



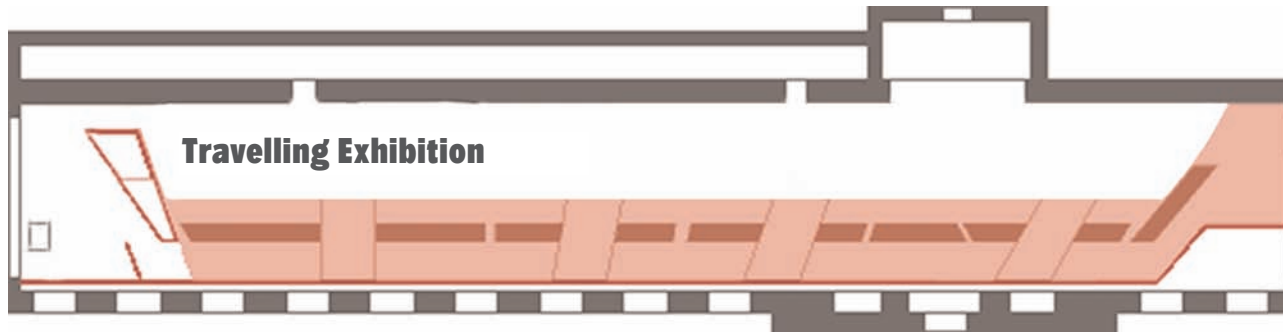
BABELSBERG
gesichter
einer filmstadt



Welcome to the Filmmuseum Potsdam!

Our permanent exhibition “Babelsberg – Faces of a Film City” invites you to take a closer look at the history of the famous Babelsberg film studios and at the history of the film companies behind it: Ufa, DEFA, and Studio Babelsberg. Its main focus is on the DEFA-years between 1946 and 1992.

This booklet offers only one of several possible tours through the exhibition. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask our attendants. They will be delighted to help you.



Bioscop – Decla - Bioscop – Ufa

1912 – 1945

The **first section** of the exhibition deals with the History of the Ufa and its predecessors.

On the right information on the company's history is provided. Straight ahead, a large showcase presents film exhibits.

Film-makers have worked in Babelsberg, a former factory site, since 1912. Bioscop, a small Berlin film company, purchases the extended premises in 1911. After the company sets up a glass studio – the largest and most modern one in Europe at the time – next to an old factory building, the first film is shot in February 1912: "Der Totentanz" ("The Dance of the Dead", Director: Urban Gad). Leading actress is the first great European film diva, Danish Asta Nielsen. By 1913, Nielsen has acted in eight further Bioscop films. Her talent and her popularity help the small film company to enjoy a remarkably successful start in the new studio. One of Asta Nielsen's film costumes, a *large fringed shawl*, is displayed in our showcase.

In the early twenties, financial difficulties force Bioscop to merge, first with the Decla (Deutsche Eclair) into Decla-Bioscop, and only a few years later with the Ufa (Universum Film AG), founded in 1917. Subsequently, famous directors create many German silent film classics in Babelsberg. In the show case, you will also find one of the oldest exhibits from that time: an *Egyptian wig worn by actor Martin Wolfgang* in the film "Satanas" ("Satanas", 1920), one of the earliest works of famous director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau and also advertising material for the two-parter "Die Nibelungen" (1924, Director: Fritz Lang). The *two paintings* in gilt frames are print patterns for small picture cards given as gifts with the purchase of a certain brand of coffee.



The advertising promotion for “Frau im Mond” (“Woman in the Moon”, 1929, Director: Fritz Lang), a tale of a moon journey, conveys similar ingenuity: The Ufa mints coins with the inscription “redeemable on the moon” and distributes this “moon money” among the audience on the opening night.



In the thirties and forties, the Ufa is successful mainly with its entertainment films. Stars like Hans Albers, Lilian Harvey, Willy Fritsch, Heinrich George, or Marika Rökk, whose *portraits* are visible on the wall to your right, make their mark on famous Ufa films.

One great success is the comedy “Die Feuerzangenbowle” (1944, Director: Helmut Weiss), featuring Ufa star Heinz Rühmann. The film, based on the familiar plot of pupils playing various tricks and jokes on their teachers, still enjoys cult status in Germany. One of the *desks* used in the film is on display in the showcase.



Between 1937 and 1942 the Ufa makes Swedish singer Zarah Leander a star. The separate showcase displays the only extant *costume* of her from those days.

Apart from light entertainment, the Ufa also produces heavier, more political, fare. In the early twenties, patriotic historical films on Prussian king Frederic the Great begin to become popular.

In fourteen of these films, actor Otto Gebühr plays the leading part. You will find his *wig* from one of the earliest "Frederic"-pictures, "Fridericus Rex" (1922/24, Director: Arzen von Czèrepy), in the large showcase.

After Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the production of propaganda films increases greatly. Ufa film-makers shoot anti-Semitic films like "Jud Süß" ("Jew Sues", 1940, Director: Veit Harlan), war films like "Stukas" (1941, Director: Karl Ritter), or, towards the end of the war, films like "Kolberg" (1945, Director: Veit Harlan) that urged the people to "stand firm". Propaganda minister Goebbels even diverts soldiers from the front, disregarding their generals' protests, in order to employ them as extras. *Clips of these propaganda films are run on the monitor on your right (category "Film und Politik").*

In the showcase on the far right you see an *accordion*, it was a prop in one of the last Ufa films, "Unter den Brücken" ("Under the Bridges", 1945/1950) Director Helmut Käutner shot the film, an unpretentious, charming love-story featuring actors Carl Raddatz, Hannelore Schroth, and Gustav Knuth on the river Havel close to Potsdam while the Soviet Army is already laying siege to Berlin. The apolitical film passes Nazi censorship before the collapse

You are now leaving the entrance section. Please leave the showcase behind and keep right.



DEFA

1946 – 1992

In April 1945, the Soviet Army takes possession of the Babelsberg studios. Filming is abandoned. No German film company is allowed to produce in Babelsberg again until May 17, 1946, when communist German film-makers found the DEFA (Deutsche Film AG) by order of the Soviet military administration. The ideological orientation of the new film company is explicitly antifascist. The DEFA company is established three years prior to the founding of the GDR and exists two years more than the socialist German state.

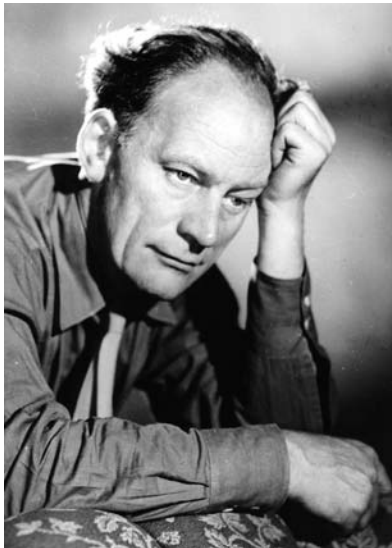
History is reflected by films directly and indirectly. There is a timeline on your right hand side to remind you of historical events between 1946 and 1992 such as the introduction of the first micro wave or the first moon landing. Photographs and smaller exhibits illustrate the spirit of the times in, both, East and West Germany. What happened in the Babelsberg studio in each year is written above the showcase and the portrait photos show popular actors.

The DEFA section is divided into four periods. To your left you will find a large showcase for each period with a representative artist each and two contemporary films. The films differ in subject matter or style. The artists are operating in four important lines of work: cinematography, directing, dramaturgy, and costume design.

DEFA

1946 – 1953

The first large showcase is dedicated to cinematographer Robert Baberske who formerly worked for the Ufa and now for the DEFA since the studio is staffed with experienced Ufa employees, returning emigrants as well as job starters. “Das Beil von Wandsbek” (1950/51, Director: Falk Harnack) is the first banned DEFA film and “Frauensicksale” (1952, Director: Slatan Dudow) is one of the first feature films with scenes that propagate socialist ideology.



Please leave the aisle and take a look at the back of the display case.

On the showcase's side that faces into the show room a variety of DEFA films are presented in a chronological order. You will find the respective title and year of first screening on the surface of the showcase.

Information as well as exhibits on selected artists are displayed in drawers.

Clips of the exhibited films are shown either directly in the showcase or at our information terminals in the aisle.

On October 15, 1946, the first DEFA-film – at the same time the first post-war German motion picture – opens: “Die Mörder sind unter uns” (“Murderers Among Us”) by director Wolfgang Staudte.

One of the most successful early DEFA-films is “Ehe im Schatten” (“Marriage in the Shadows”, 1947, Director: Kurt Maetzig). The film is released in all four occupation zones (something unusual in the post-war period), is seen by millions of German filmgoers, and manages to capture international attention. In it, Kurt Maetzig, one of the founding members of the DEFA and himself persecuted in the Third Reich as a “half-Jew”, refers to a true story: popular Ufa star Joachim Gottschalk was married to a Jewish actress. Soon after the Nazis rose to power, his wife was banned from acting. When she was about to be deported to a concentration camp in 1941, the couple committed suicide with their little son.

In the drawers, you find character shots as well as private shots of the Gottschalks, Joachim Gottschalk’s cigarette case, and pictures of their apartment taken shortly after the couple’s death in 1941. In the showcase, supporting actor Claus Holm’s photo album contains film stills and performers’ portraits.



Grotesquely, some staff members on this first German post-war production dealing with the Holocaust had taken part in producing Nazi propaganda films a couple of years earlier: One of them, film composer Wolfgang Zeller (the score is on display), wrote the soundtrack to one of the most widely known anti-Semitic films, “Jud Süß”.

In 1953 Wolfgang Staudte directs “Die Geschichte vom kleinen Muck” (“The Story of Little Mook”). The fairy tale film stayed the top-selling item of DEFA exports until the end of the GDR.

Our exhibits beautiful costume and set designs by Sybille Gerstner, Walter Schulze-Mittendorf, Willi Eplinius, and Erich Zander, illustrate with how much loving care and great effort the fairy tale was transformed into a motion picture. Some of the artists had been employed by the Ufa in the past – after the war, the DEFA benefits from their skills. *In one of the drawers, you will find a fairy tale book composed entirely of these set and costume designs.*

„Die Geschichte vom kleinen Muck“ is shot in the summer of 1953. One day, the traffic noise outside the studio becomes unbearable. Repeatedly, director Wolfgang Staudte has to halt shooting. Finally, a member of staff is sent outside to look. The noise comes from Soviet tanks crushing the GDR’s people’s revolt of June 17, 1953.

The link between film-making and politics is also present in the scenes from documentary films that are projected to aisle’s wall. After the death of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in 1953, many Eastern bloc countries have to deal with uprisings. The Korean War 1950 – 53 has already strained the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union: The Cold War is in full swing. Naturally, filming in the DEFA studios is also affected by the harsher political climate.



Please walk back into the aisle to the opposite side of the showcase.

DEFA

1954 – 1966

The **second showcase** presents director Kurt Maetzig. In the mid-fifties, he creates DEFA's biggest propaganda film, the two-parter "Ernst Thälmann – Sohn seiner Klasse" (1954) and "Ernst Thälmann – Führer seiner Klasse" (1955). Kurt Maetzig directs both parts that depict the life of Hamburg workers' leader Ernst Thälmann, who was executed by the Nazis in the Third Reich. The films are commissioned by the state's government.

Willi Bredel, Michael Tschesno-Hell, and Kurt Maetzig begin to work on the screenplay in 1949. *The authors' portraits can be seen in the showcase.* Their drafts are controlled and corrected by leading members of state party SED. Shooting expenditures are immense. Even the burning of the Berlin Reichstag in 1933 is reconstructed: The model used in the film is more than 10 feet high.



Photos in the showcase show its making and how the model is set on fire. Takes of the trick by director's assistant Günter Reisch, who will later become a DEFA-director himself, are shown on the monitor.

Postcards of film stars, luxury editions of film stills bound in red leather imitation, and an unusually colourful film programme, a four-colour print, are costly advertising material in rather poor times. For years, the films shape Thälmann's public image in the GDR. The viewing of the films is compulsory for school classes as well as for workers and higher employees. Leading actors Günter Simon and Karla Runkehl gain lasting popularity: Years later, they are still voted the most popular DEFA performers by GDR filmgoers.

Even though in 1956 the new Soviet head of state Nikita Khrushchev puts an end to the official personality cult surrounding former dictator Joseph Stalin, this change of ideology is accepted only very slowly in the GDR. Devotional objects of the Stalin era are not removed from public life until the early sixties. In 1961, all scenes in the "Thälmann"-films featuring

the dictator are deleted. *We show the takes on the monitor (category "Ernst Thälmann").*

In the "Thälmann"-films, a new process of sound recording is applied: stereo optical sound recording. The new technology will, however, not become popular until the seventies, when the US-American company Dolby starts to use it on a large scale. Stereo optical sound recording requires a special type of both recording and reproduction equipment.

Since the "Thälmann"-films are supposed to be screened in a great number of cinemas that would then need costly refitting, the films are screened only in the regular mono sound, the only existing stereo print disappears into the archives.

On the far right of the showcase, enlarged frames make the four transparent stereo optical soundtracks visible. The soundtracks run beside the sequence of frames.

In the part of the showcase which is partly concealed another one of director Kurt Maetzig's productions is compared to the two propaganda films: "Das Kaninchen bin ich" ("I Am the Rabbit"). The film deals with the GDR justice system and is shot in 1965 but is not released until 1990: In 1965, an SED state party conference (the so-called "11th plenary assembly") decides on a more restrictive cultural and educational policy.

Experimental and critical tendencies in literature, the fine arts, and film are to be suppressed

in favour of "socialist realism". Almost all DEFA productions from 1965 are banned. Director Kurt Maetzig, up to then highly praised, is criticised in public. The release of "Das Kaninchen bin ich" is banned. *On the bottom right, an album displays film stills and candid stills of several DEFA productions of 1964/65. Red notes mark films banned by the SED party conference.*

Again, documentary footage illustrates what is going on in the world: while the DEFA deals with the consequences of the SED party conference, in South East Asia the Vietnam War escalates in the mid-sixties. In the FRG, student revolts intensify; a left-wing movement promoting extra-parliamentary opposition is founded in 1967. In Prague, a last communist reform movement, the "Prague Spring", is crushed by troops of the Warsaw Pact.



DEFA

1967 – 1976

The **third showcase** in the aisle is dedicated to Walter Janka, dramatic advisor, and a communist who was persecuted during the Nazi regime and later also in the GDR. His film "Zeit zu leben" reflects on socialist ideals and „Anflug Alpha 1“ promotes the air force.

The display facing the show room starts with "Die gefrorenen Blitze" (Director: János Veiczi) of 1967. In 1963, "Das Geheimnis von Huntsville" is published, a documentary report on the production of Hitler's long-distance missile V2: In 1936, scientist Wernher von Braun and others had begun to carry out research and produce weapons in Peenemünde on the island of Usedom. In 1942, the first missile was launched. Already from 1940 on, prisoners had been employed in the V2- production, which was moved to underground sites in Thuringia in 1943. Close by, a branch of the Buchenwald concentration camp was set up especially to support this armament project. In 1944, the first missile was launched against Great Britain. In 1945, Wernher von Braun surrendered to US-troops and continued to do research on missile production in Huntsville, Alabama/USA.

Based on the report, a best seller, the DEFA produces the monumental two-parter in 1967. The gigantic Peenemünde base is reconstructed in miniature. *Several of these trick models, wooden wagons with rails and a miniature V2 are on display in the showcase. You will also find props: a secret service file, the file of a concentration camp prisoner, and photos with metal seals. Historical pictures, research material for the film, are in one of the drawers.*

Apart from antifascist films, the DEFA increasingly relies on light entertainment - especially after the 1965 ban. In 1966, the production of westerns starts. They are released every year in the summer and soon prove to be box office hits, lar-

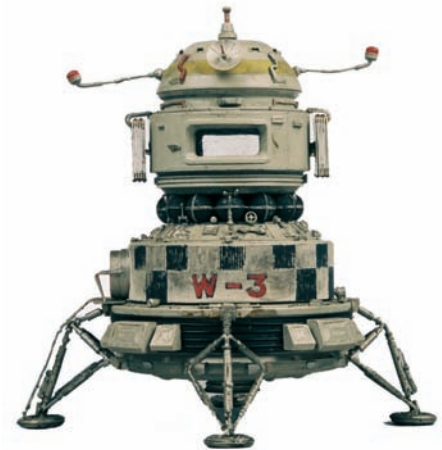
gely thanks to Yugoslavian performer and audience favourite Gojko Mitic, starring as an American Indian hero in almost all of the films. *The enlarged still in the background portrays him in "Spur des Falken" ("Trail of the Falcon", 1968, Director: Gottfried Kolditz). One of the film's drawers allows a look at the wig he wore in the film. Bow and arrow and a peace-pipe hang in the showcase, all of them props. Below, you find a blueprint of a typical North American railway engine, which was reconstructed especially for the film. The suitcase in the lower part of the showcase belonged to foley artist Hugo Gries: With this simple equipment, he imitated the sound of galloping horses and moving carriages.*



Like the westerns, science fiction films are produced in this period in order to tempt viewers into the cinemas: „Eolomea“ (1972, Director: Hermann Zschoche) even wins the *international technology award UNIATEC* (on display in one of the drawers) for its tricks.

Some of the spaceship models, blueprints by set designer Werner Pieske, and candid stills of the trick shots are displayed in the showcase.

In order to make the trick undetectable, the models, suspended on transparent strings, were filmed with a camera turned upside down. In the completed film, the suspension thus appears at the bottom of the frame where no viewer would expect it. In addition, each trick take is restricted to a length of only seven seconds.



After 1965, the DEFA refrains for the most part from producing critical contemporary films. Instead, directors choose historical or literary plots. One of these films is „Jakob der Lügner“ („Jacob the Liar“), shot in 1975 and based on a novel by Jurek Becker. It tells the story of a Jew in the Warsaw ghetto who tries to spread hope by telling fictitious good news from a just as fictitious radio station. The director is Frank Beyer, whose film „Spur der Steine“ was banned in 1966. In consequence, Beyer was banned from his occupation entirely and went to work at a theatre. Three years later, he was allowed to television directing and was re-employed by the DEFA in 1974. His film „Jakob der Lügner“ is a DEFA co-production with GDR television and the first - and only - DEFA film ever to be nominated for an Oscar. *The nomination is displayed in the showcase.*

For a long time, it remains uncertain who would play Jacob. Initially, actor Heinz Rühmann was considered but, being a West German star, turned down in favour of Czech actor Vlastimil Brodsky. *In the upper part of the showcase you will find Brodsky's film costume, in the lower part a costume design for Jacob by costume designer Joachim Dittrich.* A Hollywood remake starring Robin Williams as Jacob was released in 1999.



Signs of the time are barely visible in these movies. In 1975, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe signs its final communiqués in Helsinki. While it tries to relieve tension on an international level, in the GDR internal problems amount, e.g. critical singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann is refused re-entry into the GDR because of „remarks hostile towards the state“. Biermann's expatriation throws the entire East German cultural scene into turmoil. Many artists who support Biermann consequently leave the GDR - more or less voluntarily.

DEFA

1977 – 1994

In the display case facing into the show room a film is presented that causes a sensation after its release in 1980: “Solo Sunny” by Konrad Wolf, one of the most widely renowned DEFA directors, president of the GDR Academy of Fine Arts, and brother of the head of the secret service, Markus Wolf. The film’s plot portraits the rebellious singer Sunny’s quest to make her dreams come true, individually – a delicate subject in socialist GDR. Sunny’s extravagant outfit – *a leather jacket, a fox fur, a hairnet* – are in the showcase. Just like the film’s English title-track, the costume marks the main character’s attempts to escape from social norms.

In the following years, DEFA films repeatedly allude to Wolf’s “Solo Sunny”, honouring it as an important contribution to greater individual freedom. “Solo Sunny” is withdrawn from the cinemas after leading actress Renate Krößner leaves for West Germany. *The official banning order is in the showcase to your right.*



Just as delicate is the subject of “Märkische Forschungen” (1982, Director: Roland Gräf), released only two years later. A professor and a village schoolteacher are doing research on the biography of a revolutionary poet. The teacher finds out that the poet changed sides and became a reactionary in later years. The professor, well known to the public, influential with the media, and afraid that the true story might damage his career, hinders the teacher from publishing the truth. *On display are hand-written notes by the director on the film’s structure, also props, and an award:* Gräf’s film opens at the

GDR Film Festival in 1982. It is agreed even before the festival's opening that the film will not be awarded a prize. „Märkische Forschungen“, however, proves itself such an outstanding contribution and public success that it cannot be left without an award: *a special prize* „Der Findling“, a small rock, is hastily created. You can see it in the showcase.

Please walk back into the aisle to have a look at showcase number four.



A portrait of costume designer Christiane Dorst is on display. Dorst worked on several films that never reached production status, e.g. „Simplicius Simplicissimus“ which is based on literary matter that reaches far back into German history to the „Thirty Years' War“ (1618 - 1648). In the mid-1980s the production's preliminaries were well developed when the project is called of due to financial problems that the DEFA has to face. It is a disaster for all participants, not only for director Heiner Carow who had become famous in 1972 with his feature „Die Legende von Paul und Paula“.

On the contrast, Lothar Warneke in his semi-documentary film „Die Beunruhigung“ worked on a shoestring budget. A film that uses a woman's cancer sickness as the starting point for reflections on life itself.

At the far end of the timeline a title page of the tabloid „Bild“ from 1989 is visible. It shows people celebrating the opening of the Berlin Wall after 28 years. The Wall had been erected by command of the government of the GDR - a state which now faces its near end. After the reunion on October 3, 1990 DEFA film production continues as before. The films, however, do not manage to gain public attention anymore. The atmosphere in the studio becomes tense when mass dismissals start in the mid-nineties. The company is sold to the French conglomerate enterprise CGE (Compagnie Général des Eaux). In 1994 the DEFA is officially deleted from the trade register.

Studio Babelsberg

1994 – Today

Leave the aisle behind you and step into the section dedicated to Studio Babelsberg.

After the final dissolution of the DEFA, a new company cooperative starts using the studios: Studio Babelsberg. It develops into a service enterprise. Various executives lead the company, e.g. Academy winner Volker Schlöndorff.

After several flops in the 1990s, internationally renowned movie productions surface from 2000 on: "Enemy at the Gates" (2001, Director: Jean-Jacques Annaud), a film about the battle of Stalingrad starring Bob Hoskins and Joseph Fiennes, is the largest European production in recent years.

Apart from several film stills and a production shot, you will find a Soviet uniform and the rifle used by leading actor Jude Law in the showcase.

"Taking Sides" (2001, Director: István Szabó) also brings international stars to Babelsberg: The film featuring Harvey Keitel and Stellan Skarsgård discusses German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler's involvement in the Third Reich.



In 2002, the renowned director Roman Polanski – *his director's chair stands in the showcase* – shoots “The Pianist” in Babelsberg. The film about the survival of Polish pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman in the Second World War is honoured with the European Film Award as well as two Academy Awards.

Not only international but also German productions made in Babelsberg enjoy a good reputation: “Sonnenallee”, a comedy by Leander Haußmann about GDR teenagers, is a box office hit in 1999.

In 2002, “Halbe Treppe” (“Grill Point”), a film by young German director Andreas Dresen, receives the *“Berlin Bear in Silver”* at the Berlinale International Film Festival.



An important part of the “everyday” success story of the Babelsberg studios is played by TV productions. Since 1995, the series “Gute Zeiten, schlechte Zeiten” has been enthralling German teenagers.

The largest employer in Babelsberg is local radio station rbb (formerly ORB). Some of its most important services are public television and radio reports on current events.

In 2004 the French owner Vivendi sold the studios to two German investors and 2007 is the first year in which the studio grosses profits.

The showcase in front of the wall shows props from recent productions. Hollywood's "Bourne Trilogy" featuring Matt Damon is one of them and "Die Fälscher" by Stephan Ruzowitzky, winner of the 2008 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, is another. It is the story of Sorowitsch, king of the falsifiers. Imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp he is forced by the Germans to counterfeit foreign currency banknotes. *In the showcase a model of a concentration camp barrack is displayed as well as the hero's case containing the necessary tools for copying banknotes and the counterfeit notes.*



A short history of the studio's development since the early 1990s completes your walk through the exhibiton.

The Babelsberg studios will celebrate their 100th Birthday in 2011. It will be a pleasure seeing you again - when we present to you a new permanent exhibition.

Further information in German and English can be found in the catalogue. Please ask at the ticket counter.