 2010 and works at the Volkstheater Vienna

■ emily cox

as "mizzi"

The British stage and film actress was born in Vienna and studied at the Max-Reinhardt-Seminar. Her first stage contract was at Theater in der Josefstadt in 2008, and she made her film debut in Tobias Dörr's short film "Verwehte" alongside with Susanne Lothar and Ulrich Mühe. For her portrayal of the girl in it, she won the award for Best Actress at the International Film Festival run by the Vienna Film Academy. She has also acted in TV productions such as "Molly und Mops" (directed by M. Karen), "Hepzilah" (directed by R. Sigl), "Polizeiruf 110" and "Schnell ermittelt", and gave a brilliant performance playing the leading role of Gretchen Dutschke in the TV docu-drama "Dutschke", which had its first run on ZDF in April 2010. Cox notched up another great success when she played the lead role in Marvin Kren's "Rammbock", which won the Max Ophüls Award in 2010. She recently finished filming "Wie man leben soll" based on a novel by Thomas Glavinic and directed by David Schalko.

■ philipp hochmair

as "niki"

Philip Hochmair was born in Vienna and studied at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna under Klaus Maria Brandauer and at the National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris. He had engagements at the Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Staatstheater Hannover, Volksbühne Berlin, Schauspielhaus Zürich and for some years at the Burgtheater Vienna. At the moment he is a company member at the Thalia Theater Hamburg. Despite his affinity for the stage, he has also featured in a variety of film and TV productions since he began his career. On TV he has appeared in various episodes of series including "Tatort", "Bella Block" and "SOKO Donau," as well as the docu-drama "The Manns – Novel of a century". His cinema appearances include roles in Hans Steinbichler's "Winter Journey" and Oliver Hirschbiegel's "The Experiment". His most recent film appearances were in Sabine Derflinger's "Tag & Nacht" (2010) and Anré Erkau's "Arschkalt" (2011)

main cast



■ marion mitterhammer

as “anna“

Marion Mitterhammer was born in Styria and graduated in performing art from the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. After her first engagements at the theatre in Baden-Baden, at the Salzburg Festival, and at Theater in der Josefstadt, she acted in the TV mini-series “The Perfect Scoundrel“, directed by Bern Fischerauer. She was awarded Newcomer of the Year 1994 for her appearance in the series, and consequently received numerous roles in, for example, “Tatort“ and “Quintett Komplet“ by Wolfgang Murnberger. She also appeared in various ambitious European films. In 2003 she starred in Barbara Albert’s “Free Radicals“ and in 2005 in Matthias Luthardt’s award-winning degree project “Ping Pong“, which premiered at the Semaine de la Critique in Cannes. For her role in this film, where she played an austere and sensual mother and aunt, she was nominated for Best Actress at the 2007 German Film Awards. After the Nouvelle Vague icon Philippe Garrel saw Mitterhammer playing Klimt’s sister alongside John Malkovich in the movie “Klimt“ (directed by Raoul Ruiz), he cast her for his film “La Frontiere de l’Aube“, which premiered at the Cannes competition in 2008. Recently she played Mother Kolostrum in David Schalko’s “Wie man leben so“.

■ sami loris

as “miguel“

Sami Loris studied acting at the Baden-Württemberg Film Academy in Ludwigsburg and at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna. From 2001 to 2004 he featured in various plays including “Der stumme Diener“, “Sexual Perversity in Chicago“, “Manhattan Medea“ and “Parasiten“. He also featured in various film and TV productions, playing the leading role in “SOKO Leipzig – Spezial“, in Til Schweiger’s “Rabbit without Ears 2“ and Wolfgang Murnberger’s “Mein bester Feind“. He also starred in “Luft anhalten“ (directed by M. Rittmannsberger), “Scherben im Zucker“, “Man beschuldige niemanden“ (both directed by J. Sarmiento) and “Must Love Death“ (directed by A. Schaap).

■ pia hierzegger

as “sophie“

The Styrian actress, author and director is, among other things, a member of the Graz-based independent theatre company Theater im Bahnhof. She starred in the film productions “Nacktschnecken“, “Contact High“ (both directed by M. Glawogger), and “The Bone Man“ based on a novel by Wolf Haas (directed by W. Murnberger). With her play “vernetzt denken“, Hierzegger won the Augsburg Stücke competition in 2007.

■ johannes krisch

as “hans“

Since 1998 the Austrian actor Johannes Krisch has been a busy member of the Burgtheater ensemble. He has worked with directors such as Claus Peymann, Jürgen Flimm, Leander Haussmann, Karlheinz Hackl and Paulus Manker. He also had engagements at the Salzburg Festival and at the Landestheater Liechtenstein. In addition, Krisch has acted in various TV and film productions: “Bauernopfer“ (directed by W. Murnberger), “In another Lifetime“ (directed by E. Scharang), “Böses Erwachen“ (directed by U. Egger), “Der schwarze Löwe“ (directed by W. Murnberger) and “Isenhart“ (directed by H. Thurn). He played the leading part in Götz Spielmann’s film “Revanche“, which was nominated for the Foreign Language Academy Award (Oscar) in 2009. While filming “The Fatherless“, Krisch also shot “Kottan ermittelt – rien ne va plus“ (directed by Peter Patzak).

company profile



■ novotny & novotny filmproduktion GmbH

Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion, located in Vienna, Austria, has been realising cinema and TV projects since 1995. Two separate departments for film and advertising produce feature films, documentaries and TV series, on the one hand, and promotional and corporate films on the other. In addition to international co-productions with companies in Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and Eastern Europe, our diverse repertoire of productions has also included several low-budget debut films. Feature film productions by Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion have been screened at international festivals in Berlin (Berlinale), Locarno, St. Sebastian, Montreal and Moscow and at various important competitions. Numerous national and international awards and the commercial success of the films across the world bear testimony to our consistently high-quality work.

Filmographie Kinoproduktionen (Auswahl):

DIE VATERLOSEN Marie Kreutzer, AT 2011, feature (Berlinale 2011 - Panorama)
POWDER GIRL Phil Trill, GB/DE/AT, feature (release date: March 2011)
BARYLLI'S BAKED BEANS Gabriel Barylli, AT 2011, feature (release date: March 2011)
JUD SÜSS - FILM OHNE GEWISSEN Oskar Roehler, AT/DE 2010, feature (Berlinale 2010 - Official Competition)
BLUTSFREUNDSCHAFT Peter Kern, AT 2010, feature (Berlinale 2010 - Panorama)
KLEINE FISCHE Marco Antoniazzi, AT 2009, feature (Diagonale 2009 - Audience Award)
HEILE WELT Jakob M. Erwa, AT 2007, feature (Diagonale 2007, - Best Film, Filmfest Oldenburg 2007 - Best Film)
AUF BÖSEM BODEN Peter Koller, AT 2007, feature (Buenos Aires Red Blood 2007 - Best Film, Best Director)
KARULA Rajko Grlic, BiH/SLO/MK/SRB/GB/HU/FR/AT 2006, feature (Festiroia IFF - FIRPRESCI Preis)
KELLER - TEENAGE WASTELAND Eva Urthaler, AT/DE/IT 2005, feature (Locarno IFF, Max Ophüls Preis - Best young actor)
SUMMER IN THE GOLDEN VALLEY Srdjan Vuletic, BiH/FR/GB/AT 2003, feature (Rotterdam IFF - Tiger Award)
GORI VATRA Pjer Zalica, BiH/ AT/TR/FR 2003, feature (Locarno IFF - Silver Leopard)
O11 BEOGRAD Michael Pfeiffenberg, AT/SRB 2003, feature (Max Ophüls Prize)
YU Franz Novotny, AT 2003, feature (Moscow IFF)
THE PUNISHMENT Goran Rebic, AT 2000, documentary feature (Diagonale 2000 - Best Film)
SLIDIN', ALLES BUNT UND WUNDERBAR Barbara Albert, Michael Grimm, Reinhard Jud, AT 1998 (Karlov Vary, Rotterdam)

company profile



■ witcraft szenario OG

WITCRAFT SZENARIO OG developed the feature film THE FATHERLESS, written and directed by Marie Kreutzer, and realised the project in cooperation with the executive producer, Novotny&Novotny Filmproduktion.

Script editor, producer and writer Ursula Wolschlag and script editor, university lecturer and writer Robert Buchschwenter established WITCRAFT in 2008. The company provides services in script consulting and script and project development with a focus on:

- Developing fictional and documentary film projects for cinema and TV together with scriptwriters. In addition to THE FATHERLESS, these projects include the documentary GANGSTER GIRL by Tina Leisch, which had a successful cinema release in 2009 and was recently included in the DVD collections "Der Österreichische Film" and "Home Stories – 20 österreichische Dokumentarfilme". Four other projects are currently under development and will soon be realised with executive producers as buy-out or co-productions.
- Script and production consultation for scriptwriters and producers in Austria and other German-speaking countries as well as English, Russian and Italian-speaking countries.
- Creating customized training and workshop programmes on how to develop ideas and scripts and realise them professionally. Witcraft initiated the script workshop DIVERSE GESCHICHTEN, which is aimed at scriptwriters from migrant backgrounds and helps them develop their scripts for feature films and find the right partners. DIVERSE GESCHICHTEN was nominated for the Austrian State Prize for Adult Education 2010.

company profile



■ KGP kranzelbinder gabriele production

In 2007, six years after Amour Fou Filmproduktion was established, Gabriele Kranzelbinder left the company to start her own production company, KGP Kranzelbinder Gabriele Production, focusing on international co-productions of European auteur films.

KGP tells stories and supports artistic visions.

KGP refuses to be squeezed into predefined genre and format categories.

KGP focuses on producing high-quality auteur films for both the national and international market.

KGP regards itself as a partner for creative minds, sponsors and clients.

Filmografie (Auswahl)

TENDER SON – THE FRANKENSTEIN PROJECT, Kornél Mundruczó, 2010 HU/GER/A Feature (Official competition Cannes 2010)

CARLOS, Olivier Assayas, 2010 FR/GER Feature (KGP Service production) (Official competition Cannes 2010)

MUEZZIN, Sebastian Brameshuber, 2009 A Documentary (Official competition Karlovy Vary IFF 2009)

DUST, Max Jacoby, 2009 A/Lux Feature (Official competition Pusan IFF 2009)

ZARA, Aytan Mutlu Saray, 2008 A/Swi/NL Feature (Middle East IFF 2008)

UNIVERSALLOVE, Thomas Woschitz, 2008 A/Lux/SRB Feature (Toronto IFF 2008, Max Ophüls Preis 2009)

LOOS ORNEMENTAL, Heinz Emigholz, 2008 A/G Documentary (Berlinale 2007 – Forum des Jungen Films)

LOVE AND OTHER CRIMES, Stefan Arsenijevic, 2008 SRB/G/A/SLO Feature (Berlinale 2008 - Panorama Spezial)

SILENT RESIDENT, Christian Frosch 2007 A/G/Lux/HU Feature (Toronto IFF 2007)

FLY BY ROSSINANT, Jacky Stoev 2008 A/Bul/Ser Feature (Sofia FF 2006)

EZRA, 2007 Newton I Aduaka F/A Feature (Sundance FF 2007, Grand prize Etalon d'Or de Yennenga - FESPACO 2007)

SCHINDLER´ HOUSES, Heinz Emigholz 2007 A/G Documentary (Berlinale 2007 – Forum des Jungen Films)

TAXIDERMIA 2006 György Pálfi H/A/F Feature (Festival de Cannes 2006 – Un Certain Regard)

CRASH TEST DUMMIES 2005 Jörg Kalt A/G Feature (Berlinale 2005 – Forum des Jungen Films)

GIRLS AND CARS - in a colored new world 2004 Thomas Woschitz A Feature (Festival de Cannes 2004 – Semaine de la Critique)

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