

## BLESSED EVENTS

By Isabelle Stever

Festivals: Toronto IFF, Torino FF

### One liner

Entirely unexpected Simone seems to find a kind of luck. While asking herself if this could be the face of happiness, she creates obstacles on her own...

### Synopsis

New Year's Eve, Simone decides to go out alone. The next morning, she wakes up in a strange car, next to a strange man. Few weeks later, she discovers she's pregnant. By coincidence, she runs into the stranger again – the handsome Hannes – and is surprised to find out that, contrary to her expectations, he's actually happy about the pregnancy and wants to live with her. Could this be the face of happiness?

While Hannes works in a hospital at a palliative care station, nursing to the dying with extraordinary tenderness, Simone renovates their shared, little home. An attractive neighbor fuels Simone's jealousy. The larger Simone's belly grows and the more extensively Hannes' integrity warms the nest, the more oppressive their homemade prison appears.

### Director's Statement

#### Short

My cinematic goal was to consistently take on Simone's perspective, so that her horror – which seems to come out of nowhere – becomes experienceable for the viewer.

In order to atmospherically underscore the constant possibility of change and dissolution, the settings in the film are intentionally dissonant. The framing and the omissions of the montage create a space for the turbulence inside Simone, from which disaster might erupt.

#### Long

Simone and Hannes' excess of care for each other and their will to be happy, paired with an absence of passion, leads to tragi-comic encounters and moments of cryptic humour. Simone can barely endure the suffocatingness and hopelessness of her self-created, but simultaneously threatening, family idyll. While the mesmerized viewer awaits an outburst, a murder or at least some effort, Simone fails again and again in her attempts to find freedom. To Simone, accepting this life with Hannes seems like a capitulation that will leave her brain a void.

My cinematic goal was to consistently take on Simone's perspective, so that her horror – which seems to come out of nowhere – becomes experienceable for the viewer. In order to atmospherically underscore the constant possibility of change and dissolution, the settings in the film are often under construction, in renovation or intentionally dissonant. Simone's mashed, randomly thrown together clothing gives us the impression of an outsider to society, as do her improvised hairstyle and her nervousness – all enable us to vividly perceive her emotional unpredictability. The wide, cinemascope framing, as well as the omissions and ellipses of the cut, create a space for the turbulence inside Simone, from which disaster might erupt.

"Blessed Events" is based on a short story by the same name by Anke Stelling.

### Director Biography

Isabelle Stever was born in 1963 in Munich. After studying Mathematics in Berlin and New York, she studied Film Directing at the German Academy of Film & Television (dff) in Berlin. Before BLESSED EVENTS her portfolio includes two award-winning features, PORTRAIT OF A MARRIED COUPLE (2002) and GISELA (2005), she also contributed with an episode to the omnibus film GERMANY '09 (2009).

## **Cast**

Simone: Annika Kuhl  
Hannes: Stefan Rudolf  
Herbert: Arno Frisch  
Susa: Maria Simon  
Helmut: Juan Carlos Lopez  
Gynecologist: Hanns Zischler  
Female Employee: Jana Thies  
Baby: Lawrence Davis

## **Cast Biography**

Annika Kuhl, born in Wuppertal in 1974, completed her actors training at the Westphalian acting school in Bonn, Germany. Annika Kuhl acted in various movies, among them SUN ALLEY (1998); ROBERT ZIMMERMANN IS TANGLED UP WITH LOVE (2007), NVA (2004) and BERLIN BLUES (OT: Herr Lehmann; 2002), all directed by Leander Haussmann.

Parallel, Annika Kuhl performed in several TV productions, such as the popular TATORT-series in 2009, and most recently in a leading role next to Benno Führmann in a TV-Movie, directed by Jan Ruzicka.

Born in 1974, Stefan Rudolf studied acting at the Berlin University of the Arts. He acted in several feature films, like GISELA (2004), directed by Isabelle Stever, THE WEDDING PARTY (2004), directed by Dominique Deruddere, SLEEPING SONGS (2008) directed by Andreas Struck, as well as in a few short movies. His most recent roles were in e THE SINKING OF LACONIA (2009) and AM KREUZWEG (2010), both TV-Movies directed by Uwe Janson and performed in a TATORT TV-episode in 2010, directed by Michael Schneider.

## **Crew**

Director: Isabelle Stever  
Writer: Anke Stelling, Isabelle Stever  
DOP: Bernhard Keller  
Editor: Bettina Böhler  
Production Design: Beatrice Schultz  
Production Supervisor: Martin Cichy  
Music: Yoyo Röhm, Jupiter Moll, Louis Marioth  
Sound Design: Frank Kruse  
Sound Mix: Bernd von Bassewitz  
Re-Recording Mix: Martin Steyer  
Costume Design: Anette Guther  
Make up: Lilli Müller  
Producers: Sigrid Hoerner, Anne Leppin  
Production Company: moneypenny filmproduktion in co-production with ZDF - Das Kleine Fernsehspiel in collaboration with ARTE and CinePostproduktion

## **Technical Information**

Original Title: Glückliche Fügung / 35 mm / 1:2.35 / Colour / 91 min / Dolby Digital 5.1 / HDCam SR & Digital Betacam available / German / English Subtitles / Germany 2010