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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21

A tribute to Das Kleine Fernsehspiel/ZDF: Alternative Filmmaking in television (Co-Sponsored by the Goethe Institute and ZDF in association with KQED-TV)

Program starts at 7:30 -

"Best Boy"

"Death Magazine, or How To Become
A Flowerpot"

"Death Magazine..." - Rosa von Praunheim is no stranger to scandal. His two notorious documentaries on homosexual subcultures and gay liberation, "It Is Not The Homosexual Who Is Perverse But The Situation In Which He Lives" (1971) and "Army Of Overs, Or Revolt Of The Perverts" (1978), caused great controversy in and out of the gay community. Most of the features and shorts he made for ZDF's Das Kleine Fernsehspiel in the past nine years have provoked outrage in one critical quarter or another. But "Death Magazine..." which was not aired as scheduled by ZDF on August 9, 1979, has inspired a greater storm of controversy in the German press than any previous von Praunheim provocation.

As for the film, which ZDF considered too shocking to show to unsuspecting casual TV viewers, it is based on Al Goldstein's sick/punk paper, 'Death Magazine', which was published in New York in 1978, and featured such items as the "US Hit Parade Of The 20 Most Deadly Afflictions," and the "Cemetery of the Month Award." According to von Praunheim:

"The film introduces the poet Helen Adam, who looks forward to dying eagerly, because she would adore to frolic all over the universe. We filmed in NY City Morgue, interviewed Dr. La Hary, a specialist in forensic reconstruction. He showed us around the murder cases from the day before.

"There is a collage of different approaches to death from Egypt, India, Phillippines, Hong Kong, and Mexico.

"We filmed the Afterlife and introduce a funeral service where people's ashes are turned into flowerpots.

"New York offers classes for understanding death in some of its higher schools, where we filmed role playing and discussions by students and their teacher.

"The punk movement is a death reflection.

"The manager of the Punk group, the Contortions, appears in the film and her group performs, accompanying news footage of the dead and dying from all over the world.

"My film tries to destroy the biggest taboo in life, which is death. It tries to show it's human and not without humour."