



CORINNA KIRCHHOFF  
KATHLEEN MORGENEYER

# DAUGHTERS

A FILM BY MARIA SPETH

 **64** Internationale  
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**Forum**

64th Berlin International Film Festival  
Forum

# DAUGHTERS

a film by Maria Speth

Germany 2013 / 92 minutes / 24fps / DCP / 1:2.39 / 5.1 Stereo

a MADONNEN FILM production

co-produced by ZDF – DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL

in association with ARTE and with support from BKM

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## PRESS BOOK

## SYNOPSIS

Agnes, a teacher from the German province Hesse, comes to Berlin to identify a dead girl. The police suspect she is Agnes' fifteen-year-old daughter Lydia, who has run away from home. But she is not. Agnes decides to stay in Berlin, driven by the hope of finding her daughter. A desperate search begins that takes her to railway missions, junkie hangouts and homeless shelters – places Agnes fears and would usually avoid. The worst part is not knowing. Ines has been living in Berlin for years: on the street or with people who offer her shelter. She claims to be a painter, but is actually a cunning social parasite. One night, the two women's paths cross. From that point on, Ines clings to Agnes' side. She infiltrates the older woman's life as though it were her own. Agnes yields to the young woman's forceful ways. This stranger seems outlandish, bewildering and menacing, yet somehow familiar. The two women develop a peculiar relationship based on attraction and repulsion. Agnes becomes confused and disoriented. Where did Ines come from and why did she come to her? Is there a link between this stranger and her daughter? Should Agnes continue searching for Lydia? Why does Agnes not show Ines the door? Agnes is faced with a difficult decision.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When shooting was completed on my film MADONNAS, someone gave me a book called “Dann hau ich eben ab” [Then I’ll just leave]. Conversations with parents whose children had run away from home. The book inspired me to make another film with the actress who had played Fanny in MADONNAS, who had been 12 years old at the time. Months later I began researching the world of street kids and homeless young people in Berlin. And then I met a young woman whose defiant energy reminded me of Fanny. A young woman who saw herself as an artist, but who rejected the art scene, the same way she broadly rejected all of society’s demands to perform and succeed. With her intelligence and abilities she would have been ideally equipped to fulfil these requirements. Her favourite stance was an aggressively argued critique of society in all its forms. A freeloader by conviction. This society produces so much surplus. It’s only fair to partake. I was interested in a possible continuation of Fanny’s story. This was impossible, though, without the figure of the mother. And the street kids’ mothers aren’t necessarily unemployed and living in Märkische Viertel. They also work as teachers. German and History, maybe. At a humanist grammar school in a small town in Hesse. Very bourgeois, very normal, very orderly. But they refuse to talk. About the flaws. The guilt. And the shame.

“The most important things in life are your own feelings. If they weren’t hurt in some way, then you’d be a fantastic person your whole life long. If you feel it, then it’s true.” (John Cassavetes)

The first place hurt occurs is in the family. The family is this society in its smallest organisational form. Everything which defines life in society also defines the family, and vice versa. But relationships within families aren’t regulated by public law and order. That’s why the relationships are more loving, or more brutal and inconsiderate. Agnes and Ines, the two protagonists of my film, bear the wounds of their families when they meet. As mother and as daughter. With the chance to maybe experience these roles in a different way. Or to repeat the past.

## WRITER & DIRECTOR: MARIA SPETH

Born in 1967, studied directing at the Konrad Wolf University of Film and Television in Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany. Since 1991 she has worked as an assistant editor and assistant director for feature films and TV movies. Her early short film BAREFOOT (Barfuß, 1999) won the 3sat Incentive Award. Her debut feature, THE DAYS BETWEEN (In den Tag hinein, 2001), won the VPRO Tiger Award in Rotterdam, the Grand Jury Award at the Créteil International Women's Film Festival, and the MFG-Star Award in 2001. Her second feature MADONNAS (Madonnen, 2007) premiered in the Forum section of the Berlin International Film Festival and received the Hessian Film Prize. Actress Sandra Hüller won the „Silver Astor“ Award as Best Actress for her role in MADONNAS at the International Film Festival in Mar del Plata. In 2009, Speth founded the production company Madonnen Film, and wrote, directed, produced and edited her documentary debut 9 LIVES (9 LEBEN, 2010). The film received the DEFA Foundation's Incentive Award at DOK Leipzig in 2010 and the Open Eyes Youth Jury Award at the International Human Rights Film Festival in Nuremberg in 2011. Maria Speth was awarded the Incentive Prize for Film and Media Art from the Academy of Arts in Berlin in 2011. In 2012, she received the German Director's Award Metropolis as the Best Director in the documentary category for 9 LIVES.

### FILMOGRAPHY

- 2013 **DAUGHTERS** (Töchter) Writer, director, editor, producer
- 2010 **9 LIVES** (9 Leben) Writer, director, editor, producer
- 2005-07 **MADONNAS** (Madonnen) Writer, director, editor
- 2000-01 **THE DAYS BETWEEN** (In den Tag hinein) Writer, director
- 1999 **BAREFOOT** (Barfuß) Writer, director



## INTERVIEW MARIA SPETH

**Your three films so far have focussed on women who don't conform to specific roles, whose lives or actions contradict expectations. What is it about these female characters that interests you?**

The problems, questions, the contradictions in these characters are not specific to women. So any of these characters could also be men. But since I'm a woman, and the impulses for my films are very strongly rooted in my life and experience, it seems the best thing for me is to talk about women.

Lynn, in *THE DAYS BETWEEN*. Her aggressive and unconventional behaviour is an expression of insecurity. If you want: a way to deal with insecurity which society can't accept.

Lynn doesn't know how she is supposed to live, work, love... The transition from youth to adulthood is often hard and takes up a whole life. But society expects you to suddenly understand how life works, to understand how to earn money, be productive and take responsibility. And then there's love. What is that feeling? Does it bring happiness or put you in danger?

When I began to work on *MADONNAS* I was myself a mother with a three-year-old daughter, and I struggled with this role and the resulting biological and social expectations. And then I read an article about delinquent mothers. Mothers who live in prison with their children. A slap in the face to any concept of a "good mother". I started researching. In the mother-child detention centre in Preungesheim in Frankfurt. That's where I met the woman who, during the process of writing the screenplay, became the character of Rita.

There's always a reference for my characters. People I know. Or people I got to know while researching. That's my starting point. And I'm a part of some of my characters myself. I can imagine that, given the right conditions, I might have acted in similar ways.



DAUGHTERS is in a sense a sequel to MADONNAS. In a way, a continuation of the possible story of Fanny, Rita's oldest daughter. A young woman who is mostly homeless and lives on the street. Aggressive. Despising society. Defiant. Self-destructive.

All these characters have scars that you maybe can't spot immediately, but which determine their lives. "Hurt women" who try, who struggle, refuse, who challenge and demand a lot from themselves and others. To be seen. To experience closeness, comfort or care. And they haven't developed ways to conceal their existential pain and their contradictions. They have to express them in occasionally extreme forms. The pierced "warrior" Sunny in 9 LIVES. The "evil angels" Ines and Rita.

**Your new film is about the encounter between two women with extremely different designs for life. What are they looking for in each other, and what do they find? In this intimate scenario, do Agnes and Ines repeatedly come up against their emotional limits?**

During the development phase of the project people frequently asked me why I wasn't telling the story of the encounter between the mother and her real daughter, who ran away from home. Why the daughter was represented by a stranger.

In a reunion like this, though, it would all be about their shared past. That didn't interest me as much. I felt the need to tell the story of an encounter in which the roles of mother and daughter are recognisable, but are free of the burdens of a concrete, shared biography: free from the need to overcome a concrete, shared past. In order to make an encounter in the present possible. An open situation, you don't know what's going to happen. Where's it heading?

The chances that arise when two people meet. Why do we look for other people? Because people are social beings. They try to

feel. But feelings are normally suppressed. Agnes and Ines find moments of closeness, affection, a bond, trust. There's a chance for a new design for life. Utopia? Then they lose it. Why? Because of their behavioural patterns. Because of their lack of trust. Because of their biographical damage. Because of their fear of being hurt. They are discarded.

It's always about trust. Which is also physical. The more trust is given, the safer the existential ground beneath your feet. This is particularly true of the mother-daughter relationship. For a few short moments in the hotel room Agnes and Ines feel different in these roles than they felt in their previous lives. Parents are often so caught up in their designs for life that they can't even picture an alternative for their children. And they also can't perceive their children as individuals with their own needs. There's a rift. A rift which is passed on. From one generation to the next.

**You don't use a traditional narrative form when telling the stories of these two women – would it be correct to say that you rather follow the women, accompany them for a period in their lives?**

As in my other films, the characters are the starting point. The narrative is determined by the characters. In my experience, people don't change that much after being imprinted by genetics and upbringing. So the coming-of-age novel is not a suitable model for my films. My films tend to describe a state rather than a plot with a beginning and an ending.

In DAUGHTERS I show a section of roughly five days in the lives of Agnes and Ines. There are only traces and hints of what came before and what will happen afterwards. The encounter between the two women is "open-ended". There's no narrative- or plot-driven imperative, no chain of cause and effect, which forces a specific finale or a specific development of the situation. Some things are real. A lot of things are possible. That's the point.

## CINEMATOGRAPHER & WRITER: REINHOLD VORSCHNEIDER

Cinematographer Reinhold Vorschneider, as in Speth's previous films, is responsible for the camera work. They are by now a smoothly working team, and they have developed a special, individual visual language. Vorschneider was born in 1951 and studied Philosophy and Political Science before beginning studies at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin (dffb) in 1983. Vorschneider has worked as a cinematographer since graduating in 1988. In this capacity he has mostly worked with auteur film makers like Rudolf Thome (PARADISO – SIEBEN TAGE MIT SIEBEN FRAUEN, 2000), Angela Schanelec (NACHMITTAG, 2007), Maria Speth (MADONNAS, 2007), Thomas Arslan, Christoph Hochhäusler and Benjamin Heisenberg. As well as working for the cinema, Vorschneider has also been involved with television productions, usually for the director Michael Kreihsl (DER PRAGER FRÜHLING, 2008). In 2010, Reinhold Vorschneider was represented at the Berlinale with three films: Benjamin Heisenberg's THE ROBBER (in Competition), Angela Schanelec's ORLY and Thomas Arslan's IM SCHATTEN (both in Forum). Reinhold Vorschneider was nominated for the German Film Prize in 2010 for his composition work on Benjamin Heisenberg's much-praised drama THE ROBBER. He was also nominated for the Austrian Film Prize and the German Camera Prize for the same film, in the category Camera. He worked on Hugu Vieira da Silva's SWANS and Christoph Hochhäusler's DREILEBEN/EINE MINUTE DUNKEL, both of which were screened at the 2011 Berlinale. In 2012 DREILEBEN was awarded the Grimme Special Prize. Reinhold Vorschneider was awarded the Marburg Camera Award in 2013 for his life's work.



## AGNES: CORINNA KIRCHHOFF

Corinna Kirchhoff was born in 1958 and studied at the Max-Reinhardt-School for Acting in Berlin. Her spectacular debut in the theatre was in 1983, when she played Irina in Chechov's "Three Sisters" at the Schaubühne at Lehniner Platz, directed by Peter Stein. In 1984 she won the O.E. Hasse Prize. She has since worked in numerous theatrical productions as well as worked extensively for film and television. In 1996 she was voted Actress of the Year by Theater heute. She played Helena in Peter Stein's production of "Faust I and II". In 1999 she performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna with Andrea Breth. While there she played in Schiller's "Maria Stuart" and Albee's "The Goat or Who is Sylvia?", among others. She was nominated for a Nestroy Award as Best Actress for her role as Maria Stuart in 2002. She played Genia in Schnitzler's "The Vast Domain" in 2002 and 2003 at the Salzburg Festival (dir. Andrea Breth). From 2005 at the Zurich Schauspielhaus, Corinna Kirchhoff's roles included Ranjewskaja in Chekhov's "Cherry Orchard" (dir. Jürgen Gosch) and the premiere of Reza's "Carnage" (dir. Jürgen Gosch). This production won the Nestroy Theatre Award for Best German-Language Production of the Year, and was invited to the Berlin Theatertreffen festival. Most recently, Corinna Kirchhoff had the role of Lady Marwood in the premiere of Lessing's "Miss Sara Sampson" (dir. Günter Krämer) at the Berliner Ensemble. She also works regularly for film and television, including several TATORT episodes and Hochhäusler's UNTER DIR DIE STADT.

## INES: KATHLEEN MORGENEYER

Kathleen Morgeneuer was born in 1977 and studied at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Art in Berlin. In 2006 she joined the ensemble at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. She later performed at the Deutsche Theater Berlin. From 2009 to 2011 she worked at the Schauspiel Frankfurt, and since the 2011/2012 season she has returned to the ensemble at the Deutsche Theater Berlin. She was Young Actress of the Year 2009, and won the Alfred Kerr Acting Award for her role as Nina in Jürgen Gosch's production of "The Seagull" at the Deutsche Theater Berlin. She worked increasingly in the theatre, but since 2006 has also acted in film and television productions, including UNTEN MITTE KINN by Nicolas Wackerbarth and THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT by Ramon Zürcher. The academy short film DER BRIEF, in which Morgeneuer played the lead, won the First Prize of the Cinéfondation at the Cannes International Film Festival in 2011.



## CAST

Agnes	CORINNA KIRCHHOFF
Ines	KATHLEEN MORGENEYER
Commissioner	HERMANN BEYER
Sculptor Madsen	LARS MIKKELSEN
Car Rental Employee	HANS JOCHEN WAGNER
Thomas	FABIAN HINRICHS
Railway Mission Director	PETER KURTH
Social Worker in Klik Ole	MATTHIAS MATSCHKE
Hakuo Tanaka	HIROKI MANO
Chambermaid Julija	IRINA POTAPENKO
Lydia	DZAMILJA SJÖSTRÖM



## CREW

Producer, Writer & Director	MARIA SPETH
Cinematographer & Writer	REINHOLD VORSCHNEIDER
Editor	MARIA SPETH, GERGANA VOIGT
Casting	ULRIKE MÜLLER
Production Design	OLIVIER MEIDINGER
Costume Design	BIRGITT KILIAN
Sound	JOHANNES GREHL
Mixing	DENIS SECHAUD
Assistant Director	LISA HAUSS
Production Management	SABINA BELCHER
Line Producer	MICHAEL STRICKER
Responsible for ZDF	CLAUDIA TRONNIER
Responsible for ZDF – ARTE	ANNE EVEN DORIS HEPP
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ALPHA VIOLET PRESENTS A MADONNEN FILM PRODUKTION  
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH ZDF DAS KLEINE FERNSEHSPIEL IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTE FUNDED BY BKM  
WITH CORINNA KIRCHHOFF · KATHLEEN MORGENEYER HERMANN BEYER LARS MIKKELSEN  
HANS JOCHEN WAGNER FABIAN HINRICHS PETER KURTH MATTHIAS MATSCHKE HIROKI MANO  
IRINA POTAPENKO DZAMILJA SJÖSTRÖM JUDITH ENGEL MICHAEL SIDERIS  
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