

*Angel Films præsenterer*

# PÅ NÆRT HOLD



**Premiere:** 12. maj 2022

**Længde:** 116 minutter

**Censur:** 11 år

**Instruktør:** Franziska Stünkel

**Premierebiografer:**

Grand Teatret, Øst for Paradis Århus,  
Biffen Aalborg, Café Biografen Odense,  
Nicolai Biograf Kolding, Valby Kino, Café  
Slotsbio Hillerød m.fl.

## Synopsis:

*Østberlin, 1981. Den ambitiøse forsker, Franz, rekrutteres af statens sikkerhedstjeneste og sendes på hemmelig opgave i Vesttyskland. Han tager opgaven til sig med stolthed og gå-på-mod, men begynder efterhånden at betvivle statens værdier og missionens moralske præmis. Hans åbenmundede kritiske holdning til systemet begynder langsomt at skabe problemer for ham og han risikerer at blive dømt for landsforræderi.*

*Filmen er baseret på den sande historie om den sidste henrettelse i det tidlige Østtyskland og er et gribende historisk drama instrueret af Franziska Stünkel. En autentisk skildring af den barske virkelighed der herskede under DDR-styret og dennes ødelæggende indvirkning på individet.*

## Materiale og kontakt:

Trailer og pressemateriale kan hentes på: <https://www.angelfilms.dk/paa-naert-hold>

Kontakt: Peter Sølvsten Thomsen, [peter@angelfilms.dk](mailto:peter@angelfilms.dk)

## **STATEMENT OF DIRECTOR** by Franziska Stünkel

I grew up in a divided country. In western Germany. As an adolescent, I knew the east of Germany from our regular visits to family friends. We have now long since been reunited in this country – and yet we have different pasts, and comprehending them is essential for mutual trust and understanding. Nahschuss shows a particularly sombre aspect of this, the death penalty in the GDR. But Nahschuss is not simply a historical film. In Nahschuss, I wanted to examine the question of how political systems can control and manipulate people, and how individuals behave within such systems.

Ten years ago in a newspaper article I discovered that over 160 executions had been carried out under the death penalty in the GDR up until 1981. This is something barely known to the public even today. I was very moved by this fact when I read about it. I then began my research, and discovered a photograph of Werner Teske, the last person to be executed in the GDR. He was sentenced to death at a secret trial held before a military court – then killed by an “unexpected close-range shot in the back of the head” at the “Central execution site of the GDR”, a converted caretaker’s flat at Leipzig prison. In the GDR, the case was covered up by the state. The body was anonymously cremated under the strictest secrecy.

Werner Teske had been a passionate scientist, was recruited by the GDR’s secret service, and died caught within the web of its network. A photo of him shows a young man with a sensitive, intelligent appearance. It was taken a year before he was executed, and inspired me to make this film, the semi-fictionalised story of his life.

It was important to me for the film to be shot at original locations such as the former Ministry for State Security and the Hohenschönhausen remand prison – historically preserved locations that have retained their aura even today. I am very grateful to the brilliant cast and the great team for the high level of concentration fundamental to bringing the sense of this atmosphere out on set. This focus enabled us all to work together with a great emotional depth during filming.

In the role of Franz Walter (Werner Teske) Lars Eidinger moves between right and wrong, having direction and being lost, perpetrator and victim, closeness and distance, strength and weakness, truth and lies. An enormous complexity that led to Lars Eidinger’s uncompromising embracing of the role.

This film is all about trust. Trust is always also a leap of faith. Trust can be abused – by people, but also by political systems.

I spent nine years researching and writing the script for Nahschuss. At the same time I was also taking photographs for my exhibitions on all continents around the world. During this period, my awareness of how importance knowledge from the past is for understanding the present has become ever more acute – in relation to each of us individually, but also in relation to a society, a country.

Even today, 56 countries around the world still have the death penalty.

## **PRODUCER'S NOTE** by Bettina Wente (Network Movie)

I grew up in Hanover in the strip zone along the border with the GDR. As a child, I watched the GDR's own version of the Little Sandman on TV before bedtime, and later I loved it that all the bands from Berlin came to my hometown, at that time the first town you came to past the internal German border. Sometime later a fellow student wrote his dissertation on fall of the Berlin Wall, entitling it "Moments of Happiness". But this new reunification was less about me and more to do with the old border - and it actually took me a few years before I realised that the end of the GDR also meant that the Federal Republic of Germany as was, the country of my childhood, had also ceased to exist. I only understood how far-reaching this major change had been when I looked back in retrospect – through a process of literary and cinematic reflection.

The fact that Franziska Stünkel, as somebody 'born' as a West German, addressed the topic of the death penalty in the GDR in a style far removed from all the literature of disquiet on the subject, I found immediately exciting. In her screenplay, Franziska succeeds in creating a narrative that goes beyond stereotypes, instead adopting an approach focused on unsentimental concreteness. Franz Walter's life ends due to a bullet ordered by the state. Franziska describes this 'wrong life within the right one' so finely and precisely that the question of the systems by which we are now bound inevitably arises. The shot that kills Franz Walter breaks through the wall of history and reaches us right where we are now. Not just because in 2019 there were more than 25,000 people on death row worldwide awaiting execution. But also because the question of what, and how much, individuals are willing to do – or not to do – in the interest of society has been on everyone's mind for the past few months.

*Nahschuss* portrays Franz's long journey of despair in a totalitarian social system. But the film also has something else to say. It is underpinned by the hope for transformation, for routes out of isolation. This becomes particularly tangible when Franz is sitting alone on the balcony, singing Rio Reiser: "Hold on to your love!"

We would like to thank Sabine Teske for enabling us to make this film with her permission.

## **FRANZISKA STÜNKEL CV**

Franziska Stünkel is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning film director, screenwriter, and art photographer. Following her studies in the Film Class and Art Photography Class at Kunsthochschule Kassel art school and the Academy for Fine Arts in Hannover, she became a masterclass student under Prof. Uwe Schrader.

As a film director and screenwriter, Franziska Stünkel has written and directed five short feature films, two feature-length films and a 15-hour documentary film. Her films have screened in 19 countries and at over 150 international film festivals, where they have received numerous awards, including the Best New Director Award at the WBFF in New York and the Otto Sprenger Director's Award.

Her screenplays have been nominated for several awards, including the Förderpreis Deutscher Film for best German film at the Munich Film Festival and the Prix Genève Europe for best European screenplay.

Her first full-length movie, *Vineta*, is based on the play *Republik Vineta* by Moritz Rinke. As director and screenwriter, Franziska Stünkel addressed the topic of work addiction in the film. Her movie features an impressive cast, including Peter Lohmeyer, Susanne Wolff, Ulrich Matthes, Justus von Dohnanyi and Matthias Brandt. *Vineta* was released theatrically in 2010 as well as on DVD. The movie then aired on ARD, one of the main German public broadcasters. German news magazine *Stern* called the film “cinematic bliss”.

In 2012, Franziska Stünkel also directed a 15-hour documentary film, *Der Tag der Norddeutschen / The Day of the North Germans*. The documentary shows one day in the lives of 121 Germans. Stünkel worked with a 400-strong team, gathering 750 hours of footage on a single day which were edited into the 15-hour film. *The Day of the North Germans* was a major TV event, with German broadcaster NDR Fernsehen transmitting the documentary in its entirety from six a.m. until midnight. Edel Motion released the monumental production on DVD.

The next few years saw Franziska Stünkel as film director and screenwriter working on her second movie, *Nahschuss*, starring Lars Eidinger, Devid Striesow and Luise Heyer. The movie is inspired by the life of Dr. Werner Teske, the last person sentenced to death and executed in the former German Democratic Republic in 1981. The movie will be released in cinemas in 2021.

For her highly acclaimed photographic series, *Coexist*, Franziska Stünkel has been travelling through Asia, Africa, Europe, and America over the past 10 years with her Leica camera, in search of natural reflections in shop windows, which, in their concentration, narrate the coexistence of human life. Franziska Stünkel’s photographs are exhibited in museums and galleries, as well as being represented in private and public collections, including the collection of the Sprengel Museum. The Audi Art Award and the Berlin Hyp Art Award are among the prizes garnered by her works of photography. In 2020, her photo book *Coexist* was published by the Kehrer Verlag. US broadcaster CNN wrote: “In today’s light, these surreal photos of busy metropolises are eerily poignant.”

Franziska Stünkel examines sociopolitical issues in her movies. The photographic series *Coexist* depicts her globe-trotting search for peaceful coexistence.

[www.franziskastuenkel.com](http://www.franziskastuenkel.com)

## LARS EIDINGER CV

Lars Eidinger, born in Berlin in 1976, studied from 1995 to 1999 at the prestigious Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Art in Berlin.

Since 1999 he has been an ensemble member at the Schaubühne theatre in Berlin. His portrayals of **Hamlet** and **Richard III** in the productions of Thomas Ostermeier were internationally acclaimed, and made him one of the most influential actors of the Schaubühne. His most recent theatre work is **Peer Gynt**, produced by him and artist John Bock.

Next to his theatre work, Lars Eidinger has featured in numerous cinema and television productions, including **Alle Anderen** (directed by Maren Ade, 2008), **Goltzius & The Pelican Company** (directed by Peter Greenaway, 2011), **Was bleibt** (directed by Hans-Christian Schmid, 2011), **Tatort – Borowski und der stille Gast** with two sequels (directed by Christian Alvart, 2012, Claudia Garde, 2015, Ilker Catak, 2021), **Clouds of Sils Maria** (directed by Olivier Assayas, 2013), **Familienfest** (directed by Lars Kraume, 2014), **Personal Shopper** (directed by Olivier Assayas, 2015), **SS-GB** (BBC, directed by Philipp Kadelbach, 2015), **Mathilde** (directed by Alexey Utchitel, 2014-15), **Die Blumen von gestern** (directed by Chris Kraus, 2015), TV series **Sense 8** (directed by Lana and Lilly Wachowski), **Maryline** (directed by Guillaume Gallienne, 2016), **Terror** (directed by Lars Kraume, 2016), **High Life** (directed by Claire Denis, 2017), **25 km/h** (directed by Markus Goller, 2017), **Dumbo** (directed by Tim Burton, 2017), **Mackie Messer - Brechts Dreigroschenfilm** (directed by Joachim A. Lang, 2017), **Proxima** (directed by Alice Winocour, 2018), **Persischstunden** (directed by Vadim Perelmann, 2018), TV series **Babylon Berlin** (directed by Tom Tykwer, Hendrik Handloegten, Achim von Borries, 2017-now), **Schwesterlein** (directed by Stéphanie Chuat, Véronique Reymond, 2019) and **Joan Verra** alongside Isabelle Huppert (directed by Laurent Larivière, 2020).

In 2013, Lars Eidinger received the German Film Critics' Prize for Best Actor and, in 2014, won the Grimme Award. In 2017, Eidinger was again nominated for the German TV Prize as Best Actor for **Terror** and **Familienfest**, the latter of which won the prize for Best Film. In 2018, he received the Austrian Film Award for Best Actor and was nominated for the German Film Awards as Best Actor for **Die Blumen von gestern**. In the same year, he received the Ernst Lubitsch Award for the Best Comedic Performance in **25 km/h**, for which he was also given the Bavarian Film Award for Best Actor in 2020.

The film **Schwesterlein** is the Swiss entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 2021 Oscars.

In addition to acting, Lars Eidinger is a musician, photographer and DJ. He lives in Berlin with his family.