


OFFICIAL
SELECTION
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM
2004

AMOUR FOU VIENNA
PRESENTS

PANDORA'S LEGACY

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF
G.W. PABST

A
FILM
BY
ANGELA
CHRISTLIEB

PRESS BOOK



IFFR SCREENING DATES

Sun 28 Jan 2024	14:15	Cinerama 2	PREMIERE
Thu 01 Feb 2024	14:15	Cinerama 2	



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SHORT SYNOPSIS

A journey through the family universe of GW Pabst, giant of early cinema, told through the eyes of the woman who was his great love and lifelong partner: Trude Pabst. A film about dream and trauma, and about why we become who we are.



LONG SYNOPSIS

PANDORA'S LEGACY is a journey through the family universe of GW Pabst, giant of early German cinema. His films explore the radical transformations taking place in the roles of men and women, set against reactionary models. GW Pabst's private and artistic partner on this voyage is Trude Pabst. She noted her dreams, thoughts and experiences on thousands of loose sheets of paper, now shared with an audience for the first time in this film.

Trude and Georg Wilhelm share an extraordinary love. But as head of the family, GW is a patriarch who wants to dictate the course of his wife's life. The exchange of letters between the lovers bears witness to the conflicting standards of the 1920s, reflected in GW Pabst's films and also in the couple's relationship. A wide-ranging area of tension is revealed, encompassing deep spiritual kinship, conflicts about parenthood, body images and eroticism, chauvinism and rebellion against it.

The portrait of the family deepens as we meet Trude's and GW's grandchildren today: Marion, butterfly breeder and radical environmental activist, Daniel, art collector and composer, and Ben, dinosaur researcher, struggle with their grandparents' emotional legacy of gender, power and love. Their stories merge with Pabst's film clips, the voice of Trude Pabst, diary entries, metaphorical images and surreal landscapes.

A film about dreams, trauma and why we are who we are.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have always been fascinated by dream worlds, parallel worlds and escapism in psychoanalysis. My films often focus on people who live in "imaginary" universes they have created for themselves, surrendering to eccentric passions and calling into question the realities of "norm" society. Cinemania depicts five cinephile New Yorkers who spend their entire lives watching up to 6 films every day. Naked Opera accompanies a wealthy opera fan in his quest to find the perfect way of staging his own life. Under the underground leads into a hidden subcultural labyrinth of sound and music.

I met Daniel Pabst in the Vienna music scene. He told me he was an art collector. On his visiting card it said "Pabst Collection". I asked whether he was by any chance related to GW Pabst. He nodded: The grandfather! His eyes flashed with subliminal pride.

As somebody who is enthralled by the cinema, and a big fan of the early GW Pabst films, my curiosity was aroused. In a series of personal conversations, Daniel told me about his childhood, and about his grandmother Trude Pabst, who "lived on" in her husband's films after his death. The stories were so incredible that I could already envisage a film as I listened. Daniel also told me about his uncle Christian Broda, who would often give him a ride in his ministerial limousine when he was a child. With considerable frankness Daniel also described to me how a strain of verbal violence and suppression ran through his family because of his grandfather. And how Daniel's father, Michael Pabst, suffered from this throughout his entire life.

When his father died, Daniel began to grapple with the story of his family. It was an attempt to understand the legacy of emotions and trauma which had been passed on to him through the generations. I accompanied him on his journeys as an art collector and on his visits to his family. One of our trips took us to Zürich, to visit his cousin Ben Pabst, a 75-year-old dinosaur expert. I later met his sister Marion, and his mother Heidi. Marion had a very close relationship to her grandmother Trude, and her childhood memories provided a quite different perspective.





My fascination with Trude Pabst, the wife of the famous director, grew with every story I heard. Although she had been an actress before marrying GW Pabst, he never allowed her to act in any of his films – except for one small supporting part. What role did she play at the side of her husband, who was always in the limelight? How did it feel for her when her husband had affairs with actresses? How did she come to terms with her position as a mother, which didn't fit in with the glamorous world of GW Pabst? What was the story about her close friendship with Leni Riefenstahl, whose portrait hung over her bedside table until Trude's death?

Daniel showed me Trude's diaries and the records she kept of her dreams. These diaries opened up a powerful insight into the landscape of her soul and her visions. I knew that my film would be rooted in a deep exploration of this woman's perspective and her development. Her intimate accounts transport us back to that period, allowing us to witness her personal experiences before and after the Second World War. Trude Pabst constructed for herself a kind of spiritual parallel universe where ghosts, premonitions and dreams played a significant role. The records she kept of her dreams went far beyond simple accounts; she had precognitive abilities and could sometimes predict events in her dreams. This was a defining influence on her life until very near the end. Daniel told me that during the last years of her life she conversed almost exclusively with her spirits.

Fascinated by this extraordinary family story, I knew I had to make this film. A film which links the action of GW Pabst's early films with memories of his grandchildren in the present day. With Trude's diaries as a meta-level. In the process I employ an artistic approach which I greatly admire in his films: long, elegant, flowing sequences of images which then appear to dispense with the existing geometry. Orderly systems dissolve, giving way to lack of orientation. Paradoxically enough, it is precisely in this way that the presentation of reality becomes concise and focused.



ANGELA CHRISTLIEB

1989 Studied at the Academy of Fine Arts of Berlin, Germany under Valie Export (Video Art) and Heinz Emigholz (Experimental Filmmaking). **1996** Master of Fine Arts degree. In **1997**, she moved to New York with an Emerging Artist grant and began working as an independent filmmaker, producing several shorts. Followed by freelanced work as theater manager for Anthology Film Archives and Filmmakers Coop NY.

In **1999** she received a DAAD Grant to study film production at the New School, developed her first feature documentary CINEMANIA, which premiered in **2002**. Winner Best Documentary Award, Hamptons Film Festival.

Since 2002 she collaborated with Eve Sussman & the Rufus Corporation New York, working as camera operator and performance artist for several art projects. In **2001** she moved back to Berlin and began working as writer and freelanced editor, as well as instructor at UdK Berlin and FU Berlin. In **2006** she participated at EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs) program to develop her feature documentary URVILLE.

In **2007** she worked as freelanced editor and visual artist for Christoph Schlingensief's AFRICAN TWINTOWERS. **Since 2010** development of her feature ELECTRIC GIRL. **Since 2012** development and production of her feature artist documentary WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GELITIN. **2013** NAKED OPERA premiered at BERLINALE. Winner Heiner-Carow-Award, BERLINALE and Press Jury Award, Message of Man Festival St. Petersburg.

2014 Theatrical Release NAKED OPERA in Germany and Luxemburg. In **2014** she directed and produced WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GELITIN. **2015** Kinos-tart NAKED OPERA in Austria. **2016** Premiere of WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GELITIN at Diagonale Festival. **2018** she directed and produced UNDER THE UNDERGROUND. **2018** she received an artist grant (BKA Vienna) and a writers grant in Carinthia, Austria. **2019** Premiere of UNDER THE UNDERGROUND at Diagonale Festival. Winner Best Music Documentary Award, Unerhört Festival Hamburg and Winner Audience Award, Soundwatch Festival Berlin.

2024 Premiere of PANDORAS LEGACY at International Rotterdam Film Festival.

SELECTED **FILMOGRAPHY**

2024	PANDORAS LEGACY
2022	THE GARDEN OF ROBOTIC UNKRAUT (short)
2019	UNDER THE UNDERGROUND
2019	SUPERUNKNOWN (short)
2017	INTO AN ALIEN LAND (short)
2016	WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GELITIN
2013	NAKED OPERA
2009	URVILLE
2002	CINEMANIA
2000	DEJA-VU (short)
1997	MEDUSA SUICIDA (short)



CONVERSATION WITH **ANGELA CHRISTLIEB**

- Why this decision to make a film on GW Pabst?

GW Pabst is the director of the Weimar era whose film work and personality could never be clearly categorised. There is always something enigmatic about his person and I wanted to solve this mystery. What interested me most were the contradictions in his biography and in his person. On the one hand, he was regarded as an artistic visionary who created a radical spectrum of new 'types of women' in his films. He was regarded as a director who was able to empathize with the soul of female roles. On the other hand, he was a patriarch who hindered his wife in her artistic development. It was this ambivalence that made me curious.

- Why did you decide to tell his story through the eyes of his wife, TRUDE PABST?

When I was allowed to read the diary entries of grandmother Trude Pabst, the film took a completely different turn: Trude's experiences added a personal first-person narrative. I learnt that she played an important role in G.W. Pabst's film work in his shadow. There is a lot of literature about G.W. Pabst, but nobody knows the story of Trude Pabst: how they met, how she supported him during filming and how she later emancipated herself. I decided that the film needed a change of perspective: a cinematic journey with a meta-level. Trude's memories and the letters she exchanged with G.W. Pabst form the structure of the film. Diary entries are mixed with film clips and real-life stories from the grandchildren.

- What was the biggest surprise for you while working on the film?

The biggest surprise was seeing how GW and Trude Pabst's grandchildren put their own family history together like a mosaic. How secrets came to light on camera that had long been suppressed or never made public. The whole family is now working together on a written biography about their grandfather.





WHO WAS **GW PABST**?

GW Pabst was one of the greatest in early cinema, feted as a master of the medium in the first histories of the moving image. He was perhaps the greatest director of his era and a world star in the 1920ies. Born in Bohemia in 1885, died in Vienna in 1967, in between directing over 30 films in Germany, France, Great Britain, the United States, Italy and Austria.

As early as the 1920s, at the time of silent film, he made Greta Garbo famous; with "Secrets of a Soul" he made the first psychoanalytical film and with "Pandora's Box" he turned the American actress Louise Brooks into a fashion idol and the most famous bob of all time.

His 'street films' brought a new realism to the screen, in which he pioneered the technique of 'invisible' editing, and established point-of-view shots such as the eyeline match and the shot-reverse-shot method of constructing a conversation. In so doing, he became one of the first filmmakers to direct actors for the camera, as well as for the truth of a scene. Moreover, he made expressive early use of sound.

The man who discovered Greta Garbo shot films with deep humanist empathy, psychological insight, memorable female protagonists, and amazing visual language. At the height of his powers, he was one of the most innovative filmmakers of the late silent era. He found his achievement downgraded by future critics, who accused him of returning to post-Anschluss Austria and for agreeing to make two historical dramas for the Nazis during the Second World War.

CREDITS

CREW

Director	Angela Christlieb
Screenplay	Angela Christlieb
DOP	Max Berner
Additional Camera	Martin Putz
Dramaturgy	Ina Ivanceanu
Editor	Angela Christlieb
	Sebastian Schreiner
Original Score	Daniel Pabst
	Martin Siewert
Sound Mixers	Thong Zang
	Chris Janka
	Matthias Edelmann
Sound Design	Wolf-Maximilian Liebig
Re-recording Mixer	George Tomandl

CAST

Daniel Pabst	Voices: Maresi Riegner
Marion Jaros	Ernst A. Grandits
Ben Pabst	
Heidi Pabst	
Karsten de Riese	
Anton Fürst	
Chris Janka	

PRODUCED BY

AMOUR FOU Vienna	Bady Minck
Producers	Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu
	Martin Repka
Post production Manager	Julian Berner
Line Producers	Philipp Grandits

TECH SPECS

Running time	89 min.
Production year	2024



Founded in Luxembourg in 1995 and in Vienna in 2001, AMOUR FOU Luxembourg and AMOUR FOU Vienna, realise artistically exceptional feature, documentary and short films for the international market with international and, most frequently, European partners.

Throughout the process AMOUR FOU stands for vision and pushing the envelope, whether in regard to aesthetics, production or distribution strategies. The focus is on European independent auteur cinema and the distinctive "handwriting" of the directors who work with AMOUR FOU. The associate partners of AMOUR FOU Vienna and AMOUR FOU Luxembourg are Bady Minck and Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu.





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PRODUCTION

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NIEDERÖSTERREICH



ORF Film/Fernseh-
Abkommen

SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTED BY CITY OF VIENNA