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Effi Briest, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1974

Welt am draht (World on a wire), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1973

Warum läuft Herr R. amok? (Why does Herr R. run amok?), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1969

Angst essen seele auf (Ali: Fear eats the soul), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1974

Querelle, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1982

Whity, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1970

Götter der pest (Gods of the plague), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1970

Rio das Mortes, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1970

Warnung vor einer heiligen nutte (Beware of a holy whore), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1971

Katzelmacher, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1969

Lola, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1981

Der händler der vier jahreszeiten (The merchant of four seasons), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1972

In einem jahr mit 13 monden (In a year of 13 moons), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1979

Satansbraten (Satan's brew), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1976

Despair, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1977

Mutter Küsters fahrt zum himmel (Mother Küsters goes to heaven), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1975

Martha, Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1973

Faustrecht der freiheit (Fox and his friends), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1975

Die bitteren tränen der Petra von Kant (the bitter tears of Petra von Kant), Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 1972

2/7/97 – 3/16/97

Rainer Werner Fassbinder: A Retrospective

Contemporary Latin American Films

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Goethe-Institut and the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation
under the patronage of His Excellency Dr. Juergen Chroborg
Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
and the UCLA Film and Television Archive
present

RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER:

A Retrospective

The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant

As the extraordinarily prolific frontrunner of the '70s New German Cinema movement, Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1945-1982) established a reputation as a prodigy, an iconoclast and a tyrant—a reputation that his untimely death from too much work and too many drugs did nothing to change. But since then, his films have endured and largely transcended this reputation. Accordingly, our retrospective pays tribute to Fassbinder's indelible impression upon the cinema.

In over 40 films, he masterfully blended soap opera, sexual politics, German history, sharp social satire, brilliant subversions of Hollywood genres, and homages to filmmakers like Samuel Fuller and especially Douglas Sirk. This blend is revealed in the pseudonym Fassbinder used as editor of many of his early films: Franz Walsch. "Franz" is for Franz Biberkopf, the protagonist of "Berlin Alexanderplatz," Fassbinder's favorite book, and "Walsch" is for Raoul Walsh, Fassbinder's favorite Hollywood director (until his discovery of Sirk).

After making two shorts, Fassbinder worked in the theater, ultimately helping to establish the experimental troupe, *antiteater* (or anti-theater). It was with this collective that he first began making feature films at an astonishing rate—eleven films in 1969 and 1970. As the group dissolved, Fassbinder discovered the films of Douglas Sirk and turned towards a more melodramatic style. Except for another cycle of more overtly experimental and political films between 1975 and 1979, this style would grow to encompass a sort of women's history of 20th-century Germany—until QUERELLE, his last film which points in yet another direction.

Throughout his career, a preeminent goal was to expose for middle-class audiences the destructive repercussions of unexamined values and the underlying "sentimental idealism" that nourishes more overt evils like fascism and racism. As he put it, "The best thing I can think of would be to create a union between something as beautiful and powerful and wonderful as Hollywood films and a criticism of the status quo. That's my dream, to make such a German film–beautiful and extravagant and fantastic."

Sponsored by: Lufthansa AG.; Lufthansa Cargo; Arri-Contrast; Dr. Alfred Biolek; Filmverlag der Autoren; Tim Fischer; Dr. Thomas Geyer of Geyer Werke, Berlin; Theo Hinz; Hans Kohl and Taurus Werke; Reinhard Penzel and Sony Deutschland; Hanna Schygulla; Horst Wendtland and Rialto Film; Rosel Zech; Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg; Berliner Festspiele; State Department of the Federal Republic of Germany; Goethe-Institut Munich; Inter Nationes; Export Union des Deutschen Film e.V.

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Air transportation is provided by American Airlines.

Friday, February 7
7:30 p.m.

WHITY
(1970)
A fascinating and sordid tale set in the American Southwest of 1878, about a mixed-race servant whose father is also his employer and whose mother is the family cook. After his singer/prostitute girlfriend Hanna prompts him to resist his oppression, the formerly obsequious Whity murders the decadent ranching family that has abused him. Although he escapes with Hanna, their future is as bleak as the desert they seek to cross. Unlike much of his other early films, WHITY already shows Fassbinder's love of Hollywood melodrama in its use of stylized performance. Fassbinder wrote the film for lead actor Günther Kaufmann, the black German with whom he was madly in love.
Producer: Atlantis Film, antiteater-X-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Franz Walsch, Thea Eymèsz. With: Günther Kaufmann, Hanna Schygulla, Ulli Lommel, Harry Baer. 35mm, 95 min.

BEWARE OF A HOLY WHORE
(Warnung vor einer heiligen Nutte)
(1970)
This self-critical (and extremely funny) film fictionalizes the problems Fassbinder had while filming WHITY. In a Spanish resort a gloomy, bored German film crew awaits the arrival of the movie's director and star. In the meantime, they whine, get drunk, exploit, seduce, and brutalize each other. When the director finally appears, he finds sheer chaos and must struggle to get the film underway. Although the film they are making deals with state-sanctioned violence, the troupe is ironically unable to transcend the petty violence that characterizes their own relationships. This disillusionment marks the end of the collaborative spirit of the *antiteater* phase of Fassbinder's career.
Producer: antitheater-X-Film, Nova International. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Franz Walsch, Thea Eymèsz. With: Lou Castel, Eddie Constantine, Hanna Schygulla, Marquard Bohm, R.W. Fassbinder. 35mm, 103 min.

IN PERSON: HANNA SCHYGULLA
(to be confirmed)

Saturday, February 8
7:30 p.m.

THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT
(Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant)
(1972)
Petra, a wealthy fashion designer, lives with and relentlessly abuses her secretary/lover, Marlene. After meeting Karin, a lower-class, young woman, Petra is smitten and persuades her to move in. But soon Petra's love for Karin becomes obsessive and she loses the power over others that she once wielded so easily. Their affair ends abruptly when Karin returns to her husband, and Petra's life dissolves into drunkenness and destitution. Visually, the film is as rigorously controlled, even minimalist, as the script and performances are over-the-top, even campy. This is Fassbinder's portrait of love as sado-masochistic obsession, and freedom as the most frightening thing of all.
Producer: Tango-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Margit Carstensen, Hanna Schygulla, Irm Hermann, Eva Mattes. 35mm, 124 min.

PIONEERS IN INGOLSTADT
(Pioniere in Ingolstadt)
(1970)
Fassbinder's version of Marie Luise Fleisser's play, tells the story of the transient love affairs between soldiers stationed in Ingolstadt and the local women, who view the affairs rather differently. While Alma is resigned to promiscuity, the naive servant Berta (brilliantly played by Hanna Schygulla) mistakenly believes that she has found a deep and lasting relationship with one of the soldiers. The film employs two quite different styles, as it fluctuates between Brechtian theatricality and a more fluid naturalism. The screening of this last of the *antiteater* films at the New York Film Festival marked the American discovery of both Fassbinder and Schygulla.
Producer: Janus Film und Fernsehen, antiteater. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Based on a play by Marie Luise Fleisser. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Hanna Schygulla, Harry Baer, Irm Hermann, Rudolf Waldemar Brem. 35mm, 84 min.

Sunday, February 9
7:00 p.m.

THE AMERICAN SOLDIER
(Der Amerikanische Soldat)
(1970)
After returning to Munich, hard-drinking, hard-hearted German-American Vietnam War vet Ricky is hired by a group of sinister cops to commit a series of murders. Ricky undertakes his assignments with the same cool detachment that he brings to his love affair and a family reunion. Although his work as a hitman is lucrative, the ultimate payoff is deadly. This dark and dingy film noir in baroque black-and-white evokes and pays homage to Hollywood's gangster movies and stars.
Producer: antiteater. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Karl Scheydt, Elga Sorbas, Jan George, Margarethe von Trotta. 35mm, 80 min.

THE NICKLASHAUSEN JOURNEY
(Die Niklashauser fahrt)
(1970)
A serious and deeply ironic film inspired by the real life of a fifteenth-century shepherd, Hans Böhm, who declared that the Virgin Mary had called him to become a revolutionary preacher. For a few months in 1476, Böhm led a large peasant uprising against the church and aristocracy to demand economic equality, whereupon he was arrested by the bishop's army and burned at the stake. A leather-jacketed Fassbinder plays the "Black Monk," a rather dubious follower of Böhm's. Often compared to Jean-Luc Godard's WEEKEND, the film freely mixes German history and references to contemporary political and anti-colonial struggles.
Producer: Janus Film und Fernsehen. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder, Michael Fengler. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Thea Eymèsz, Franz Walsch. With: Michael König, Michael Gordon, R.W. Fassbinder, Hanna Schygulla. 35mm, 86 min.

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Rainer Werner Fassbinder: A Retrospective (continued)

Saturday, March 1
7:30 p.m.

KATZELMACHER
(1969)
"Katzelmacher" is a Bavarian slur for a foreigner, particularly from the Mediterranean countries, who is thought to have an immense sexual appetite (and genitals to match). A chilling parable of latent middle-class fascism, the film focuses on a group of slackers in a dismal suburb of Munich. When the befuddled Greek immigrant worker Jorgos (played by Fassbinder himself) arrives, he disturbs their stupor and becomes the center of their dubious attention. Although the young women are attracted to him, the young men resent him. The result is the kind of scapegoating that has particular relevance for this country's current political climate.
Producer: antiteater-X-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Franz Walsch. With: Hanna Schygulla, Lilith Ungerer, Elga Sorbas, Doris Mattes. 35mm, 88 min.

ALI: FEAR EATS THE SOUL
(Angst essen Seele auf)
(1973)
One of Fassbinder's most popular and critically lauded films was inspired by Douglas Sirk's ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS. It tells the story of the "December-May" love affair between Emmi, a widowed German cleaning woman in her 60s, and Ali, a Moroccan immigrant worker more than 20 years her junior. The couple's decision to marry ignites the fears, snobbery and prejudices of Emmi's children and busybody neighbors. The outside pressures eventually subside, but the marriage soon falls prey to the partners' own fears and prejudices. The title character is played by Fassbinder's lover at the time, El Hedi Ben Salem. Fassbinder would later dedicate QUERELLE to him after learning of his suicide in a French prison.
Producer: Tango-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Jürgen Jürges. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Brigitte Mira, El Hedi ben Salem, Barbara Valentin, Irm Hermann. 35mm, 93 min.

Sunday, March 2
2:00 p.m.

EFFI BRIEST
(Fontane Effi Briest)
(1974)
Fassbinder's adaptation of Theodor Fontane's novel closely adheres to the nineteenth-century classic, while subtly manipulating its structure. Narrated by the film-maker, it portrays the social and sexual victimization of Effi Briest, a young woman whose parents give her in marriage to a much older Prussian diplomat. After the couple moves to a remote Baltic port, the unhappy and lonely Effi falls into a fleeting liasion with her husband's friend. The tragic effects of their affair emerge after six years with a chilling Prussian vengeance.
Producer: Tango-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Based on the novel by Theodor Fontane. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann, Jürgen Jürges. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Hanna Schygulla, Wolfgang Schenck, Karlheinz Böhm, Ulli Lommel. 35mm, 141 min.

BREMEN FREEDOM
(Bremer Freiheit)
(1972)
This dark comedy tells the story of Geesche, a Bremen woman who was executed in 1831 for murdering fifteen people. Her crimes are committed as revenge on the people who have tried to control her life. The film's narrative is condensed into fifteen scenes that dramatize—with intense irony and stylized sets and acting—Geesche's oppression by her husband, fiancé, mother, father, and others. One by one, she serves them a deadly poisonous brew, then sings a song of liberation. Geesche's revolt has feminist overtones, but it doesn't point to any lasting change.
Producer: Telefilm Saar. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder, Dietrich Lohmann. Based on the play by Fassbinder. Cinematography: D. Lohmann, Hans Schugg, Peter Weyrich. Editor: Friedrich Niquet, Monika Solzbacher. With: Margit Carstensen, Ulli Lommel, Wolfgang Schenck, Walter Sedlmayr. 16mm, 87 min.

Bremen Freedom

Thursday, March 6
7:30 p.m.

CHINESE ROULETTE
(Chinesisches Roulette)
(1976)
A disabled girl, Angela seeks revenge against parental abuse by scheming to have her unknowing parents and their respective lovers meet at a country house for the weekend. Angela arrives also with her mute governess. Captured by a dynamic camera, the emotional tensions and embarrassments of the group build until Angela convinces them to play a "Chinese Roulette" truth game, which becomes increasingly more candid, cruel and, ultimately, violent. "I tried to make a film that takes artificiality to its limits." (Fassbinder)
Producer: Michael Fengler. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Ila von Hasperg, Juliane Lorenz. With: Margit Carstensen, Anna Karina, Alexander Allerson, Ulli Lommel. 35mm, 86 min.
IN PERSON: ILA VON HASPERG, ULLI LOMMEL
(to be confirmed)

SATAN'S BREW
(Satansbraten)
(1976)
In this wild comedy, the megalomaniacal Walter, a self-appointed "poet of the '68 revolution" ends his writer's block by plagiarizing the poet Stefan George. He then masquerades as George and recruits a circle of gay men to attend his poetry readings. In the meantime, he murders his mistress, ignores his dying wife and steals his parents' burial money. The result is a portrait of the artist as a sadomasochistic fraud, created at a time when Fassbinder himself had become persona non grata as a result of several controversies stemming from his work.
Producer: Michael Fengler. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Jürgen Jürges, Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Thea Eymèsz, Gabi Eichel. With: Kurt Raab, Margit Carstensen, Helen Vita, Volker Spengler. 35mm, 112 min.

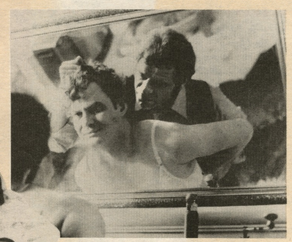
Saturday, March 8
7:30 p.m.

THE THIRD GENERATION
(Die Dritte Generation)
(1979)
In this dark comedy, a band of ineffectual upper-middle class German terrorists deploy absurd tactics and spout equally absurd explanations of government oppression—despite their utter lack of ideological motivation. The group kidnaps a computer tycoon without realizing that he's set them up in order to increase the sales of his surveillance devices to the police. Made after the climax of left-wing terrorism and governmental crackdowns in 1978, the film directly addresses the troubled political conditions in West Germany, linking the rise of terrorism to capitalism and the collusion between capitalist management and the police.
Producer: Tango-Film, Project Filmproduction im Filmverlag der Autoren. Screenplay/Cinematography: R.W. Fassbinder. Editor: Juliane Lorenz. With: Volker Spengler, Eddie Constantine, Bulle Ogier, Hanna Schygulla, Udo Kier. 35mm, 111 min.
IN PERSON: UDO KIER

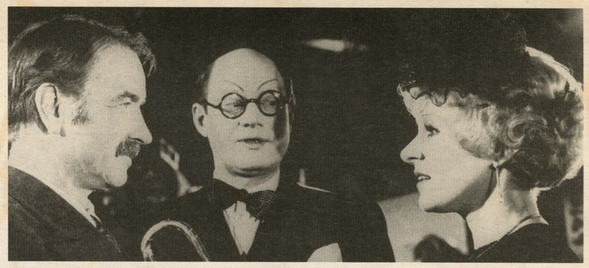
MOTHER KÜSTERS GOES TO HEAVEN
(Mutter Küsters Fahrt zum Himmel)
(1975)
The naive and simple Mother Küsters is exploited by the Left, the Right, her own family, and ultimately by the media after her factory-worker husband kills a foreman and commits suicide to protest the possibility of losing his job. On a mission to clear his name and give meaning to the apparently senseless murder-suicide, Mother Küsters turns to the Communists for help, but they use the tragedy and its notoriety for their own seamy and selfish purposes. The film caused many on the German left to repudiate Fassbinder, just as many feminists and gay activists already had. This print contains both the original, darker ending and a gentler ending given the film for export, which Fassbinder came to prefer.
Producer: Tango-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder, Kurt Raab. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Brigitte Mira, Ingrid Caven, Karl-Heinz Böhm, Margit Carstensen. 35mm, 120 min.

Preceded by

GERMANY IN AUTUMN
(Deutschland im Herbst)
(1978)
35mm, 26 min.



In a Year of Thirteen Moons



Veronika Voss

Lola

Sunday, March 9
7:00 p.m.

THE STATIONMASTER'S WIFE
(Bolwieser)
(1977/83)
This delightfully perverse story of a beautiful woman's affairs and sexual manipulation of her husband is set in pre-Hitler Germany. The officious stationmaster Bolwieser commands respect from his subordinates, but he is sexually enslaved by his wife who feeds her insatiable sexual appetites via a series of adulterous affairs. Although everyone in town knows he's a cuckold, Bolwieser himself remains ignorant. Kurt Raab, one of the director's closest friends and a longtime collaborator, gives his final and finest performance for Fassbinder as Bolwieser.
Producer: Bavaria Studios. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Based on the novel by Oskar Maria Graf. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Ila von Hasperg, Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz. With: Kurt Raab, Elisabeth Trissenaar, Bernhard Helfrich, Udo Kier. 16mm, 112 min.

THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN
(Die Ehe der Maria Braun)
(1978)
This first of Fassbinder's three parables of postwar Germany (followed by LOLA and VERONIKA VOSS) was a huge critical and popular hit in Germany and abroad. The film deftly combines elements of soap opera, sexual politics, comedy, epic romance, contemporary history, and social satire in its metaphorical commentary on the growing pains of postwar Germany. During the American occupation, Maria Braun kills a soldier, but in a fit of love her husband claims responsibility and is imprisoned. Subsequently, Maria takes up with a wealthy industrialist and collects a fortune for the day her husband returns. Their reunion, however, cheats her expectations, and the consequences are explosive.
Producer: Albatros Produktion, Trio-Film. Screenplay: Peter Märthesheimer, Pea Fröhlich. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz. With: Hanna Schygulla, Klaus Löwitsch, Ivan Desny, Gottfried John. 35mm, 120 min.

Thursday, March 13
7:30 p.m.

IN A YEAR OF THIRTEEN MOONS
(In einem jahr mit 13 monden)
(1978)
This relentlessly despairing film follows the last five days in the life of Erwin Weishaupt, also known as Elvira after a sex-change operation undergone to please an eccentric millionaire with whom s/he is in love. When this sacrificial act provokes only disgust, a series of meetings with old friends and lovers prompts Elvira's doomed bout of self-reflection. The credits below point out how much of the film's production Fassbinder took upon himself. The result is one of his most personal films, made in response to Armin Meier's suicide after his breakup with Fassbinder.
Producer: Tango-Film, Project Filmproduction im Filmverlag der Autoren. Screenplay/Cinematography/Editor: R.W. Fassbinder. With: Volker Spengler, Ingrid Caven, Gottfried John, Elisabeth Trissenaar. 35mm, 124 min.

LILI MARLEEN
(1980)
During World War II "Lili Marleen" was an enormously popular song. The film traces its history via a fictional character, the third-rate cabaret singer Willie, who becomes a superstar when her recording is a smash hit. Her fame gives her access to Nazi authorities, connections that she tries to use to aid the resistance and her Jewish lover, but the regime proves difficult to outmaneuver. Made with a big budget due to the fame of Hanna Schygulla and Fassbinder after THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN, the film includes large-scale battle scenes and climaxes with a huge propaganda spectacle, complete with swastikas, fireworks and flowers.
Producer: Roxy-Film, Rialto-Film, CIP, Bayerischer Rundfunk. Screenplay: Manfred Purzer, R.W. Fassbinder. Based on "Der Himmel hat viele Farben" by Lale Andersen. Cinematography: Xaver Schwarzenberger. Editor: Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz. With: Hanna Schygulla, Giancarlo Giannini, Mel Ferrer, Karl-Heinz von Hassel. 16mm, 120 min.

Saturday, March 15
7:30 p.m.

VERONIKA VOSS
(Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss)
(1981)
Fassbinder completed his trilogy of melodramas set in postwar Germany with this retelling of SUNSET BOULEVARD. Instead of an aging silent star, Veronika Voss is a former Nazi-era star whose career was finished by the shutdown of the German film industry during the American occupation. By the '50s, she has become a morphine addict, dreaming of a comeback and depending on the kindness of strangers. But her illusions of grandeur blind her to what little kindness she is offered, with fatal results. Amazingly enough, this grim and sordid story is based on the life of actual Nazi-era star Sybille Schmitz.
Producer: Thomas Schühly. Screenplay: Peter Märthesheimer, Pea Fröhlich, R. W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Xaver Schwarzenberger. Editor: Juliane Lorenz. With: Rosel Zech, Hilmar Thate, Cornelia Froboess, Annemarie Düringer. 35mm, 104 min.

LOLA
(1981)
The middle film in Fassbinder's trilogy about the history of postwar Germany pays visual homage to the color-saturated films of Douglas Sirk, while its narrative evokes a cross between THE BLUE ANGEL and Genet's "The Balcony." Lola is an ambitious, scheming singer-prostitute in a Bavarian town who meets a respectable and idealistic man, the new Building Commissioner. Duped by her brief charade as a cultured and naive young woman, the commissioner falls in love with her, which leads to a crisis after he sees her perform in the town brothel owned by his nemesis, a corrupt developer. Ultimately, everything ends happily, if cynically.
Producer: Horst Wendlandt. Screenplay: Peter Märthesheimer, Pea Fröhlich. Cinematography: Xaver Schwarzenberger. Editor: Juliane Lorenz. With: Barbara Sukowa, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Mario Adorf, Matthias Fuchs. 35mm, 113 min.

Sunday, March 16
2:00 p.m.

LOVE IS COLDER THAN DEATH
(Liebe ist kälter als der Tod)
(1969)
A crime syndicate wants the newly-released convict Franz, played by Fassbinder, to work for it. The handsome young Bruno is sent to persuade Franz, but the two thieves become friends. Indeed, Franz is so enamored with Bruno that he offers him the sexual favors of his girlfriend, the prostitute Hanna. But Hanna believes their relationship jeopardizes hers, so she makes other, more deadly plans for the two men. The possessiveness and jealousy within the triangle illustrate Fassbinder's point that gangsters are just as bourgeois as the system whose laws they exploit. The film is dedicated to Eric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol, Jean-Marie Straub, and QUIÉN SABE?, the spaghetti western which inspired Fassbinder to make this, his first feature.
Producer: antiteater-X-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Franz Walsch. With: Ulli Lommel, Hanna Schygulla, R.W. Fassbinder, Hans Hirschmüller. 35mm, 88 min.

Preceded by

CITY TRAMP
(Der stadtstreicher)
(1965)
16mm, 10 min. 35

THE LITTLE CHAOS
(Das kleine chaos)
(1966)
35mm, 9 min. 16

7:00 p.m.

QUERELLE
(Querelle—ein pakt mit dem teufel)
(1982)
A beautiful young sailor's lust for crime leads him to smuggling, murder and homosexuality. The result is the final step in Fassbinder's exploration of friendship, betrayal and sex between men. His last film (which was, in fact, not quite complete when he died) is a move away from melodrama to something stranger and more exotic. The lurid sets and lush lighting create a dreamlike world of dark eroticism in which sadomasochism takes on the value of a positive subversion of an oppressive moral order, rather than a replication of it.
Producer: Dieter Schidor. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Based on the novel by Jean Genet. Cinematography: Xaver Schwarzenberger. Editor: Franz Walsch, Juliane Lorenz. With: Brad Davis, Franco Nero, Jeanne Moreau, Laurent Malet. 35mm, 106 min.

Note: This screening will be preceded by a special guest appearance by a notable critic/filmmaker who will speak about QUERELLE and Fassbinder's influence on the "New Queer Cinema."

The guest appearance is sponsored by Out on the Screen.

Querelle

Tuesday, February 11
7:30 p.m.

RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER
(1977)
This never-before-seen documentary, part of a series of interviews with filmmakers of the New German Cinema, includes clips of Fassbinder acting and footage of the director on the set. The centerpiece is a conversation between Fassbinder and German film critic Florian Hopf.
16mm, 45 min.

NORA HELMER
(1973)
In Fassbinder's version of Ibsen's play "A Doll's House," Nora Helmer saves her family from financial ruin, whereupon her troubles begin. Ignoring the typical Ibsen naturalism, Fassbinder flagrantly exaggerates the decor of late nineteenth-century middle-class domesticity, which provides a sharp and meaningful contrast with the actors' stiff, deliberate and carefully choreographed performances. "Nora is not someone who finally 'sees the light'. At the end, she's as stupid as she always was. I haven't been able to find a shred of evidence in Ibsen's text for taking Nora as an advocate of women's liberation." (Fassbinder)
Producer: Telefilm Saar. Screenplay: R. W. Fassbinder. Based on "A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen. Cinematography: Willi Raber, Wilfried Mier, Peter Weyrich, Gisela Loew, Hans Schugg. Editor: Anne-Marie Bornheimer, Friedrich Niquet. With: Margit Carstensen, Joachim Hansen, Barbara Valentin, Ulli Lommel. 16mm, 101 min.

Nora Helmer

Fox and His Friends

Friday, February 14
7:30 p.m.

THE MAKING OF BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ
(1979) Directed by Hans Dieter Hartl
This captivating documentary is a behind-the-scenes look at Fassbinder with his cast and crew during the production of the monumental BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ. It provides a rare glimpse of the director—sporting his trademark fedora, black leather jacket and omnipresent cigarette—as he calmly and masterfully orchestrates the performances and photography of several difficult scenes.
Producer: Bayerischer Rundfunk. Writer: Hans Dieter Hartl. 16mm, 44 min.

Saturday, February 15
10 a.m.

BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ
(Parts 1 through 7)
(1980)
16mm, 432 min. (One-hour lunch break at 2 p.m.)

10 a.m.

BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ
(Parts 8 through Epilogue)
(1980)
16mm, 463 min. (One-hour lunch break at 2:15 p.m.)

This ambitious fourteen-part television adaptation of Alfred Döblin's epic novel about Germany in the late '20s generated enormous controversy in Germany. Its protagonist Franz Biberkopf is a former transportation worker and pimp who has been imprisoned for killing his girlfriend. After his release he seeks respectability, but finds only marginal jobs. When he meets the criminal Reinhold, Franz is attracted to him immediately and joins his gang of thieves, only to lose his arm during the first heist. Renewing his vow to be respectable, he falls in love with a prostitute who supports him. But the jealous Reinhold once again intervenes with dire results.
Typically, Fassbinder heightens the relationship between the two male protagonists by pointing up its disavowed homoeroticism, which is mediated through the bodies of the women in their lives, until the violence turns against the male body itself. The spectacular epilogue foregrounds the sado-masochism underpinning much of Fassbinder's films while prefiguring the phantasmagoric eroticism of QUERELLE.
Producer: Peter Märthesheimer. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Based on the novel by Alfred Döblin. Cinematography: Xaver Schwarzenberger. Editor: Juliane Lorenz. With: Günther Lambrecht, Gottfried John, Barbara Sukowa, Hanna Schygulla. 16mm, 895 min.

Note: Admission is free to the programs on February 14-16, which will take place at the Goethe Institute, 5700 Wilshire Blvd., #110, Los Angeles.

Parking: two hours free on 6th and 8th Streets; metered on Masselin and Curson, south of Wilshire; Wilshire Courtyard Place ($1.10 every 20 minutes and $3.30 after 4 p.m.); System parking lot on Hauser Blvd., south of Wilshire ($4.00 all day, free after 5 p.m.).

The Merchant of Four Seasons

Saturday, February 22
7:30 p.m.

THE MERCHANT OF FOUR SEASONS
(Der Händler der vier Jahreszeiten)
(1971)
In this touching meditation on alienation, routine existence and shattered dreams, a fruit-and-vegetable peddler dominated by his mother and spurned by his one great love due to class disparities, finds himself bound in a loveless and increasingly bitter marriage. This film, with its deft blending of soap opera and social critique, marks Fassbinder's discovery of the films of Douglas Sirk and the beginning of his move from an earlier cool, distanced style toward the richly layered melodrama of his later work. As always, the film features brilliant ensemble performances from Fassbinder's regular troupe of actors.
Producer: Tango-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Hans Hirschmüller, Irm Hermann, Hanna Schygulla, Gusti Kreissl. 35mm, 89 min.

WHY DOES HERR R. RUN AMOK?
(Warum läuft Herr R. amok?)
(1969) Directed by Michael Fengler, R.W. Fassbinder
R. is a simple, likeable man enjoying the comforts of middle-class life—until he suddenly breaks out of his routine to turn serial killer one evening... While the improvised dialogue gives the acting a Cassavetes-esque realism, Fassbinder displays the usual *antiteater* stylization by shooting each scene in one long take. And although the improvisary nature of the film is quite a departure from Fassbinder's usual rigorous control, thematically WHY DOES HERR R. RUN AMOK? fits comfortably within the long line of Fassbinderian "male melodrama."
Producer: antiteater. Screenplay improvised from outline by Michael Fengler and R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Franz Walsch. With: Kurt Raab, Lilith Ungerer, Amadeus Fengler, Franz Maron. 35mm, 88 min.
IN PERSON: DIETRICH LOHMANN

Sunday, February 23
2:00 p.m.

GODS OF THE PLAGUE
(Götter der Pest)
(1969)
This dark and densely plotted film noir contemplates the Hollywood gangster genre with a French New Wave twist, as it offers a portrait of an aimless postwar German generation. After his release from prison, Franz renews his acquaintance with the Munich underworld. He and another petty crook plan a robbery, but their criminal scheming is subverted by two women, both of whom are in love with Franz. The film is ultimately a buddy movie, with the homoerotic friendship between the two criminals foreshadowing Fassbinder's adaptation of BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ.
Producer: R.W. Fassbinder, Michael Fengler. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Franz Walsch. With: Harry Baer, Hanna Schygulla, Margarethe von Trotta, Günther Kaufmann. 35mm, 91 min.

RIO DAS MORTES
(1970)
In this comedy, war veteran Michel joins an old school chum to escape the depressing constraints of their lives in Munich by pursuing a childhood fantasy—to search for buried treasure in Peru along the (fictional) Rio das Mortes. After dashing around making plans and trying to raise money, they find a patroness willing to finance their trip. But the cockeyed scheme angers Michel's marriage-minded girlfriend who follows them to the airport with gun in hand. The result is a farcical variation on the Fassbinderian themes of male friendship and dreams of escape from an alienating world.
Producer: Janus Film und Fernsehen, antiteater-X-Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Dietrich Lohmann. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: Hanna Schygulla, Michael König, Günther Kaufmann, Katrin Schaake. 16mm, 84 min.

7:00 p.m.

MARTHA
(1973)
MARTHA tells the story of a 30-something spinsterish librarian living with her parents and dominated by her father. After her father's sudden death, she immediately marries a handsome and rich engineer, with disastrous results. Her husband endeavors to exercise complete control over Martha. He forces her to quit her job, isolates her in his house, forbids her to socialize, and chooses her music and reading materials. Equal parts Gothic melodrama and black comedy, the film's equation of marriage and sadomasochism provides the link between the campy excess of THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT and the stylish gloss of EFFI BRIEST.
Producer: Westdeutscher Rundfunk. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Liesgret Schmitt-Klink. With: Margit Carstensen, Karlheinz Böhm, Gisela Fackeldey, Adrian Hoven. 35mm, 112 min.

FEAR OF FEAR
(Angst vor der Angst)
(1975)
Margot, an apparently happily married housewife, becomes depressed and plagued by inexplicable fears during her pregnancy. Her condition is exacerbated by a decent but preoccupied husband who fails to comprehend her predicament, and self-righteous in-laws who mercilessly deride her. A chemist prescribes Valium and she has a brief fling with him. But the drugs and her increasing drinking precipitate a breakdown, after which Margot finds that recovery isn't very much of an improvement. Although never released in the U.S., the film's success on German television boosted Fassbinder's reputation at home.
Producer: Peter Märthesheimer. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Jürgen Jürges, Ulrich Prinz. Editor: Liesgret Schmitt-Klink, Beate Fischer-Weiskirch. With: Margit Carstensen, Ulrich Faulhaber, Brigitte Mira, Irm Hermann. 35mm, 88 min.

Tuesday, February 25
7:30 p.m.

WORLD ON A WIRE
(Welt am Draht)
(1973)
ALPHAVILLE meets BIG SLEEP in this Fassbinder sci-fi/crime thriller produced for German television and based on an American novel. It tells the story of Dr. Fred Stiller, a cybernetics researcher who hopes to create artificial intelligence, but who learns that the world in which he lives is a computer projection that has displaced reality. Dr. Stiller's knowledge poses a severe threat to the political, corporate and legal powers, and they pursue him relentlessly, until a young woman with powers of her own comes to his rescue. WORLD ON A WIRE is perhaps the best example of the "aesthetics of hope" that Fassbinder claimed characterized his work for television, as opposed to the "aesthetics of pessimism" of his theatrical films.
Producer: Westdeutscher Rundfunk. Screenplay: Fritz Müller-Scherz, R.W. Fassbinder. Based on "Simulacron III" by Daniel F. Galouye. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Marie Anne Gerhardt. With: Klaus Löwitsch, Mascha Raaben, Adrian Hoven, Ivan Desny. 35mm, 197 min.

Thursday, February 27
7:30 p.m.

FOX AND HIS FRIENDS
(Faustrecht der Freiheit)
(1975)
This "male melodrama" set in a gay milieu tells the story of a naive and trusting man ruthlessly manipulated by his friends. Fassbinder is quietly compelling as the carnival-worker protagonist Franz Biberkopf. After separating from his carnival-barker lover, Franz is picked up by a wealthy antique dealer, Max. When Franz wins the state lottery, Max's brittle and affluent friends are attracted to him despite his crude, working-class style. Captivated by the handsome sophisticate Eugen, Franz moves in with him, whereupon his lottery money is squandered to enrich Eugen's family and friends. The film is dedicated to Armin Meier, Fassbinder's third and last great love, and it eerily foretells Meier's own sad fate.
Producer: Tango-Film, City Film. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Thea Eymèsz. With: R. W. Fassbinder, Peter Chatel, Karlheinz Böhm, Karl Scheydt. 35mm, 123 min.

I ONLY WANT YOU TO LOVE ME
(Ich will doch nur, dass ihr mich liebt)
(1976)
Based on actual events, this film tells the story of a hardworking young Bavarian bricklayer who was neglected by his parents as a child. When he marries his childhood sweetheart and settles in Munich, the lures of the consumer society prove too overwhelming for his modest wages. Social pressures propel him to a crazy, violent reaction. This simple and personal film is one of the most straightforward examples of the Fassbinderian protagonist driven to desperation by an uncaring world.
Producer: Peter Märthesheimer. Screenplay: R.W. Fassbinder. Cinematography: Michael Ballhaus. Editor: Liesgret Schmitt-Klink. With: Vitus Zeplichal, Elke Aberle, Alexander Allerson, Ernie Mangold. 16mm, 104 min.

("Rainer Werner Fassbinder: A Retrospective" continues after *Screenings and Events*.)

I Only Want You to Love Me

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