



OFFICIAL SELECTION
**INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM**
2016



FADO

a film by Jonas Rothlaender



dffb

rbb¹

Leucht
stoff

medienboard
Berlin-Brandenburg



PRIMEIRA
IDADE

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LOGLINE

Young doctor Fabian travels to Lisbon to win back his ex-girlfriend Doro. While the two of them are gradually getting closer again they are being haunted by their fears. Fabian's jealousy once again puts their relationship to the test.





SHORT FACTS

Germany / Portugal, 2016, feature film

100 minutes, color, digital (ARRI Amira), 1:1,66, DCP 24 fps

Dolby Digital 5.1. Stereo, German/English/Portuguese

with English or German subtitles

A StickUp Film Production in co-production with German Film and Television

Academy Berlin (dff), Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, Primeira Idade and Atara Film

SYNOPSIS

When the young doctor FABIAN (33) sees an uncanny resemblance in the face of a dying patient, he snaps out of his rut. On a whim, he leaves Berlin and travels to Lisbon, where his ex-girlfriend DORO (31) works as an architect. Doro is surprised by his sudden appearance and struggles with her feelings. The two of them had a very intimate, but also painful relationship together.

Fabian fights for Doro. He wants to show her that he has learned from his mistakes and is serious about getting her back. He finds an apartment in Lisbon, starts taking Portuguese lessons and even quits his job in Berlin so he can start a new life with her. Fabian seems to enjoy life more than ever and, unlike in the past, he is able to keep his jealousy under control. Doro falls in love with Fabian all over again.

However, after their first night back together, Fabian's fears and anxieties come back to haunt him. Fabian feels threatened by Doro's close friendship with her charismatic colleague, FRANCISCO (36). Fabian tries to suppress his ever-growing jealousy, but he fails to hide it from Doro and eventually returns to his old ways. In fear of being hurt by Fabian again, she gradually drifts away from him.

During a trip to the Atlantic coast, the tension between Doro and Fabian escalates, and the couple is driven apart. When Fabian finally realizes that he must let go of Doro to conquer his fears, he makes a discovery that launches him into a full-blown nightmare.



LUISE HEYER AS DORO

HÄRTE (2014, Rosa von Praunheim)

EIN GESCHENK DER GÖTTER (2013, Oliver Haffner)

JACK (2013, Edward Berger)

WESTWIND (2010, Robert Thalheim)

GOLO EULER AS FABIAN

TATORT „IM SCHMERZ GEBOREN“ (2015, Florian Schwarz)

DIE VERWANDLUNG (2014, Igor Plischke)

ANDERSWO (2013, Ester Amrami)

KASIMIR UND KAROLINE (2010, Ben von Grafenstein)





OTHER ROLES INCLUDE:

ALBANO JERÓNIMO as Francisco

PIRJO LONKA as Anita

DUARTE GRILO as Nuno

ISABEL ABREU as Maria

SUZANA BORGES as Patricia Saramago

RUI MORRISSON as Ricardo Costa



TEAM

DIRECTOR

Jonas Rothlaender

SCREENPLAY

Jonas Rothlaender
Sebastian Bleyl

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Luis Singer
Dennis Schanz
Ole Lohmann

PRODUCER

Tara Biere

CO-PRODUCERS

Joana Gusmao
Pedro Fernandes Duarte
Robert Morgenstern
Alexander Haßkerl

LINE-PRODUCER

Andreas Louis

PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Diogo Varela Silva
Raquel de Silva

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Alexander Haßkerl

EDITOR

Dietmar Kraus (BFS)

SOUND RECORDIST

Johannes Kaschek

SOUNDDESIGN

Julian Cropp

COSTUME DESIGN

Dorothee Bach

SCENOGRAPHY

Raquel Santos
Marta do Vale
Celeste Lopes Alves
Ricarda Schwarz

MAKE-UP ARTIST

Ria Weber

BIOGRAPHY

JONAS ROTHLAENDER

Born 1982 in Lübeck, Germany. During his school days he wrote short stories which were published in different anthologies. After his graduation in 2003 he shot multiple self-produced shorts and worked as an assistant director for other productions. From 2007 to 2015 he was studying directing at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb). During that time he shot several short films which were presented at numerous festivals. His film THE SHIRT was selected for the Next Generation Short Film Reel and toured festivals worldwide, starting with Cannes in 2011. His first feature-length documentary FAMILIAR CIRCLES premiered at the Max-Ophüls-Preis in Saarbrücken in 2015. It will be released to German cinemas and video on demand platforms in the beginning of 2016.

FILMOGRAPHY

2015 FAMILIAR CIRCLES, 130 min.

Documentary, German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb)
in co-production with Jonas Rothlaender
Festivals: 36. Max Ophüls Preis, 19. Filmfest Schleswig-Holstein,
25. Filmkunst Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

2014 RETURNING, 30 min.

German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb)
Festivals: 56. Nordische Filmtage Lübeck, 10. Achtung Berlin -
New Berlin Film Award

2011 HUNTING GROUNDS, 30 min.

German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb) in co-production
with RBB. Festivals: 53. Nordische Filmtage Lübeck

2010 THE SHIRT, 6 min.

German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb) in Co-Production
with arte. Festivals: 44. Hofer Filmtage, Next Generation Kurzfilmrolle
Cannes 2011, 16. Milano Film Festival



INTERVIEW WITH JONAS ROTHLAENDER

What inspired you to write FADO?

FADO is first and foremost a film about jealousy. I believe everyone has experienced jealousy to some extent in their lives – whether it be on the active or passive end of the spectrum. But the core exploration in the film is about the emotions and the fears that are hidden behind jealousy. Fabian constantly struggles with his fear of betrayal and abandonment. Because of his perception of masculinity, he doesn't allow himself to show any weakness or to discuss his fears. He desperately tries to suppress his emotions and ends up becoming overwhelmed by them. The actual tragedy is that Fabian stands in the way of his own happiness and destroys the love he so longs for in the process. He would rather risk his own demise than to show his emotions.

On first glance, it may appear that the film is a tragic love story between Fabian and Doro. However, their relationship is what in many ways fosters Fabian's inner struggle. Most of all, I'm fascinated by the dynamics that develop during romantic relationships. These dynamics often provoke the question whether what we consider love may actually be nothing more than dependency.

Is the story based on personal events?

Although the film is not autobiographical by any means and Fabian's behavior is somewhat dramatized, I can definitely relate to many of Fabian's inner conflicts and problems. I grew up in a middle-class environment where emotions were often suppressed. This is something I explored in my documentary film, FAMILIAR CIRCLES. There's a saying

that goes something like this: "If you don't want to confront your fears, they will go down in the cellar and lift weights." That is exactly what happens to Fabian. He tries to keep a cool facade of being in control. By avoiding his feelings and fears he only makes everything worse in the process.

What led to your decision to shoot the film in Lisbon?

That is actually based on a personal story that inspired an early version of the script. When I was in my early twenties, I visited my girlfriend at the time in Lyon. Shortly after I arrived, she broke up with me. Not only was I alienated by the sudden distance between the two of us, but there was also the sense of being lost in an unknown place. In retrospect, this situation fascinates me. As I was thinking about the setting for this love story, it was

clear to me that it would have to take place abroad. Shooting in Lisbon was an intuitive decision. What's special about Lisbon for me is the specific atmosphere of the city. I consider it a very meta-physical place. You can't put your finger on what makes it so special. You can only sense it. As this sense of the city constantly changes, it can never be tangible. That is what absolutely fascinates me about Lisbon. Sebastian [Bleyl] and I traveled there a number of times to explore the city more intensely and to find ways to merge it with our story.

The film begins with a striking image of a wave. Why is water such a prominent theme in FADO?

In the beginning, my gut instinct told me that the picture of the wave needed to be included in the film. I didn't know why. I guess you could say it was an intuitive decision.

Later, it was clear to me that the wave represents Fabian's inner struggle. The wave symbolizes Fabian's stewing emotions which he both fears and desperately longs for. At the end of the day, the natural force behind the wave contrasts his obsession to control his emotions.

How were you able to convey feelings of jealousy through pictures?

What I think is fascinating about jealousy and what is particularly cinematic about it is that the mind may create little movies when the imagination runs wild with jealousy. The really insidious thing about these imaginary scenarios is that they can feel very real. We tried to convey this in the film by making the difference between real and imaginary scenes very subtle. The audience finds it just as difficult as Fabian to distinguish between fantasy and reality. This makes the audience participate directly in Fabian's distorted perception.

The storyline of FADO demands an intense performance from the actors. What were the challenges while filming?

From the very beginning the project was tailored to the work with the actors. Everything was focused on the actors in this particular location and that specific story. Because of this, it was important for me to shoot with a small, flexible team and minimal technical equipment. Of course it was not easy for both lead actors, Luise and Golo, to get to the painful core of their roles considering the grueling dynamics of their fictional relationship. Working with them to get there together was the greatest challenge throughout the shooting process for me.



How do the sometimes very explicit sex scenes play into that?

The sex scenes have an important meaning for the plot. Luckily, the actors understood this immediately. Before we started filming, but also on the set, it was extremely important to me to keep the communication with the actors very open and direct. We always talked about the scenes and choreographed the action in detail before we filmed. As we shot the sex scenes, we differentiated between two different types of scenes. The first type portrayed sex as a fragile and vulnerable act for Fabian. The second illustrated Fabian's fears and anxieties of Doro having sex with other men. It was important for me to illustrate Fabian's painful and agonizing perception in this second type as intense and explicit as possible in order to reflect Fabian's jealousy and

fears. I think that, when it comes to sex, men feel a lot of pressure to prove their masculinity. And because of this, there's great potential for an inferiority complex to develop which can be a breeding ground for jealousy itself.

What made you decide to use fado music in the film?

What fascinates me about fado music is the emotion behind it. I have vivid memories of sitting in fado bars and not understanding the lyrics, but being deeply moved by the emotion of the songs. I'm amazed by how fado vocalists can sing in such a visceral way. Using this type of music in the soundtrack provides a strong contrast to Fabian's emotional unavailability. The most difficult thing about using fado music was to not cross the line in making it kitsch or have it fall into a cliché. Going to a fado bar in

Lisbon, may be considered something that tourists do. At the same time, fado music is also an expression of national pride and thus a highly sensitive subject.

STICKUP FILMPRODUKTION

Ole Lohmann, Dennis Schanz, and Luis Singer founded StickUp Films in 2009. Our short films BULLET (2010) and IN THE COUNTRYSIDE (2012) both received the commendation „Prädikat wertvoll“ from the German Filmbewertungsstelle and were shown at the Max-Ophüls Prize, the Interfilm Festival Berlin, and a number of other international film festivals.

In 2013, we co-produced our first feature-length film: BLACK PANTHER. The graduation project of director Samuel Perriard is a sensitive portrayal of the secret love affair between a brother and a sister, set in the Swiss mountainside. The film premiered at the Filmfest Munich and was nominated for the newcomer prize First Steps Award in the category “feature-length fiction film” and for the Studio Hamburg Newcomer Prize.

With our latest feature film production FADO, by Jonas Rothlaender, we aim to build on the success of our first feature. It is another project of a film academy graduate, it is also set in a non-German environment, and it treats a similarly daring topic in a powerful way.



CONTACTS

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