

 **61** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Forum

KAI HILLEBRAND RALPH HERFORTH
MARIA SCHUSTER VASUPOL SIRIVIRIYAPOON

SWANS

A FILM BY HUGO VIEIRA DA SILVA



SWANS



SYNOPSIS

A father and his teenage son travel to Berlin. The boy has never met his mother who is in hospital with a coma. The father is confronted by his uncertain past. Both are unsettled by the winter gloom in the unfamiliar big city, and by the hostile environment of the hospital. The mother's flat where both are lodging is equally unwelcoming. They meet a mysterious and beautiful woman there, the mother's flat mate. While the boy explores the city, the father waits for the mother to recover. The film evokes an atmosphere oscillating between desire and anonymity, the fear of personal proximity and of death, between boredom and physical excess on a skateboard. It presents an unusual impression of Berlin, involving a fascinating coming-of-age story and of facing up to old age. It is a haunting exploration of the many facets of love and desire.



SWANS



KAI HILLEBRAND

Born 1990, Kai Hillebrand first visited a vocational school for electrical engineering, before entering a one-year-internship at the model agency Tomorrow is another day in Cologne. In 2008 he worked as a model for the “Top Man” campaign and for the Japanese fashion label “Factotum” in Tokyo in 2009.

Additionally, he began a skateboarding career in 2005 where “Vibes”, “Forvert Clothing”, “Decline Shoes” and “Sweet Skateboards” sponsored him. At Adio C.O.S. Cup German championship 2009 he won the third prize. In 2009 he successfully auditioned for the leading role in *Swans*, which is his feature film debut.

RALPH HERFORTH

Ralph Herforth was born in 1960 and studied at the Max Reinhardt Seminary Vienna between 1979 and 1982. In the 1980ies, he achieved a reputation in theatre productions, acting among others in “Othello” (1983, Schillertheater Berlin), “Romeo und Julia” (1983, Stadttheater Heilbronn) and “Macbeth” (1990, Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf). He made his cinematic film debut in “Schattenboxer” (1992) directed by Lars Becker. Since then he has continuously acted in numerous theatrical and TV-productions, working together with renowned directors such as Fatih Akin, Oskar Roehler, Roland Suso Richter and Friedemann Fromm.

Filmography (selection):

2010	<i>Swans</i> (Hugo Vieira Da Silva)
2009	<i>Unter Strom</i> (Zoltan Paul)
2008	<i>1½ Ritter – Auf der Suche nach der hinreißenden Herzelinde</i> (Til Schweiger)
2008	<i>Speed Racer</i> (Andy and Larry Wachowski)
2007	<i>Lamento</i> (Daniel Hedfeld, René Sydow)
2005–2010	<i>Unter anderen Umständen</i> (Judith Kennel) – TV series
2005	<i>Æon Flux</i> (Karyn Kusama)
2006	<i>Into The Night with Ralph Herforth and Dolph Lundgren</i> – TV series
2006	<i>Rage</i> (Züli Aladag) – TV movie
2005	<i>Bis in die Spitzen</i> (Thomas Berger, Michael Kreindl) – TV series
2004	<i>Agnes And His Brothers</i> (Oskar Roehler)
2004	<i>Das Blut der Templer</i> (Florian Baxmeyer) – two-part TV feature
2004	<i>Ratten 2 – Sie kommen wieder</i> (Jörg Lühdorff) – TV feature
2003	<i>Das Herz ist rot</i> (Christine Kabisch) – TV feature
2002	<i>A Map Of The Heart</i> (Dominik Graf)
2001	<i>Ratten – Sie werden dich kriegen</i> (Jörg Lühdorff) – TV feature
2000	<i>Tatort – Tödliches Verlangen</i> (Miko Zeuschner) – TV series
2000	<i>Kanak Attack</i> (Lars Becker)
1998	<i>Der Eisbär</i> (Til Schweiger)
1998	<i>Kurz und schmerzlos</i> (Fatih Akin)
1997	<i>Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door</i> (Thomas Jahn)
1992	<i>Schattenboxer</i> (Lars Becker)

MARIA SCHUSTER

From 1987 until 1989 Maria Schuster took acting lessons with Gabi Oetterer (Freiburg State Theatre) and additionally singing lessons at the Music School Mariendorf between 1989 and 1991. She also participated in a method acting-workshop with John Costopoulos as well as in workshops with Yoshi Oida in 1999 and 2002 respectively. Maria Schuster acted in films such as "Nachtfalter" directed by Frank Novotny and "Poem" directed by Ralf Schmerberg and also starred in many popular TV series, most notably: "Großstadtrevier" (ARD) and "Wolffs Revier" (Sat1). After some theatre productions at the Freiburger State Theatre in the late 1980ies, she later on worked with theatre directors Christoph Schlingensiefel, Jan Bosse and Armin Petras in Berlin. She toured with the comedy show "Traumfrau Mutter – Mom's the world" (Ingolf Lück, 2000–2010) throughout Berlin, Hamburg, Zurich and Munich. As a professional singer for "Jail Babes" (BMG) she achieved a (German) Gold Record status and was awarded with the Music Award "Goldene Stimmgabel" in 2002.

Filmography (selection):

2010	<i>Swans</i> (Hugo Vieira da Silva)
2009	<i>Sprit</i> (Marco Raab)
2009	<i>Kleine Fische</i> (Marco Antoniazzi)
2008	<i>Two Funny</i> (Patrick Schlosser, Joris Hermanns, Dietmar Schuch) – TV comedy
2007	<i>Doppelmord</i> (Dana Linkiewicz) – short
2006	<i>Da kommt Kalle</i> (Lars Jessen) – TV series
2005	<i>Antibodies</i> (Christian Alvert)
2004	<i>Beyond The Sea</i> (Kevin Spacey)
2004	<i>Dornröschens leiser Tod</i> (Marcus Rosenmüller) – TV feature
2004	<i>Status Yo!</i> (Till Hastreiter)
2003	<i>Ein starkes Team</i> (Maris Pfeiffer) – TV series
2003, 2006	<i>Soko Wismar</i> (Dirk Pientka, Lars Jessen) – TV series
2003	<i>Wolffs Revier</i> (Jürgen Bretzinger) – TV series
2003	<i>Großstadtrevier</i> (Lars Jessen) – TV series
2001	<i>Escort Service</i> (Franz Novotny)
2001	<i>Poem_ I Set My Foot Upon The Air And It Carried Me</i> (Ralf Schmerberg)
2001	<i>Alaska.de</i> (Esther Gronenborn)
2000	<i>Im Westen wird sie untergehen ... – Balra a nap nyugszik</i> (András Fésös)
1998–1999	<i>Freunde fürs Leben</i> (Nicolai Müllerschön, Gero Erhardt) – TV series
1999	<i>Gnadenlos 2</i> (Gabi Kubach) – TV feature





DIRECTOR HUGO VIEIRA DA SILVA ON ...

... how the story starts:

In this film two people are confronted with a situation that is completely new for them. In a minimalistic setting (an apartment, a hospital) they are each forced to face intimate layers of themselves, past feelings, an unfamiliar body, their own body.

... the developments:

In the course of the film, father and son embark on a parallel journey: the boy to his (past) connection to his mother's body, the father to a past intimacy that he once had with the boy's mother.

... sexuality:

Manuel's sexuality is very vague. In a way he is lost. His interest in people is similar to that of his interest in objects; it remains superficial and he builds a kind of fetish relationship to them. At first he experiences his mother's body – like the objects or the masks – as a substitute for a deeper relationship to another person. In the course of the film, the quality of these relations changes.

... coming of age:

I don't really see Manuel's path as a coming-of-age story. His journey, triggered by his mother's body, does not move towards the development of an identity but rather opens up a sensory space of indefiniteness: a physical exploration of a world that does not submit itself to conventional language. What happens there is open. His father Tarso embarks on the same journey yet in a very different way.

... the character of K.

K. is only created through the gaze of Manuel and Tarso. She appears and disappears, we don't know anything about her. She has a ghost-like presence in this film. A household ghost.

... the casting and the work process:

The work with the actors was very important and it began before the shooting with improvisations and research that I had developed in collaboration with the choreographer and dramaturge Heidi Wilm. We continued this collaboration on set where we created several of the film's scenes together. Maria Schuster, who plays the character of Petra, took on the challenge of embodying a person in a coma. Actors generally are used to build a psychological or biographical background for their characters. In this case, however, she couldn't use these conventional tools. Maria brought in a huge measure of generos-

ity to the rehearsals where together we found a way to let her character emerge from her physical presence. With Kai Hillebrand it was different. We found him through a street casting because we were looking for a skater and not an actor. In a long working process that lasted about two months, we worked on his presence and his ability to improvise so that later we could develop a lot of scenes with him. Working with Ralph Herforth was always very intense. He comes from a more commercial cinema. Sometimes we clashed. But right from the beginning we had the feeling that he had a wish to try out different ways of working. In the course of our work, he revealed a fragility that we had not known and that became fundamental to the character of Tarso. Ralph opened up immensely during the shooting and added much of himself into the character.

... Berlin as a location:

Berlin is not just one but ten or fifteen cities with very different aspects. The Gropius city has a certain meaning, for each and every citizen of Berlin. This comes also partially from a filmic memory. The Gropius city was initially designed and conceived within the frame of social utopic values of the 60's. Then it became temporarily forgotten and today is simply a residential area, somewhat lost without much social life. However it's full of things you don't see at first sight; you have to open doors to see what's happening. It seems empty, especially in winter but there is a lot going on beneath the surface.

... working with cinematographer Reinhold Vorschneider:

Reinhold really liked the script. He is very rigorous. And he has something that a lot of cinematographers don't have: He appears to be quite formal but the most important thing for him is to tell the story and to reflect about the images that are made. Some media claim that there's a certain "Vorschneider" aesthetic but that's a mistake. Reinhold is not interested in an "aesthetic". Rather he consistently challenges what cinema can be. It wasn't like that I had a story and I wanted a cameraman to deliver me the pictures for it. It was more of an attentive and collective experience of creating something together.

... the title of his film "Swans":

The expression "Swans" naturally carries a multitude of meanings as well as a symbolic dimension that differs from culture to culture. I would rather not define its meaning for the film. I think that every viewer is sure to find a personal relationship between the title and the story and perhaps not only on the symbolic level ...

... his work in Germany:

SWANS is a consequence of my life in Berlin. Berlin is a crossroads of cultures where new forms of social life have emerged. Some of these forms are not based on the old concepts of belonging to a culture of origin. This situation brings many interesting questions. It is within this framework that my work has been developing.

HUGO VIEIRA DA SILVA DIRECTOR

Born 1974 in Oporto, Portugal. After studying law at the Catholic university in Oporto from 1992 to 1995, Hugo Vieira da Silva graduated from the Lisbon School Of Theatre and Cinema (ESTC) in 1999. His graduation documentary *Arte pública* was awarded with the Kodak Prize for Best Portuguese Documentary film 1998. His following documentaries *Grupo Puzzle* and *Confesso* were screened and curated in several international contemporary art institutions and galleries. After receiving the Nipkow Grant fellowship programme 2003 he moved to Berlin. His first feature film *Body Rice*, produced by Paulo Branco, won several awards, most notably: the Best Director category in Buenos Aires (Bafici-2007) and Mexico (Ficco-2007), a Special Mention of the official competition in Locarno 2006, Best Cinematography and Best Sound of the official section in Fortaleza (Brazil) 2007. Furthermore, the film was selected for more than 10 competitive international sections. *Swans* is his second feature film. During development, the project was selected for L'atelier – Cannes film festival 2009, Binger Filmlab Script Development Programme and was awarded at the Torino FilmLab Development 2008. He was recently curated/selected for the book “The future of film-100 new directors” edited by Phaidon-New York, 2010. Hugo Vieira da Silva currently lives and works between Vienna and Berlin.



Filmography (selection) as writer and director:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2010 | <i>Swans</i> (feature film), 120 min / Red Produced by Flying Moon, Contracosta Produções |
| 2006 | <i>Body Rice</i> (feature film), 120min / 35mm Produced by Paulo Branco |
| 2003 | <i>Confesso</i> (<i>Albuquerque Mendes</i> (documentary) 52min / Digital |
| 2001 | <i>Grupo Puzzle</i> (documentary) 52min / Digital |
| 1998 | <i>Arte pública</i> (documentary) 30m / 16mm |

HEIDI WILM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Heidi Wilm, born 1978 in Graz, studied Contemporary Dance at the Iwanson School in Munich and philosophy at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. She works as a choreographer, dramaturge and performer. Various projects and collaborations with artists from different fields. Publications on dance and performance theory. Currently developing the feature film *Wellengang* together with Hugo Vieira da Silva, produced by Prisma Film, Vienna, selected for Cinemart 2011, International Filmfestival Rotterdam.





SWANS

SWANS
a film by Hugo Vieira da Silva

GERMANY / PORTUGAL 2011
126 minutes
DCP · color · 1:1,85 · Dolby Digital 5.1 · in German

CAST

Manuel Kai Hillebrand
Tarso Ralph Herforth
Petra Maria Schuster
Kim Vasupol Siriviriyapoon
Doctor Eva Kryll
Healer Cornelius Schwalm
Andreas Christian Schwarz
Nurse Anne Rathsfeld
Policeman Robert Lohr

CREW

Director of Photography Reinhold Vorschneider
Editor Andrea Wagner
Sound Recordist Nic Nagel
Writer Hugo Vieira da Silva
Co-Director Heidi Wilm
Director Hugo Vieira da Silva
Producer Helge Albers
Co-Producer Francisco Villa-Lobos
Associate Producer Roshanak Behesht Nedjad
Production Manager Ole Nicolaisen
Production Designer Thomas Molt
Costume Designer Gabriella Ausonio
Make-up Ljiljana Müller
Casting Antje Mißbach
Sound Design Daniel Iribarren
Manuel Laval
Sound Mix Matthias Schwab



SWANS

WORLD SALES

The Match Factory

Balthasarstraße 79–81

50670 Köln / Germany

phone +49 221 539 709 0

fax +49 221 539 709 10

info@matchfactory.de

www.the-match-factory.com

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Wolfgang W. Werner Public Relations

Hohenzollernstraße 10

80801 München / Germany

phone +49 89 38 38 67 0

fax +49 89 38 38 67 11

info@werner-pr.de

IN BERLIN

Christiane Leithardt

cell +49 179 104 806 4

Wolfgang W. Werner

cell +49 170 333 935 3

info@werner-pr.de

SWANS

A FILM BY HUGO VIEIRA DA SILVA

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY REINHOLD VORSCHNEIDER EDITOR ANDREA WAGNER CASTING ANTJE MISSBACH PRODUCTION DESIGNER THOMAS MOLT COSTUME DESIGNER GABRIELLA AUSONIO MAKE-UP LJILJANA MÜLLER SOUND RECORDIST NIC NAGEL SOUND DESIGN DANIEL IRIBARREN, MANUEL LAVAL
SOUND MIX MATTHIAS SCHWAB PRODUCTION MANAGER OLE NICOLAISEN ASSOCIATE PRODUCER ROSHANAK BEHESHT NEDJAD CO-PRODUCER FRANCISCO VILLA-LOBOS PRODUCER HELGE ALBERS CO-DIRECTOR HEIDI WILM A FILM BY HUGO VIEIRA DA SILVA
A FLYING MOON PRODUCTION IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH CONTRACOSTA PRODUÇÕES IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE POST REPUBLIC FUNDED BY MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-BRANDENBURG, TORINOFILMLAB, DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRDERFONDS DFFF, MC/ICA DEVELOPED THROUGH MEDIA PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,
BINGER FILMLAB AMSTERDAM, SCRIPT & PITCH WORKSHOP, ACE ATELIERS DU CINEMA EUROPEEN PROJECT SELECTED BY L'ATELIER — CANNES 2009 INTERNATIONAL SALES THE MATCH FACTORY

medienboard
Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH

TFL
TorinoFilmLab
Creative Development Funding

DEUTSCHER
FILMFÖRDERFONDS

MC
Ministerio da Cultura

ICA
INSTITUTO DO CINEMA
E DO AUDIOVISUAL

MEDIA

Binger FilmLab

SCRIPT
& PITCH
WORKSHOPS

aCe

cinéfondation
berlin

FLYING
MOON
LABORATORY

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

THE POST
REPUBLIC

THE MATCH FACTORY

DOLBY
DIGITAL