

Document Citation

Title	Querelle
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Source	<i>Art Institute of Chicago. Film Center</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Querelle, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1982

QUERELLE

1983, Rainer Werner Fassbinder,
Germany/France, 106 min.

With Brad Davis, Franco Nero,
Jeanne Moreau

7:45

This last film by the brilliant, prolific, and self-destructive director reveals some of the best and worst aspects of his remarkable body of work. Emphasizing through the use of studio sets the heightened artificiality that fascinated Fassbinder late in his career, *QUERELLE* tells the story of tangled and nightmarish erotic passions set in the underworld of the French port of Brest. The script by Fassbinder is based on Jean Genet's infamous novel *Querelle de Brest*, concerning a sailor's discovery of his homosexuality through rape. As in much of Fassbinder's work, sexuality is a force employed ruthlessly to maintain power over others. The sailor Querelle (Davis) visits the waterfront brothel where he engages in a game of dice to sleep with the madam (Moreau). Losing, he must

endure the attentions of her husband instead, an encounter which opens up a new world of previously forbidden attractions and increasingly brutal pleasures, all ruled by the arbitrary laws of the strange establishment in which he finds himself.

Uneven in quality compared with Fassbinder's best work, *QUERELLE* nonetheless has many strong points, including Brad Davis's intense performance. Many Fassbinder regulars contributed to the production, including cameraman Xavier Schwarzenberger. (BS)