

The Museum of Modern Art

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FILMS FROM THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC 21 EAST GERMAN PRODUCTIONS IN 7-WEEK MUSEUM RETROSPECTIVE

To indicate the growth and trends of cinema in the German Democratic Republic, the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art announces the first retrospective of East German films to be shown in this country. The six - week program, from November 20 to December 29, features 21 films made from 1946 to 1974, with a wide range of themes, including "socialized" versions of such classics as Georg Buchner's "Wozzeck," Richard Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman," and "The Devil's Elixir" from The Tales of Hoffman. All the films have English subtitles.

Adrienne Mancía, Associate Curator of Film, responsible for this comprehensive program, points out that it interrupts 20 years of cultural silence from East Germany in terms of film. Many of the pictures, Mrs. Mancía indicates, are traditional in style, but they give us some insight into "a cinema shaped by the force of political ideology" in a country where film production is subsidized by the State. "These cinematic signals make no pretense at objectivity - what national cinema ever did? - but we can nevertheless glean valuable information about the value system and concerns operating in this country."

Press Screenings	
4th floor Screening Room	
21 West 53 St.	
Tuesday, November 18 at 11:00	MY DEAR ROBINSON
2:00	THE NAKED MAN IN THE PLAYING FIELD
Wednesday, November 19 at 2:00	JACOB THE LIAR

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To initiate the Museum series, Dr. Rolf Sieber, Ambassador to the United States from the German Democratic Republic, will introduce Wolfgang Klaue, Director of the State Film Archives of the German Democratic Republic, a renowned film historian and vice president of the International Federation of Film Archives, arriving here from East Germany to speak to the American audience present at the first evening program of the Museum's cycle. Dr. Klaue will discuss the most recent picture of the series, "Jacob The Liar," shown at this year's Berlin Film Festival. The story of the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, it is not a documentary, rather a legend rich with humor and fantasy, evoked by the leading character, who manages to renew the failing human spirit and to keep alive hope and laughter in a time of deepest anguish.

"Jacob The Liar" was written ten years ago as an original screenplay by the author, Jurek Becker, in collaboration with the director, Frank Beyer. When a film did not materialize, the screenwriter converted the screenplay into a novel. The novel has since been translated into 27 languages, and soon will be published here by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. The success of the novel made the film possible, and it was finally produced in 1974, with the famous Czech actor, Vlastimil Brodsky, in the lead.

The earliest picture on the program, "The Murderers Are Among Us" of 1946, is described as a savage picture of post-war Berlin. According to the London Daily Telegraph, it is "a classic study of a great people in defeat in a national stocktaking in hell ... one of the most important films ever made." "The Murderers Are Among Us" is one of three films shown briefly in the

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United States; the others are "The Blum Affair," based on a celebrated murder case, resembling the Dreyfus affair, and "Marriage in the Shadows," the true story of a theatrical couple who maintained a mixed marriage in the face of the Nuremberg laws.

Guilt and totalitarianism preoccupied East German filmmakers until recent years. Typical is "The Gleiwitz Case," made in 1961 by Gerhard Klein, recreating an actual event of August 1939. German soldiers dressed as Poles attacked a radio station in the German frontier town of Gleiwitz. This trick provided Hitler with the pretext for his invasion of Poland.

More recent films deal with contemporary problems: women's role in society, marital relationships, parenthood, divorce, and the responsibility of the artist to the community. These subjects, expected to appeal to younger audiences, are favored by today's filmmakers. An example is "The Naked Man in the Playing Field," made in the past year by Konrad Wolf, from a screenplay by Wolfgang Kohlhaase. It concerns a sculptor, the social climate in which he lives, his sensitivity to the reactions of others, and his own approach to his art -- in sum, the artist's defeats and successes.

The schedule is enclosed.

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