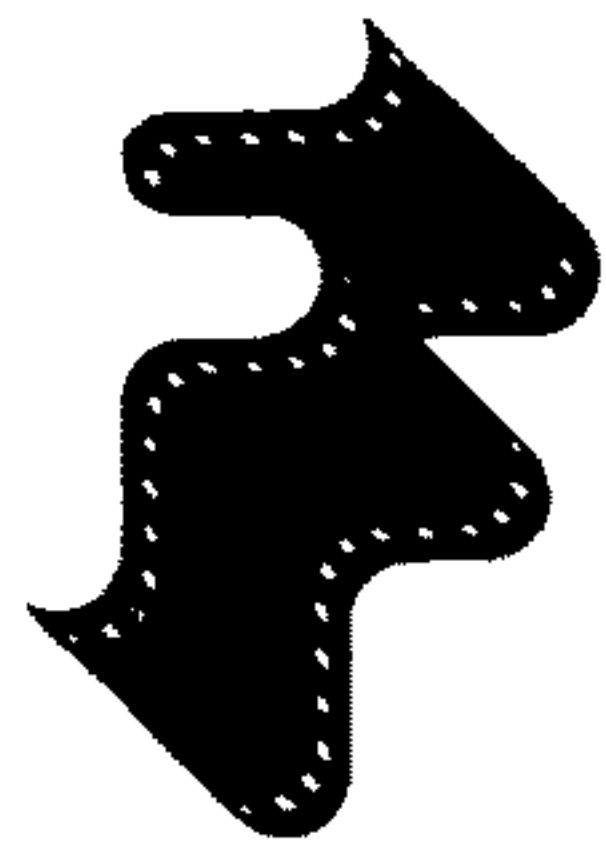


## Document Citation

Title	<b>Film fact sheet: Abschied von gestern</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Toronto International Film Festival</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	3
Subjects	Kluge, Alexander (1932), Halberstadt, Germany
Film Subjects	Abschied von gestern (Yesterday girl), Kluge, Alexander, 1966



**Festival of Festivals**

Toronto October 18-24

# FILM FACT SHEET

ABSCHIED VON GESTERN

YESTERDAY GIRL

(ALEXANDER KLUGE): born in Halberstadt in 1932. Author as well as film-maker, Kluge still practises as a lawyer, is Professor of Law at the University of Frankfurt and is Professor of Film at Ulm. YESTERDAY GIRL is based on a story from his documentary novel, "Attendance List for a Funeral".

Filmography:

Short films:

- 1960 BRUTALITÄT IN STEIN (co-director: Peter Schamoni)  
AMORE  
RENNEN
- 1961 RENNFÄHRER
- 1963 LEHRER IM WANDEL
- 1965 PORTRÄT EINER BEWÄHRUNG
- 1967 FRAU BLACKBURN WIRD GEFILMT

Feature films:

- 1966 ABSCHIED VON GESTERN (Yesterday Girl)
- 1968 ARTISTEN IN DER ZIRKUSKUPPEL: RATLOS (Artists at the Top of the Big Top: Disorientated)
- 1971 DER GROSSE VERHAU (The Big Mess)
- 1974 GELEGENHEITSARBEIT EINER SKLAVIN (Occasional Work of a Female Slave)
- 1975 IN GEFAHR UND GRÖSSTER NOT BRINGT DER MITTELWEG DEN TOD  
(The Middle of the Road is a Very Dead End)
- 1976 DER STARKE FERDINAND (Strong-Man Ferdinand)

From an interview with Alexander Kluge:

"Anita G. was born in a Jewish family which left in the Thirties, and she got her socialization with the experience that there is a form of society which will suppress and kill your family, and eventually yourself. After 1945, this family is honored in Leipzig, in the then Russian zone, later the DDR; and someone who was persecuted by the fascists now behaves like a capitalist and attempts to reacquire what the family thinks makes for happiness. So then Anita's parents - and her story is based on an authentic case history - are persecuted as capitalists, and she goes to the Federal Republic, hoping to find out about her fatherland. But this Federal Republic in no way recognizes the situation in which it actually is.



"The Federal Republic would certainly not exist without the DDR, nor without the Third Reich. And I think someone who has concrete experience of our society's history and who comes into an a-historical society which is pressured not to notice its past will have conflicts. And these conflicts can't be observed on the level of pure common sense, or on the level on which institutions function. That's why the people around Anita G. can't understand why she behaves like a criminal, or why she tries to become happy but doesn't succeed; or why she gives up opportunities and tries to find chances where none exist.

"Another linguistic difficulty is that we have no expression for "what is necessary to do". Our education and our philosophy and our language already mirror false structures. We have expressions for consciousness and for the senses, as if senses were to do with instinct, or were something lower than consciousness. The senses are a substance of consciousness, nothing else, and you can't have consciousness without its substance. And you can't have your senses without organizing them. And so you get left-wing sects who want to achieve pure consciousness; and you get National Socialists who want to achieve "pure instinct", who want to make power and life without consciousness, to think not with the whole brain but with the middle, atavistic part of it. In our sort of society, you're taught that it's always possible to divide everything to use yourself and your capacities partially. But you have virtually no expression for using them all, not in an instrumental way.

"Experience is always a question of a specific situation. In this concrete situation, there is always future, past, and actual present: it's the same. In a mass medium like the cinema, or in art, it seems as if you have a choice. A great deal of art - Proust, for example, or any of the nineteenth-century classic novels - attempts to counter the dominance of the present, to invent a second reality to serve as viceroy to the forgotten or demolished past. That's one choice. The other choice, which is made by television and by the press, is the actuality principle. It's also the choice made by the film camera, which can only photograph something that's present. And I think it's a false choice, because in a concrete situation, such as we actually live in, you can never make that separation: you can never give up the past, you can never exclude the future. Which is why I prefer the past or the future

to the present. Whether I'm making a science-fiction film or a historical film, using inserts, making a documentary or mixing fiction and non-fiction, it's exactly the same. The three parts which exist in our minds and in our experience are always present. When Freud describes the way a person thinks and feels, he always talks about free association as the elementary unit.

"Grammar, for instance, is one of mankind's most interesting illusions. It's a sort of repression of an experience, like logic, or like rationalism. You have to understand that I'm never against grammar, rationality or logic, it's just that they're only abstractions. In any concrete situation, these abstractions must be reduced to the concrete situation. And that's the province of film. This sort of mass medium film has its basis in people's minds and experience over several thousand years.

"For instance, the title ABSCHIED VON GESTERN (literally, Goodbye to Yesterday) provokes a contradiction. Because you never can say goodbye to yesterday. If you try to, you get as far as tomorrow only to discover yesterday all over again. The whole film is a contradiction of this title."

From an interview with Jan Dawson,  
recorded in July, 1974.