

GERMAN CINEMA OF THE 1970's

FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

8:00 in TISHMAN

With Faculty Introductions

THE TIN DRUM



WERNER HERZOG

"We are surrounded by worn-out images, and we deserve new ones. I see something on the horizon that most people have not yet seen. I seek planets that do not exist and landscapes that have only been dreamed." --Herzog

Introduction by Ruben R. Puentedura

September 17-18-- Aguirre, the Wrath of God (1973)

An advance expedition of conquistadors journeys into madness--a spectacularly horrifying chronicle of imperialism gone amok. With Klaus Kinski.

September 24-25-- Heart of Glass (1976)

Hallucinatory account of a small German town that goes collectively mad in its desperate search for a lost glass-making formula. Incredible apocalyptic visions.

October 1-2-- Stroszek (1977)

Lyrical, melancholy, bitterly funny tale of three oddly assorted Berlin misfits who follow the American Dream to a godforsaken truck stop in Wisconsin.

October 8-- Land of Silence and Darkness (1971)

An astonishing documentary about the world of the deaf-blind. A mystical attempt to conceive the inconceivable.



Volker Schlöndorff



Introduction by David Luebke

October 15-16-- The Tin Drum (1979)

A child refuses to grow up in pre-war Germany.

"Everything has been said and said again about the rise and fall of Hitler but never so forcefully as by Gunter Grass who said 'Nazism is the infantilism of an epoch and a society'" --Schlöndorff

Alexander Kluge

"Film is not a matter of auteurs but rather a dialogue between the spectators and the author.. For me the film produces itself in the head of the viewer, not on the screen."

"The film is no more important than that which the viewer brings to it." --Kluge

Introduction by Phebe Chao

October 29-30-- Yesterday Girl (1966)

Anita G., born 1937, Jewish, is caught in a minor theft. From then on she goes through life without any real hold on it. Winner of 8 prizes at the Venice Film Festival, the first postwar German film to win an International prize.

November 5-6-- Strongman Ferdinand (1976)

A chief of security in a large factory must investigate a death threat to the board of directors. This involves personal surveillance of his superiors, which unveils some amazing facts..



RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER

"My films are documents of my personality"

"The more personal that films are, the more they express about the country in which they have come into being."

"It would be my dream to make a German film so beautiful and so crazy and so wonderful and that could nevertheless be critical of the system..." --Fassbinder

Introduction by Reinhard Mayer

November 12-13-- The Marriage of Maria Braun (1978)

Spectacular mixture of epic, comedy, and soap opera chronicling the rise of postwar Germany as embodied by a woman (Hanna Schygulla) who builds a career while waiting for her long-lost soldier husband.

November 19-20-- The Stationmaster's Wife (1978)

Caustic chamber-drama of a smug petty official's downfall at the hands of his hopelessly unfaithful wife.

December 3-4-- Chinese Roulette (1976)

An executive and his wife are tricked by their hand-capped daughter into going to their country house with their lovers on the same weekend. Then the child shows up, too, for a game of Chinese Roulette.

December 10-11-- Bremer Freedom (1973)

The legend of Gaesche Gottfried, who for the sake of love and wealth had unscrupulously and sanctimoniously eliminated her two children, two husbands, father, mother, brothers and others involved with her, until she was finally brought to justice.

German film reaches its 100th anniversary in 1995. The sound system in Tishman is about to be improved. To celebrate these two upcoming events, the film society has organized a festival of German Cinema of the 1970's. This film series has several goals. First, it is a selection of four of the most prominent directors of this renaissance period of German film: Werner Herzog, Volker Schlöndorff, Alexander Kluge and Rainer Werner Fassbinder (an admittedly but necessarily skimpy list due to the length of the term and to the availability of films and money).

This grouping as a whole complements last term's festival of German silent film of the 1920's, the other of the two golden eras of German Cinema. These periods are not only related in their degree of excellence. The influence of the German film of the 20's on the directors of the 70's is openly acknowledged by several of them; Herzog's remake of "Nosferatu" is an open tribute to F.W. Murnau and Expressionist Cinema. Kluge, the most historically rooted of all these directors, acknowledges his debt as well: "I would make no films if the film history of the 1920's did not exist. Since I have been making films, I have made them with reference to this classical tradition."

As well, the classic American films of the 30's and 40's which was such a strong stylistic influence on directors like Wenders and Fassbinder (including Billy Wilder, Douglas Sirk, Orson Wells, Hitchcock, Fritz Lang and much of what is grouped under the vague label of "American Film Noir") actually springs directly out of German Expressionism-- Fritz Lang being the primary German director of the 20's. The shadows and fog of American crime thrillers would have been impossible without "Caligari". (This oddly displaced link-- American Film Noir-- might be presented next term depending on funds.)

It is what separates these two eras that provides the second context-- the rise of fascism which cut short German Expressionist Cinema (or which some consider to be the culmination of Expressionism: see From Caligari to Hitler by Siegfried Kracauer) forcing directors such as Lang and Murnau to relocate to Hollywood. The reign of Nazism which all but buried German Cinema for decades, was a natural subject for the reborn cinema to grapple with. Three films dealing with this subject are grouped about the middle of the term to correspond to David Luebke's class "Daily Life in Nazi Germany 1933-1945": Schlöndorff's "The Tin Drum", Kluge's "Yesterday Girl" and Fassbinder's "The Marriage of Maria Braun". Herzog, although the most individual and unhistorically oriented of the group, provides his own vision of fascism with "Aguirre, the Wrath of God", which will start the festival. In addition, Luebke will be presenting the nine episode "Heimat", "Triumph of the Will" and other Documentary films in the barn.

Interdisciplinary study is essential to Bennington. Film is the perfect medium to bring disciplines together; film is, before anything, under the deceptive guise of "entertainment", an experience.