



 **73<sup>rd</sup>** Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Perspektive Deutsches Kino

**FABIAN STUMM  
KNUT BERGER**

# **BONES AND NAMES**

**A FILM BY  
FABIAN STUMM**

**MARIE-LOU SELLEM SUSIE MEYER MAGNUS MARIUSON DOREEN FIETZ RUTH REINECKE  
ERNST STÖTZNER ANNEKE KIM SARNAU GODEHARD GIESE AND ALMA MEYER-PRESCOTT**

CINEMATOGRAPHY MICHAEL BENNETT ASSISTANT CINEMATOGRAPHER PETRA REBERNIK SOUND ADEL GAMEHDAR EDITING KASPAR PANIZZA GRADING BERTRAND GLOSSET  
SOUND DESIGN & MIX BELA BRANDES DIALOGUE EDITOR LAMBERT REGEL CASTING EVA ROTH SET DESIGN NELE SCHALLENBERG COSTUME ANNA HELLMANN  
MARIE SIEKMANN MAKE-UP MELISSA DOBERL GRAPHICS OTTERHELLMANN PRODUCTION ASSISTANT LAURA KÖPPEL CO-PRODUCTION NELE SCHALLENBERG  
PRODUCTION FABIAN STUMM NICOLA HEIM ASSISTANT DIRECTORS NICOLA HEIM KASPAR PANIZZA WRITER & DIRECTOR FABIAN STUMM A POSTOFILM PRODUCTION

**POSTOFILM**

# **BONES AND NAMES**

SYNOPSIS



## **LOGLINE**

Two men find themselves at a turning point in their relationship and start to question their togetherness.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Boris and Jonathan have been a couple for many years. When writer Jonathan gets more and more lost in his work on a new novel and actor Boris feels drawn to his younger colleague Tim during film rehearsals, they unexpectedly find themselves at a turning point in their relationship and begin to question their love. Meanwhile, Jonathan's single mom sister Natascha strives to find more stability for herself and her small daughter Josie, who in turn struggles to deal with the approaching end of her childhood.

**BONES AND NAMES** portrays a group of people searching for their place in different ways. A tender and humorous variation on the dissonances of life that alternately connect and disconnect us.

# BONES AND NAMES

CAST



**BORIS**  
**JONATHAN**  
**JEANNE**  
**CARLA**  
**TIM**  
**NATASCHA**  
**JOSIE**  
**HEIDI**  
**MICHAEL**  
**HELEN**  
**BECKS**  
**NAIMA**  
**LARA**  
**PAULINE**  
**STELLA**  
**MARIE**  
**YASIN**  
**DAHLMANN**  
**FRAU STRECKER**  
**ESTHER**  
**VERA**

Fabian Stumm  
Knut Berger  
Marie-Lou Sellem  
Susie Meyer  
Magnus Mariuson  
Doreen Fietz  
Alma Meyer-Prescott  
Ruth Reinecke  
Ernst Stötzner  
Anneke Kim Sarnau  
Godehard Giese  
Haley Louise Jones  
Milena Dreissig  
Ella Bennett  
Anne Haug  
Luise Helm  
Tanju Bilir  
Rainer Sellien  
Melika Foroutan  
Lisa Marie Becker  
Tina Pfurr

# BONES AND NAMES

CREW



<b>WRITER   DIRECTOR</b>	Fabian Stumm
<b>1. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR</b>	Nicola Heim
<b>2. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR</b>	Kaspar Panizza
<b>PRODUCER</b>	Fabian Stumm   Nicola Heim
<b>CO-PRODUCER</b>	Nele Schallenberg
<b>PRODUCTION ASSISTANT</b>	Laura Köppel
<b>CASTING</b>	Eva Roth
<b>CINEMATOGRAPHY</b>	Michael Bennett
<b>CAMERA ASSISTANT</b>	Petra Rebernik
<b>EDITOR</b>	Kaspar Panizza
<b>GRADING</b>	Bertrand Glosset
<b>SOUND RECORDIST</b>	Adel Gamehdar
<b>SOUND DESIGN &amp; MIX</b>	Béla Brandes
<b>SET DESIGNER</b>	Nele Schallenberg
<b>COSTUME</b>	Anna Hellmann   Marie Siekmann
<b>MAKE UP</b>	Melissa Döberl   Roksana Geiss
	Debora Waltl
<b>SET ASSISTANT</b>	Stefan Rutkowski
<b>CHOREOGRAPHY</b>	Natalia Torales Elizalde
<b>GRAPHIC</b>	otterhellmann

Original Title: **KNOCHEN UND NAMEN** | Germany | 2023  
Color | 104 mins | 16:9 | German & French



**BONES  
AND  
NAMES**  
DIRECTOR



**FABIAN STUMM**

Writer | Producer | Director

Fabian Stumm, born 1981 in Koblenz, studied acting at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute New York. He has appeared on stage at HAU Berlin, Münchner Kammerspiele, Volksbühne Berlin, The Kitchen New York and Tate Modern London, among others.

His film work includes **LORE** by Cate Shortland, German Film Award and Audience Award at Locarno Film Festival 2012, **BELA KISS: PROLOGUE** by Lucien Förstner, **PRECIOUS IVIE** by Sarah Blaßkiewitz, First Steps Nomination 2021, and the Grimme-Award nominated series **DRUCK**.

He made his directorial debut in 2020 with the short film **BRUXELLES**. In 2022, his second film **DANIEL** was awarded Best Mid-Length Film at the Achtung Berlin Festival. **BONES AND NAMES** is his feature film debut.

Filmography:

- 2023 **KNOCHEN UND NAMEN** (Bones and Names) | Feature  
Berlin International Film Festival – Perspektive Deutsches Kino 2023
- 2021 **DANIEL** | Mid-Length Feature  
Achtung Berlin Festival – Best Mid-Length Feature 2022  
Split Film Festival – Official Selection 2022  
Big Shorts Awards – Best Film Nomination 2023
- 2020 **BRUXELLES** | Short Film  
Achtung Berlin Festival – Competition 2021

# BONES AND NAMES

INTERVIEW  
FABIAN STUMM

## **You've been working as an actor for many years. How did you get into writing and directing?**

I wrote a lot as a child. Short stories, plays or radio plays. Later I discovered acting. In recent years, the need to tell my own stories became stronger. Certainly out of a hunger to have greater influence on material and more artistic control. But first and foremost, I think, to give form to the things going on in my mind. The path to directing then came quite organically. I grew up with films and cinema, which has always occupied the largest space in my life. At drama school in New York, I often skipped classes because I wanted to catch a matinée at the cinema. I remember watching Isabelle Huppert in **THE PIANO TEACHER** by Michael Haneke several times in one week. I still feel you can learn more in the cinema than in most classes. To this day, I watch films that move me over and over again to understand how they work.

## **How did the idea for BONES AND NAMES come about?**

After the end of my last relationship, I felt for a while that a part of me had been submerged. Joan Didion once wrote: *Remember what it was to be me. That is always the point.* That speaks to me. I wanted to come to terms with the pillars that make up my life. To remember what is good and stable about it, what scares me or makes me sad, and why. But I only really became aware of that in retrospect, before and during the shoot there was only this inner motor that drove me. In a sense, the film reconciled and reunited me with myself.

## **The film has a wonderful cast. What was the casting process?**

I developed most of the roles for the respective actors and actresses. It's great when you already have a voice in your ear while writing, knowing its rhythm and composing the dialogues accordingly. At the same time, it's fun to consciously let the actors do and say things you're not used to hearing from them and let them surprise you. The collaboration with the casting agent Eva Roth was also important. I value her eye and her intuition, and together we cast the parts I consciously wanted to be open about.

## **Tell us something about your ensemble. How was working with your co-star Knut Berger?**

Knut was on board from the very first idea. Because at the core I was interested in telling a relationship story between two men, it was essential to have a great deal of trust in each other. Knut and I have been close friends for many years and he immediately understood the script and his character on a deep level. His enthusiasm and love for the project really encouraged and sustained me. I am very proud of his work in the film.

## **How did Marie-Lou Sellem become part of the project?**

Marie-Lou and I met years ago on a shoot. I immediately saw her in the role of Jeanne, a French director who is filming her own story. I love Marie-Lou's humor, her curiosity, her focus. She has great power in her acting. It was virtuosic how she was able to shuttle between the two languages, her role and herself. She impressed me on many levels.

## **Anneke Kim Sarnau has only one scene in the film but she leaves a lasting impression.**

Anneke is a very important actress for me. We have become close friends over the years but long before we knew each other her films accompanied me. I will never forget her in **HOPE DIES LAST**, where she has moments that are burned into my memory forever. I didn't want anyone else for that scene, which is very

close to my heart, and when we were done with it, there wasn't a dry eye on the set.

**And little Josie, played by Alma Meyer-Prescott?**

Alma is the daughter of Susie Meyer, who I cast in the role of Carla. I've known her and her little brother since the moment they were born because I was there for the births. So Alma is family to me. On set, I was sometimes asked which character I identified with the most, and my answer was always Josie. I'm sure that's because of the autobiographical elements of the role - but I also feel reminded of my own childhood in the way Alma plays her. I was very touched to see her on set with so much joy and openness.

**Susie Meyer, who was heavily pregnant with her second child in your last film DANIEL, doesn't play the single mother this time.**

That was a deliberate play on reality. Susie is in fact a single mother, and that's a theme that concerns me a lot. This absence of men who are fathers but don't get involved. I wanted to see Susie in the role of the actress Carla, who can keep working also because she has a partner who supports her at home. On set we understood each other without many words, usually just a look was enough and she knew what I meant. I think she's unique in front of the camera.

**How was it for you to be your own director and direct yourself?**

Liberating. I love working with other filmmakers and really like fitting into their vision. But even when I was acting in my short films, I noticed the instance I want to please falling away. I want to play a role the way I feel it, but at the same time I want to make the director happy. That can sometimes be a balancing act. As Boris, I was so focused on the work of the other actors that I played very instinctively, without making any plans, and was always in the moment. That was beneficial for me and my acting. I find it incredibly exciting to direct while acting, because you can influence and guide your scene partners in a very unobtrusive but direct way.

**Were there many rehearsals in advance?**

No. I met with the individual groups and talked intensively about the script and the characters. Ruth Reinecke and Ernst Stötzner, for example, I brought together with their film children Knut Berger and Doreen Fietz. They talked for hours about their own experiences with the themes of the film. At the end, they read the scene once and it was all there. While shooting, I was stunned at how truthfully they played their long interview scene. Their first take was also the one we used in the film. I don't really like rehearsing on set. I like to shoot right away and find moments in front of the camera that you couldn't possibly recreate afterwards. Little accidents, insecurities, spontaneous reactions - even though we stuck very closely to the book and the dialogues, we kept a few of those in the film. That makes it more human.

**Tell us about the visual language of the film.**

While writing the script, I knew very clearly what I wanted the scenes to look like. I drew a detailed storyboard, which I rehearsed and photographed with my cinematographer Michael Bennett in the various locations before shooting. We were then able to communicate wonderfully during the shoot via the photographic storyboard that came out of that, because we didn't have to go searching in the locations. Through his experience as a photographer, he has an good feel for spaces and architecture, and we share a passion for clear lines and graphic settings. So that was a very harmonious collaboration.

**You shot without funding. What was the process behind that?**

I like working with people I know, but also enjoy building a network of new people. I've known co-producer Nicola Heim since drama school. She's one of the first to read my ideas and is always enthusiastic when it comes to a new project. My editor Kaspar Panizza, on the other hand, is a young filmmaker I met for this film. From our first meeting, I knew he would be the right person for the job. He brought something special to the film. Nicola and I decided early on to make the film with our own money without funding. The urge to tell the story

was too strong to wait months for financial support, so we did everything ourselves. We were able to build great team that believed very much in the film and worked on provision with small fees. Of course, that's not the ideal and it's not sustainable in the long run. Still, I don't think good material necessarily needs huge budgets. I would find it commendable and important if independent, more intimate film projects could also have more options in financing.

#### **Which artists influence you in your work?**

There are many. Claude Sautet, Maurice Pialat, Chantal Akerman, Robert Altman, Claude Goretta, Olivier Assayas, Helmut Käutner and André Téchiné are just a few of the filmmakers who mean a lot to me. In literature, they are Annie Ernaux, Heinrich Böll or Joan Didion. The paintings of Nicolas de Staël. And Taylor Swift has been a reference for me for years. As a storyteller, I find her immensely talented. I'm moved by the fact that she seems to reveal a lot about herself in her songs. That's what every work is about for me: connecting with life and the people around you, whatever the form.

## **BONES AND NAMES**

BIOGRAPHIES

**FABIAN STUMM** studied acting at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute New York. He has appeared on stage at HAU - Hebbel am Ufer, Volksbühne Berlin, Münchner Kammerspiele, The Kitchen New York and Tate Modern London, among others. His film and TV work includes **LORE** by Cate Shortland, German Film Award and Audience Award - Locarno Film Festival 2012, **BELA KISS: PROLOGUE** by Lucien Förstner, **KIDS OF COURAGE** by Matthias Zirzow, International Emmy Kids Nomination 2019, **PRECIOUS IVIE** by Sarah Blaßkiewitz, Best Feature Film at Festival des Deutschen Films Ludwigshafen 2021, **GREAT FREEDOM** by Sebastian Meise, Jury Prize Un Certain Regard - Cannes Film Festival 2021, and the Grimme Award nominated youth series **DRUCK**.

**KNUT BERGER** studied acting at the UdK Berlin. On stage he appeared at Schaubühne Berlin, Maxim Gorki Theater and Volkstheater Vienna, among others. He played his first lead role in **WALK ON WATER** by Eytan Fox, Berlinale - Panorama 2004. Other film and TV work included **WIR** by Martin Gypkens, Max Ophüls Förderpreis 2003, **JERICHOW** by Christian Petzold, **NO HARD FEELINGS** by Faraz Shariat, First Steps Award and Berlinale - Teddy Award 2019, **DEUTSCHLAND 86** by Arne Feldhusen, **WE MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD** by Natalia Sinelnikova, Berlinale - Perspektive Deutsches Kino 2022, **DAS WEISSE SCHWEIGEN** by Esther Gronenborn and **OH HELL** by Simon Ostermann and Lisa Miller, German Television Award 2022.

**MARIE-LOU SELLEM** studied acting at the Folkwang Hochschule Essen. Her stage credits include Volksbühne Berlin, Schauspiel Köln, Deutsches Theater and the Salzburg Festival. She has also appeared in a variety of film and TV productions and was nominated for the German Film Award for Best Supporting Actress in 2002. She was seen in **WINTER SLEEPER** by Tom Tykwer, **MARSEILLE** by Angela Schanelec, **EXIT MARRAKECH** by Caroline Link, **CASTING** by Nicolas Wackerbarth, Berlinale - Forum 2017, **CHARLIE'S ANGELS** by Elizabeth Banks and **TÅR** by Todd Field, New York Film Critics Award 2022. Most recently she was part of **VERBRANNT ERDE** by Thomas Arslan.

**SUSIE MEYER** studied acting at the Mozarteum Salzburg and appeared on stage at the Residenztheater Munich, HAU Berlin, The Kitchen New York and the Tate Modern London. Her film work started with video artist Keren Cytter in



**NIGHTMARE, LES RUISSELLEMENTS DU DIABLE** and **CROSS FLOWERS ROLEX**, National Gallery of Young Art Award nomination 2009. She had roles in **SANS, SOUCI** by Nuno Cera, **DIE FÜNF PHASEN DES ERTRINKENS** by Richard Marx, and **TREPPE AUFWÄRTS** by Mia Meyer, Hofer Filmtage 2015. In 2021 she took the lead role in **DANIEL** by Fabian Stumm, Best Mid-Length Film at Achtung Berlin Festival in 2022.

**MAGNUS MARIUSON** studied acting in Finland and at LAMDA - London Academy of Music & Dramatic Arts. He played his first main cinema role in **ADAM** by Maria Solrun, Berlinale - Generation 14plus 2018. He then appeared in the Netflix miniseries **THE LIBERATOR** by Grzegorz Jonkajtys, the Sky series **THE BOAT 3** by Hans Steinbichler and Dennis Gansel, **THE VAGABONDS** by Doroteya Droumeva, Out of Competition - Cannes Film Festival 2021, **TATORT - BOROWSKI UND DAS HUNGRIGE HERZ** by Maria Solrun and the Grimme Award nominated comedy series **DIE DISCOUNTER**.

**DOREEN FIETZ** studied acting at the UdK Berlin. From 2003 to 2007, she was a member of the ensemble at the Deutsches Theater Göttingen, where she was awarded the Nachwuchsförderpreis in 2004. She had her first TV role in 2008 in the ARD series **GROSSSTADTREVIER**. This was followed by appearances in **VORWÄRTS IMMER!** by Francis Meletzky, Bavarian Film Award 2016, the ZDF series **FLEMMING** by Bernhard Stephan and the ZDF series **BLUTIGE ANFÄNGER**. Most recently, she appeared in **DANIEL** by Fabian Stumm, Best Mid-Length Film at Achtung Berlin Festival 2022.

**RUTH REINECKE** studied acting at the Hochschule Ernst Busch and had her first engagement in Schwerin. From 1979 to 2020 she was part of the ensemble of the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin. Her film and TV work includes the Chekhov adaptation **THREE SISTERS** by Thomas Langhoff, **WEISSENSEE** by Friedemann Fromm, Grimme Award 2016, **DU BIST DRAN** by Sylke Enders, **TONI ERDMANN** by Maren Ade, German Film Award and European Film Award 2016, **KUNDSCHAFTER DES FRIEDENS** by Robert Thalheim and **FOSSIL** by Henning Beckmann.

**ERNST STÖTZNER** studied acting at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt am Main. In 1979 Peter Stein engaged him at the Berlin Schaubühne. Other stage credits were Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Berliner Ensemble, Burgtheater Wien and Deutsches Theater Berlin. He has appeared in films like **DAS SPINNENNETZ** by Bernhard Wicki, **UNDERGROUND** by Emir Kusturica, **KLIMT** by Raoúl Ruiz, **HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS** by Hans-Christian Schmid, German Film Award Nomination - Best Supporting Actor 2012, **FRANTZ** by François Ozon and **DIE NEUE ZEIT** by Lars Kraume.

**ANNEKE KIM SARNAU** studied acting at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Stuttgart. For **END OF SEASON** by Stefan Krohmer and **HOPE DIES LAST** by Marc Rothemund she received the Bavarian Television Award and the Grimme Award. Further works were **SIE HABEN KNUT** by Stefan Krohmer, **THE CONSTANT GARDENER** by Fernando Meirelles, **UNVEILED** by Angelina Maccarone, **4 KINGS** by Theresa von Eltz, German Film Award Nomination - Best Supporting Actress 2016, and **PRECIOUS IVIE** by Sarah Blaßkiewitz. Since 2010, she is the detective of **POLIZEIRUF ROSTOCK**, for which she most recently received a Grimme Award in 2022.

**GODEHARD GIESE** studied acting at the UdK Berlin. His film work includes **LILA, LILA** by Alain Gsponer, **IM SOMMER WOHNT ER UNTEN** by Tom Sommerlatte, Best Actor - Achtung Berlin Festival 2015, **LIEBMAN** by Jules Herrmann, Berlinale - Perspektive Deutsches Kino 2016, **BABYLON BERLIN** by Tom Tykwer and **TRANSIT** by Christian Petzold, Berlinale - Competition 2018. For **I WAS, I AM, I WILL BE** by İlker Çatak and **NOONE IS WITH THE CALVES** by Sabrina Sarabi he was nominated for the German Film Award for Best Supporting Actor. In 2014, he made his feature film debut with **DIE GESCHICHTE VOM ASTRONAUTEN**.

# BONES AND NAMES

STILLS



**BONES  
AND  
NAMES**  
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