

Document Citation

Title	Cinematheque
Author(s)	John W. Rowberry
Source	<i>Our Paper</i>
Date	1983
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	Fassbinder, Rainer Werner (1945-1982), Bad Wörishofen, Bavaria, Germany
Film Subjects	Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss (Veronika Voss), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1982 Querelle, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1982

John W. Rowberry

CINEMATHEQUE

Since Ranier Werner Fassbinder's death earlier this year, interest in his last three films has risen to a near-fever pitch as the international film community vies for premieres, retrospectives and clamors to assure Fassbinder's fans get a heavy dose of the German's talents. While *Lola*, Fassbinder's masterful period piece set during the Adenauer era in post-war Germany, has received a lion's share of accolades, and deservedly so, his final two films, *Veronika Voss* and *Querelle*, await their day in the sun.

Veronika Voss almost seems on ice; it has been picked up by United Artists Classics for American distribution and it has already won the Golden Bear Award at the 1982 Berlin Film Festival. But when it will be shown is still unclear. Since it opened the New York Film Festival, and has made its American critical debut, it should be expected this fall — while *Lola* is still playing its initial engagement throughout the country.

Querelle, Fassbinder's version of the infamous Jean Genet novel about homosexuals and murder in war-torn France, stands to cause the greatest controversy of all the Gay German director's 41 feature films. Its auspicious premiere at the Venice Film Festival guaranteed it will be treated seriously by the international film community, but what fate it will have in America remains to be seen.

Querelle could stand as Fassbinder's masterpiece. Filmed in English with an international cast (Jeanne Moreau, Brad Davis, Franco Nero, Frank Ripploh), Fassbinder pulled no punches when it came to Genet's explicit, although nearly surrealistic, expression of homosexuality.

Nero and Davis, who had never worked with Fassbinder before, were faced with roles of sexual candor far beyond anything they

had experienced as actors in the cinema before. Fassbinder, in answer to press charges that he was unfairly expecting too much from his cast, said, "I never ask an actor to do more than he is capable of."

Ms. Moreau had the easiest time of the lot with her role in the film, she is a personal friend of the French homosexual novelist Genet.

Besides the world premiere of *Querelle*, the Venice Film Festival also saw two documentaries about Ranier Werner Fassbinder. Dieter Schidor, who produced *Querelle*, also made a documentary about the film production itself and its famous director. Included in his film was a fourteen minute interview with Fassbinder taped just eight hours before the director's death.

Fassbinder's mother, who has herself appeared in a number of her son's films under the name Lilo Pempeit, went to court demanding that the 14-minute interview be cut from the documentary, claiming that the piece of film, shot so near the time of her son's death, would cast an unfavorable light on the events surrounding the death itself. The court agreed, for the present, and Schidor's documentary was seen in its edited version.

Another contemporary of Fassbinder's, Wolf Gremm, showed his documentary, *Portrait of Ranier Werner Fassbinder*, as part of the competition for new films.

Although *Querelle* is the big event of the Venice Film Festival, it is also entered in competition, up against the likes of Wim Wender's new film, *The State of Things* and Paul Mazursky's *Tempest*, the strongest of the international entries.

Veronika Voss, immediately after its New York Film Festival premiere, opened in Paris and West Germany, and was shown

(more)

OUR PAPER/MAGAZINE SAN JOSE, CA

—Hung Tran
August, 1982

privately at the Montreal Film Festival — where, before Fassbinder's death, it was assumed it would first be seen.

Fassbinder's next project was to have been a biographical film based on the life of Rosa Luxemburg, starring Jane Fonda. Currently, that project, also to be produced by Dieter Schidor, is being considered by Margarethe von Trotta, who has just finished her third film, *Heller Wahn*. Von Trotta has literally taken the film community by storm with her first two films, *Sisters* and *Marianne and Juliane*. She had previously worked on her husband's films (Volker Schlöndorff), most notably *Circle of Deceit* and *The Tin Drum*.

Director Frank Ripploh, who appears in Fassbinder's *Querelle* in a cameo role, has had his own hit, *Taxi Zum Klo*, released in Australia, but only after the water sports scene was cut by the censors.

Besides Fassbinder's *Querelle* and *Veronika Voss*, expect to see Wolf Gremm's *Kamikaze 1989* imported from Germany on the strength of Fassbinder starring in the futuristic tale of terrorism. Franco Nero and Frank Ripploh, who appeared in the final Fassbinder film, are also featured in Gremm's project.

Despite the less-than-overwhelming response to his romantic *Endless Love*, director Franco Zeffirelli is happily and

busily at work in Rome on his latest project, an opera-film of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Another Italian, Luigi Cozzi, has just begun to embark on an extravagant myth and muscle epic, *Hercules*, with former "Hulk" Lou Ferrigno in the title role.

An unexpected Christmas treat might well be Sydney Pollack's *Tootsie*, in which Dustin Hoffman plays an unemployed actor who masquerades as a woman to get a role in a soap opera. More than a drag camp role, word has it that Hoffman has created an amazing female character that is going to take his fans and filmgoers in general by surprise. ●



Dustin Hoffman (R) portrays out-of-work actor Michael Dorsey in the film *Tootsie* to be released in December. He lands the lead in a soap opera as "Dorothy Michaels" thanks to high-powered agent Sydney Pollack (L). Would you believe Dustin/Dustina?

Sept 29, 1982