

German Films at Shanghai Film Festival 2009

German Films had a strong presence at the 12th Shanghai International Film Festival, held from June 13 to 21. In addition to a film in competition, fourteen new films were screened as part of the Focus German showcase. German Films organized a delegation of film-makers to travel to China to present their films at the festival, attend a press conference and participate in a seminar at Shanghai University.

A lunchtime cocktail reception was held on June 15 at the Consulate General of Germany to launch Focus Germany. The reception gave the German Films delegation an opportunity to meet and mingle with several high profile local industry professionals, including Wang Quanan, director of 2009 Golden Berlin Bear award winner *Tuya's Marriage (Tuya de Hunshi)*. The opening film *Hilde*, a biopic on German actress/singer Hildegard Knef from director Kai Wessel, screened in the evening.

"It's always great to present your film but it was especially great to present a film like *Hilde*, which is such a huge German film, in a foreign country," Kai Wessel said after the screening. "Hilde was probably the most popular German actress/singer after World War Two. She was born in 1925 and died in 2002, so during her life she experienced the Third Reich, the World War Two, then the economic miracle and the building of the Berlin Wall ... it's almost too much life for one film."

Fourteen films in total were screened during Focus Germany, including *Sometime in August* from director Sebastian Schipper, *Lippel's Dream* from Lars Büchel, *The Red Spot* from Marie Miyayama, *Bergfest* from Florian Eichinger, *Close to You* from Almut Getto, *Breathing Under Water* from Winfried Oelsner, *Clara* from Helma Sanders-Brahms, *In Berlin* from Ciro Capellari, *Dr Aleman* from Tom Schreiber, *Northface* from Philipp Stölzl, *Jerichow* from Christian Petzold and *Moonbeam Bear* from Thomas Bodenstern, Mike Maurus and Hubert Weiland.

A Piece of Me, a coming of age story from director Christoph Röhl, screened in competition for the Golden Goblet (*Jin Jue*) Awards at the ceremony. It screened in competition against 15 other films from around the world for the prizes, which were selected by a jury led by British director Danny Boyle. Although the honors ultimately went to other films, Röhl said he was delighted his film was selected for the competition (see story under Events for the full list of winners).

"I was very surprised and happy to hear it was chosen for competition. To be in competition is something amazing," Röhl said ahead of the screening. "Like every film-maker, I want the audience to like the film. I want them to be moved, to find it funny."

The German Films stand at the international film market also received a number of visitors, including representatives from local film studios and distribution companies.

2009 marked German Films' sixth year at the Shanghai International Film Festival and Shanghai TV Festival. Mariette Rissenbeck, German Films' director, said she was very pleased with the results.

"The presence of German film-makers at the festival has really helped to boost the visibility of German films in China," she said. "It's not just about presenting films, it's also about improving cooperation between China and Germany."