A FADING MAN

OFFICIAL SELECTION
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM 2026

A FILM BY WELF REINHART

FILMWELT VERLEIHAGENTUR PRESENTS A MAVERICK FILM PRODUCTION IN COPRODUCTION WITH BAYERISCHER RUNDFUNK IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARTE MERKI UND REINHART FILM METZ-NEUN SYNCHRON CINEPOSTPRODUCTION

STARRING DAGMAR MANZEL AUGUST ZIRNER HARALD KRASSNITZER SCREENPLAY BY TÜNDE SAUTIER WELF REINHART DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICKY GRAETER (BVK) PRODUCTION DESIGNER LISA GELLER COSTUME DESIGNER MIRIAM WALDENSPUHL THERESA RAAB

HAIR AND MAKE UP BY NICOLE FÖRSTER JEANNE GRÖLLMANN EDITOR ULRIKE TORTORA WELF REINHART CASTING DIRECTOR STEFANY POHLMANN SOUND BY XAVIER FLEMING MUSIC BY PABLO JÓKAY SOUNDDESIGN AND MIX BY STEFAN MÖHL (BVFT)

GRADING BY JULIAN NIESNER COMMISSIONING EDITOR NATALIE LAMBSDORFF THEODOR FUSBAN DANIELA MUCK PRODUCED BY PHILIPP MARON TRISTAN BÄHRE LOUIS MERKI DIRECTED BY WELF REINHART

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A FADING MAN

(Der verlorene Mann)

Director
Welf Reinhart

Screenplay
Tünde Sautier, Welf Reinhart

Cast
Harald Krassnitzer, Dagmar Manzel, August Zirner

A production by
MAVERICK FILM

In co-production with
BR

In collaboration with
ARTE
Merki und Reinhart Film

Producers
Philipp Maron, Tristan Bähre (MAVERICK FILM)
Louis Merki, Welf Reinhart (Merki und Reinhart Film)

Editorial
Natalie Lambsdorff, Theodor Fusban (BR)
Daniela Muck (ARTE)

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The artist Hanne (Dagmar Manzel) and the retired pastor Bernd (August Zirner) lead a happy marriage that, after many years, has settled into a comfortable routine, when Hanne's former husband Kurt (Harald Krassnitzer) suddenly appears at their door out of nowhere. Due to his dementia, Kurt can no longer remember that he and Hanne have been divorced for 20 years. When the couple takes him in temporarily, a lightness long thought lost returns to their marriage. But as time goes by, their shared life begins to unravel more and more.

A FADING MAN tells a touching story about forgetting and remembering, about love and friendship, about growing older and staying young, about farewell and the courage to begin anew. With great sensitivity and a fine sense for nuance, the film portrays tragic as well as comic moments, especially those that come with old age and shape our lives into what they are. At the heart of the film are Dagmar Manzel, Harald Krassnitzer, and August Zirner, who shine as Hanne, Kurt, and Bernd, balancing seriousness with subtle humor.

A FADING MAN is the feature film debut of Welf Reinhart, who co-wrote the screenplay with Tünde Sautier. In 2022, Welf Reinhart won the Student Academy Award with his short film "Eigenheim".

A FADING MAN will celebrate its world premiere at the end of January at the renowned International Film Festival Rotterdam, as part of the Tiger Competition, the section dedicated to international debut feature films.

A FADING MAN is a production by MAVERICK FILM (Tristan Bähre, Philipp Maron), in co-production with BR (editors: Natalie Lambsdorff, Theodor Fusban), and in collaboration with ARTE (Daniela Muck), Merki and Reinhart Film (Louis Merki, Welf Reinhart), as well as CinePostproduction and Metz-Neun Synchron. The screenplay was written by Tünde Sautier and Welf Reinhart. The production was funded by FFF FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Hessen Film & Medien, the German Federal Film Board (FFA), and the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF).

STORY

Hanne (Dagmar Manzel), an artist of what is known as an advanced age, and Bernd Zweig (August Zirner), a retired pastor, live a happy, if somewhat routine, marriage in quiet rural idyll on the edge of a small village. One winter afternoon, Hanne's ex-husband suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere appears at their door. She has seen him perhaps twice in the past twenty years. Kurt (Harald Krassnitzer) behaves as if he has just come home from work, clearly convinced that he is still married to Hanne. A phone call to his daughter Samira (Lene Dax) confirms a quiet suspicion: Kurt is suffering from Alzheimer's, and in his world the divorce no longer exists.

At Samira's request, Hanne and Bernd take Kurt back to the care home where he is staying while his daughter is abroad for work. However, an exhausted caregiver explains that he cannot be held there against his will. At another address that Samira hastily arranges, they are politely but firmly asked to come back the next day. Since the alternative of handing the uninvited guest over to the police is out of the question for Bernd, "When someone is in need, it always concerns us," Kurt is supposed to sleep in the guest room for one night. In the morning, Hanne and Bernd are horrified to discover that their visitor has secretly slipped into their bed and is lying between them.

After being informed that, given the general shortage of care facilities, she cannot expect a place in a home for at least twelve months, Hanne returns from her next attempt to get rid of Kurt angry and empty-handed. Kurt also no longer understands the world: he wants to know why "his" wife is avoiding his tender advances. Over dinner, Bernd urges Hanne to tell him the truth. Reluctantly, she speaks for the first time about her painful separation, which she never truly got over. Since Kurt cannot remember the conversation the following day, Bernd invents an explanation that simplifies matters for the time being. The idea that Kurt and Hanne are in an open marriage and that Bernd is Hanne's lover seems something "the old sixty-eight activist" can accept without difficulty.

When Hanne then receives the news that a place in a care home has suddenly become available, she gently confronts Kurt with the fact that he can no longer live with them and that she has "another man." Kurt reacts with a fit of rage and runs away. After an anxious search, the couple find him in police custody. Officers picked Kurt up at a bus stop and had already informed Samira, who then arrives, ashamed and desperate, with her young daughter. Together they accompany Kurt to the apartment of the single mother, who is clearly overwhelmed. Deeply shaken, Hanne realizes, "I can't leave him here. I feel responsible." After brief hesitation, Bernd agrees to take Kurt in temporarily, as long as Kurt sleeps in the guest room. And as long as Bernd retains the option of drawing a clear line without lengthy explanations and returning to his former life alone with Hanne.
For a while, an unexpected lightness seems to enter the quiet house with the new roommate. Hanne feels artistically inspired by Kurt's presence and reminded of her youth by his affectionate nature. But the more time passes, the more the fragile emotional balance begins to falter. Torn between caring for her ex-husband, whose health is steadily deteriorating, and the question of how much Kurt her marriage to Bernd can withstand, Hanne plunges into a deep moral conflict. Bernd, on the other hand, feels increasingly pushed to the margins within the unconventional trio and ultimately begins to contemplate an even more radical change in his life.

PRODUCTION NOTES

MATCHMAKING: WHEN “EIGENHEIM” MEETS “SONNENPLÄTZE”

A moving story about forgetting and remembering, and about the courage to see aging as a new beginning: A FADING MAN tells of a marriage that is shaken out of its entrenched routine by an unexpected echo from the past and confronted with its own impermanence. At the center of this film, staged with great sensitivity and gentle humor, is a dementia diagnosis. Yet it is less about medical suffering than about love and identity, about how relationships can continue to grow even in advanced age, and about how one can wrest as much life as possible from aging and one’s own transience.

This idea of “growing together” also plays a decisive role in the origin story of A FADING MAN, more precisely the coming together of talents who share a common past and common roots at the University of Television and Film Munich. As so often, however, it took a third person to bring them together again. While still a student, Welf Reinhart made the short film Eigenheim in 2021, about an elderly couple fighting against the forced eviction from their apartment. This student exercise won the coveted Student Academy Award® in October 2022. Since then, Reinhart, with his clear signature and his fine sense for “empathetic realism,” has been considered one of the great hopes of emerging German cinema. The same applies to Philipp Maron and Tristan Bähre, also HFF graduates. With their production company MAVERICK FILM, founded in 2016 originally with Sebastian Fehring, and their debut feature Sonnenplätze, directed by Aaron Arens, they scored an immediate festival hit in 2024 that was celebrated by critics and audiences alike. The tragicomic family drama about a homeless young writer who occupies her parents’ vacation home on Lanzarote was awarded the Bavarian Film Award for Best Emerging Film and the VGF Emerging Producers Award. Both projects also brought the filmmakers international visibility and thus paved the way for A FADING MAN. Both were co-productions with Bavarian Broadcasting, whose responsible commissioning editor now acted as a “matchmaker.”

“At film school we actually never had anything to do with each other,” Philipp Maron recalls. “Of course we were aware of the success of Eigenheim, but there were no points of contact. Then Welf, looking for production partners for his first feature film, approached Natalie Lambsdorff from BR, who kindly recommended us.” At the end of 2023, Reinhart and his co-writer Tünde Sautier, with whom he had already developed Eigenheim, presented a first draft of the screenplay to MAVERICK FILM, and Philipp Maron immediately knew what kind of film could emerge from it. “If you have seen the short film and read the script, it was easy to abstract what A FADING MAN was meant to be: a strong, emotional story with a relevant theme, but above all with great sensitivity and respect for the characters.” A FADING MAN would be a calling card, a reference for further joint projects. “Welf works in a very structured and forward-looking way,” says Maron. “He was very clear that the film should appeal to as broad an audience as possible, which was also a logical next step for us as MAVERICK. We are all still relatively at the beginning of our careers. We have been able to establish ourselves with our first successes, but we still have a lot to fight for and a lot we want to do. It certainly helps that we are of a similar age and want to make similar kinds of films.” “The Mavericks have a great instinct for content, which they already proved with the wonderful Sonnenplätze,” confirms Welf Reinhart. “We were on the same wavelength from the very first moment.”

With Louis Merki, with whom the director had previously realized Eigenheim through their company Merki und Reinhart Film, and with BR and ARTE on board as co-producers, things then moved forward relatively quickly. “One of the first steps we took together was the search for the actors and actress for the three leading roles, together with our casting agent Stefany Pohlmann,” Reinhart reports. August Zirner had already committed at that point, and in the summer of 2024 Dagmar Manzel and Harald Krassnitzer completed the dream cast. How was it possible to engage three of the most renowned character actors in the German-speaking world for a debut film? “Honestly, I do not quite know myself,” Reinhart laughs. “I approached August Zirner on the recommendation of Doris Dörrie, with whom I had discussed the script at an early stage. She thought he would be a perfect, and also musical, pastor and suggested I attend one of his jazz concerts. On that occasion I simply went up to him. He invited me to his home and we talked at

length about the story. I met Dagmar Manzel later during the shooting of Mimi Kezele's film about Kati Witt, where I was second unit director. At the premiere I told her about the idea and she said, 'Sounds great,' but that she had no time. I told her I would move everything for her if she took on the role of Hanne, and so she reconsidered." At the latest when all three sat together for dinner at the Reinharts' home, the director knew: "This fits perfectly. Especially because all three actors got along extremely well right away and, by the way, are still in contact to this day. That was a real stroke of luck for the film."

CHALLENGES: THE PERFECT LOCATION AND THE RIGHT TONE

With this, and with the credentials that MAVERICK FILM and Merki und Reinhart Film could present, funding was secured from the FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, Hessen Film & Medien, the German Federal Film Board and the DFFF, and Filmwelt was brought on board as a distributor for the German theatrical release. Before things could really get going, however, the shooting location was first and foremost "a very big issue," as Philipp Maron recalls. "We worked with many location scouts, but it was not easy to find what we wanted." Welf Reinhart and cinematographer Micky Graeter had very clear ideas about the house in which Hanne and Bernd live, which would be at the center of the story. Finding a house that matched the intended mood and atmosphere became a time-consuming challenge, until Reinhart eventually discovered a listed holiday home in the Upper Palatinate on a website and was able to convince the producers to relocate most of the shoot to a village of 27 inhabitants south of Nuremberg.

In addition to the location, another perhaps even greater challenge for Philipp Maron, who also took on the role of line producer, was to devise a shooting schedule for a trio of lead actors as busy and often tied up in theater work as Dagmar Manzel, Harald Krassnitzer and August Zirner. This was particularly true given the complex subject matter, which required careful preparation. That the cast took "more time than is usually the case" for this was something Welf Reinhart especially appreciated.

The support of the German Alzheimer's Association proved enormously helpful in this preparatory work. During his script research, Reinhart had trained with the organization as a dementia companion. A workshop was now organized specifically for the actors, an "Alzheimer parcours" that guides participants through a typical day of those affected, making their everyday lives tangible and conveying an understanding of what dementia symptoms feel like. "Harald Krassnitzer also met with the men I had been caring for over the course of a year," Reinhart says. "Afterwards he continued researching in his private environment and gradually prepared for the role."

Another result of the collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association are the scenes shot in three different care facilities. "I absolutely wanted these almost documentary images, for example in the dementia shared apartment, which is actually a dementia group run by the Alzheimer's Association, and in the cooking group, where one of the men I accompanied as a dementia helper can be seen. We also shot the singing circle at the end in a care home," Reinhart reveals. These are only short glimpses into the patients' everyday lives, but they contribute greatly to the authenticity of what is shown and created an intensity that also affected the actors' performances. "We had to interrupt the scene in the residential group several times because Harald started crying and could not hold back his emotions, as the situation affected him so deeply," Reinhart says. Maron adds: "This authenticity was incredibly important to us. We are deeply grateful to the residents and their relatives for being willing to appear on camera and take part. Everyone quickly realized that we had engaged seriously with the subject. I believe the entire team was moved by the way the story is told, how the characters act, and by the fact that with A FADING MAN we did not want to make a 'problem film,' but certainly one that does not gloss over anything." Not least, it was Harald Krassnitzer's acting performance and sensitivity that ensured the portrayal of the illness "never slips into the ridiculous or the kitschy. The moment he committed to the role, a weight lifted from my heart, because it was clear that we would succeed in striking this balance between emotionality and seriousness."

Shooting over a total of 23.5 days began in early February 2025 in Jettenhofen, Bavaria. Due to the actors' schedules and commitments, additional locations in Denmark and Munich, such as the

Alte Pinakothek, were filmed in a separate shoot in mid-May. In order to remain as flexible as possible, partly due to the debut nature of the film and partly because of the budget, the production traveled with a smaller crew. The change of location and move to the north were indispensable not only for dramaturgical reasons. “The aesthetics of the landscape, the muted colors, the melancholy give the film a tremendous visual appeal,” enthuses Philipp Maron. “It was just as important to Welf and Micky Graeter as it was to us as producers not to make this film look like a debut, but always to bring a certain scale and quality to the image.” The time between the shooting blocks was used for initial editing work, with the intensive phase of post-production, for which Ulrike Tortora was responsible, following in the months after the end of filming.

Against this backdrop, composer Pablo Jókay accompanied the project from the very beginning and delivered initial suggestions for the score even before shooting started. An important impulse for the tone of the film came from a legendary song by the German cult rock band Ton Steine Scherben, “Der Traum ist aus.” Philipp Maron explains: “A friend brought us this idea. With his band, Florian Paul & Die letzte Kapelle der Hoffnung, he recorded a very beautiful cover version of ‘Der Traum ist aus,’ which inspired us to use the song not just as a needle drop, but in a more versatile way. It can be heard in a particular scene on the car radio, and later August Zirner plays the melody on the piano.” “Der Traum ist aus” says a great deal about the characters, their world and their possibly political past, and it also fits so perfectly because it moves away from the classical piano music often expected in films about aging. As Welf Reinhart recalls: “We searched for a long time to find a piece that touches the characters’ youth and at the same time conveys this sense of new beginnings. It sounds avant-garde, rebellious, and not like a cliché.”

LEARNINGS: THE END IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

This very sense of new beginnings, and the rebellious refusal of the protagonists to accept aging as the end of a dream, also carried over to the atmosphere on set. “Many people on our team were our age, around 30 or a bit younger, creatives who wanted to prove themselves and were also willing to take risks,” Philipp Maron explains, adding that this may have encouraged the stars in front of the camera “to perhaps do things a little differently.” At the same time, the young Mavericks used the collaboration with such a high-caliber ensemble, whose “magic was always palpable on set,” to consolidate professional structures in production. “We learned very quickly that working with professionals also requires the appropriate structures. Welf is someone who thinks a great deal, makes clear decisions, and wants to create security as early as possible. I believe that working with such an incredibly experienced cast worked so well precisely because Welf is extremely well prepared, very precise, and at the same time willing to compromise.”

“But the most important thing is the people,” Maron continues. “That we had such an incredibly talented team was due in part to the strategic decision to shoot at a time of year when not many projects are usually realized, making it easier to get highly qualified people. We were all personally invested in honoring this commitment, in meeting everyone where they were, in taking the small extra steps that are hardly possible on a large TV production, and especially in pre-production not cutting corners. It was clear that A FADING MAN, as a debut film, had to be made with a low budget and therefore demanded all the more passion. But I believe that the passion and love, the power and optimism reached everyone on set, including the older and more experienced.” Welf Reinhart also benefited from working with actors “who have several more years of life and film experience.” “The exchange was never condescending, always on equal footing. It was a consistently pleasant collaboration. I think one of the beautiful things about film in general is that you often find this wonderful balance that arises from the meeting of different generations who are willing to learn from each other.” “That is exactly what we want to stand for together, this shared growth,” Philipp Maron concludes. “And I hope that this can be recognized as a common thread in A FADING MAN, as well as in all future projects by Welf Reinhart and MAVERICK FILM.”

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: DIRECTOR WELF REINHART ON...

…THE IDEA AND THE RESEARCH

A FADING MAN is first and foremost a love story. Of course, it also deals with the subject of dementia. But what interested me most from the very beginning was the relationship triangle connected to the story of a returnee: a man comes back to his ex-wife after twenty years because he has forgotten everything that happened between them. I found that particularly appealing.
The original idea came from a filmmaker friend and film school lecturer, Mimi Kezele. She showed me a meme on Instagram that essentially said that Grandpa had forgotten his divorce from Grandma. At that time, I already had several ideas for my first feature film and, as I always do, I began by researching.

Research is very important to me. Just as I had accompanied a bailiff at work for my short film *Eigenheim*, I attended events organized by the German Alzheimer's Association for this project and began training as a dementia care assistant. At a cooking class I met Erik, whom I was then able to support for over a year. Erik developed dementia at an early age, in his late forties or early fifties, and he has two teenage children. Talking to him and learning about his perspective on the illness made it clear to me that this contained a compelling and important subject, one that also sheds light on the humanity that interests me most in filmmaking. My co-writer Tünde Sautier, who also attended the first meeting with the Alzheimer's Association, and I agreed that there was a story here that we absolutely wanted to tell.

Our previous film also focused on an older married couple. The fact that A FADING MAN connects to this in some way is, however, a coincidence. In *Eigenheim*, the age of the characters emerged from the research. Poverty and housing insecurity affect seniors in particular, not only in Munich, and the consequences are especially dramatic in old age. In this case as well, it was a dramaturgical decision driven by the subject matter, because dementia primarily affects a specific age group.

…APPROACHING THE SUBJECT

It is, of course, incredibly difficult to portray a complex illness like Alzheimer's in an appropriate way. This is especially true because everyone who lives with it shows different symptoms. Some suffer early on from the loss of their ability to speak, while for others motor skills or memories are affected first. There are no two Alzheimer's patients who are the same, something we learned very early in our research. We also learned that every person affected has good days and bad days. For this reason, we relatively early on let go of the idea that there is a right or wrong way to portray it.

We worked through the screenplay both with a professor who specializes in the depiction of love, aging, and dementia in film, and with the wives of two people affected by the illness. Again and again, the focus was on small details, language, sentence length, word-finding difficulties, and so on.

We also watched a large number of films in advance that deal with the topic. For example, the wonderful drama *Die Auslöschung* with Klaus Maria Brandauer and Martina Gedeck, as well as many recent American and English-language films such as *The Father*, *Still Alice*, and *An ihrer Seite*. It was not necessarily about taking these films as role models, but rather about knowing them and being aware that they exist, in order to understand how one can approach the subject or what one might want to do differently. As a director, it was important to me to approach the topic as free of preconceptions as possible.

…INFLUENCES

Of course, there are filmmakers I admire. In the German-speaking world, for example, I really like the films of Andreas Dresen. Perhaps that has found its way into the film without us intending it. We also laughed from time to time about the fact that the nature and one of the early images we

shot, in which Dagmar Manzel stands at a fence, smokes a cigarette, and looks out over the landscape, is reminiscent of Tarkovsky. But these were the only references we talked about during the shoot.

…THE VISUAL LANGUAGE

My cinematographer Micky Graeter and I began quite early on to collect colors, moods, and similar elements. We agreed that, as in Scandinavian cinema, we wanted to work with natural, soft light in order to create a certain neutrality.

To achieve this particular atmosphere, we also invested a great deal of time in finding the right location. What was beautiful about the house we eventually shot in was that so much was already there that suited this mood, which is also why I fell in love with it immediately. It originally belonged to a gravedigger, and later a musician lived there who had assembled the furnishings from various farmhouses in the surrounding area. The atmosphere was very special, somehow mystical and yet cozy.

The landscape shots were also important for developing the characters. As an artist, Hanne engages with nature, but she has reached a standstill in her career and her life. When Kurt begins collecting leaves and pinecones, she feels inspired by this. Once or twice during filming, Harald Krassnitzer said, “I am your forest” or “I am the forest.” This came about more or less by chance, but we kept it in the film. There are several scenes in which the two of them walk through the forest together. Hanne even dreams of the forest. I wanted the landscape shots, these aesthetic “intermediate images,” to be perceived like dreams, without making it too obvious. It should not feel overly surreal. But it is also, to a certain extent, a romantic film, and for me nature and romance are connected.

…THE EXPERIENCE

One of the key takeaways for me from the film and the filmmaking process is a heightened awareness of the challenges posed by an aging society, care dependency, and the shortage of care services. I think this is a topic that concerns many people. The question is: what happens as we grow old? What if one day I have to pay thousands of euros per month out of my own pocket for a nursing home? These are existential issues that worry many people and that should also be addressed more strongly in political discourse.

I hope that this also offers points of connection for a younger audience. Perhaps because they have relatives of the appropriate age or even with an illness. Or in relation to the alternative relationship model, since the characters are essentially living, if you will, a hinted-at polyamorous relationship. I hope that younger viewers will also give the film a chance and be able to find personal meaning in it.

THE GERMAN ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

The film A FADING MAN sensitively addresses the complexity of dementia and shows that dementia is never merely a medical diagnosis, but also a relational event. The ambivalence experienced by family members and close contacts, the oscillation between rejection, overwhelm, and a strong desire to help, is something many relatives know all too well from their own everyday lives. The film portrays their attempt to find new ways of dealing with a person living with dementia, as well as their failure in the face of structural conditions such as staff shortages, bureaucratic hurdles, and ultimately their own limits.

With a certain restraint, with calmness and few words, the film tells of the profound changes that a dementia diagnosis can also bring to the social environment. The finely measured humor helps make the gravity of the subject accessible without trivializing or exaggerating it. And even if questions remain unanswered in the end, the film invites viewers to continue reflecting on what they have seen long afterward.

German Alzheimer Society e.V. Self-Help Dementia
Active for a better life with dementia

Around 1.8 million people in Germany are currently living with dementia. Approximately 400,000 people are newly diagnosed each year. By 2050, the number of people affected by dementia is expected to rise to between 2.3 and 2.7 million, unless a breakthrough in prevention and treatment is achieved. About 60 to 70 percent of those affected have Alzheimer’s disease. In addition, there are many different forms of dementia, and symptoms can appear in a wide variety of combinations and individual expressions. Every person living with dementia is unique. In addition to memory, other cognitive abilities are affected, such as attention, orientation, language, planning and problem-solving, or the use of everyday objects. There are also changes in social behavior, impulse control, mood, or perception. At first, people with dementia are often still able to live largely independently, but over time their need for support increases.

Nevertheless, people with dementia want to continue taking part in shared activities and to shape their hobbies and daily lives as independently as possible. This requires greater knowledge and understanding throughout society. Too many people still believe that dementia is a normal part of aging. And many still hesitate to talk about the fact that they or a close relative have received a dementia diagnosis, because they fear, with good reason, being excluded or discriminated against.

For more than 35 years, the German Alzheimer Society e.V. Self-Help Dementia (DAlzG) has been committed to improving the lives of people with dementia. A key part of its work is informing the public, for example through activities surrounding World Alzheimer’s Day on September 21. In 2026, the theme of this public health day will be “Dementia, a question of age or not?” Although most people with dementia are over 65, dementia can also occur at a younger age. In addition, the personal environment of those affected often includes people from very different generations. Wherever people meet, we may also encounter dementia. Dementia should therefore not be seen as a phenomenon that will affect others at some point in the future, but as a shared responsibility that already shapes how we live together today. Around World Alzheimer’s Day, numerous events take place nationwide, including lectures, concerts, film screenings, information stands, exhibitions, and much more.

Providing information to a broad public is also the aim of the Dementia Partners initiative, which has been offering free 90-minute basic courses across Germany since 2016. These courses provide essential knowledge and practical guidance for everyday interactions with people living

with dementia. In addition, the courses can be completed as online training independent of time and place, and they offer target-group-specific materials for different professions.
Equally important is awareness of the possibilities for preventing dementia. In cooperation with the Federal Institute for Public Health, the DAlzG has developed a corresponding course program, which has been available in many regions since 2025.

Beyond this, the DAlzG advocates for better diagnosis and treatment of dementia, for more competent local counseling services, for support for family caregivers, for high-quality care and nursing, and for a society that is overall more dementia-friendly. As a national umbrella organization of around 130 Alzheimer societies, the DAlzG supports local self-help initiatives. It is also politically active and represents the interests of people with dementia and their relatives in important federal-level committees.

On the DAlzG website, interested readers can find extensive information and publications on dementia, the different types of dementia and their effects, strategies for dealing with everyday challenges, legal issues, and much more. A nationwide directory allows users to search for counseling and support services as well as memory clinics.

Since 2002, the DAlzG has operated the nationwide Alzheimer's Helpline at 030 259 37 95 14. A multiprofessional team provides free advice, anonymously if desired, to people affected, relatives, and anyone seeking information. Topics include memory problems, Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, diagnostics and treatment, everyday interaction with people living with dementia, options for legal planning, long-term care insurance, and support services. The focus is always on empowering those affected. Each year, between 5,000 and 6,000 consultations take place by phone and email, with the majority of callers being relatives of people with dementia. People who have themselves received a dementia diagnosis, as well as staff from counseling services or care facilities, also regularly seek advice. The Alzheimer's Helpline is funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth.

Together with medhochzwei publishing, the German Alzheimer Society is also the publisher of the Dementia Podcast. Every two months, author and host Christine Schön dedicates a roughly 30-minute episode to a central topic such as communication, self-care, legal matters, meaning and intimacy, and much more, in conversation with expert guests. The Dementia Podcast is available on all major streaming platforms and on the DAlzG website.

LEAD CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Dagmar Manzel – *Hanne*

Dagmar Manzel has been one of the most distinguished and popular German actresses for many years. She has received numerous awards for her wide range of roles and her body of work. From 1977 to 1980 she trained at the State Drama School in Berlin, now the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts. After engagements at the Staatsschauspiel Dresden from 1980 to 1983 and the Deutsches Theater Berlin from 1983 to 2001, she has been working as a freelance actress and singer since 2001.

With her acting versatility, Dagmar Manzel captivates audiences in both film and television. She has appeared on the big screen in Heiner Carow's COMING OUT (1989), Helmut Dietl's SCHTONK (1991), Franziska Meletzky's FREI NACH PLAN (for which she was named Best Actress at the Shanghai International Film Festival), Florian Gallenberger's JOHN RABE (2009), Christian Schwochow's DIE UNSICHTBARE (2010), and ZETTL (2011), her second collaboration with Helmut Dietl. She received the German Acting Award in 2012 for her roles in these two films, as well as the German Film Award for DIE UNSICHTBARE. This was followed in 2013 by Nana Neul's drama STILLER SOMMER, in 2018 by Florian Gallenberger's comedy GRÜNER WIRD'S NICHT, SAGTE DER GÄRTNER UND FLOG DAVON, and in 2021 by Wendla Nölle's highly acclaimed directorial debut EIN GROSSES VERSPRECHEN.

Dagmar Manzel appeared on television in 1998 in Jo Baier's three-part series ‘Der Laden’ (The Shop), for which the cast received the Grimme Prize in Gold. She received the German Television Award for her role as Eva Klemperer in Kai Wessel and Andreas Kleinert's series ‘Klemperer – Ein Leben in Deutschland’ (1999), and was honoured with the Grimme Prize and the Bavarian Television Award for her role in ‘Leben wäre schön’ (2003), also by Kai Wessel. She received the German Television Award for ‘Die Nachrichten’ by Matti Geschonneck and ‘Als der Fremde kam’ (both 2005) by Andreas Kleinert, and was voted Best Actress 2016 by the members of the German Academy of Television for ‘Besuch für Emma’ (2015, directed by Ingo Rasper). In 2020, she appeared in the Juli Zeh film adaptation ‘Unterleuten’, again directed by Matti Geschonneck, and in 2024 in ‘Kati Witt. Eine Kür, die bleibt’ (Kati Witt: A Performance That Lasts). She was also very popular with audiences as a detective in the Franconian ‘Tatort’ series, in which she appeared on camera until the end of 2024.

Alongside film and television, Dagmar Manzel has always been active on stage. At the Deutsches Theater Berlin she worked with directors such as Frank Castorf, Heiner Müller, Luk Perceval, Thomas Langhoff, and Luc Bondy. For the two-hander “Gift”, in which she performed with Ulrich Matthes, she received the prestigious Faust Theatre Award in 2014. In 2017 she was awarded the Golden Curtain, the audience prize of the Berlin Theatre Club, for “Gift” as well as for her roles in “Glückliche Tage” at the Deutsches Theater and the operetta “Die Perlen der Cleopatra” at the Komische Oper Berlin. She made her debut at the Komische Oper Berlin in 2004 in “Sweeney Todd” and has since appeared there in productions such as “Kiss Me, Kate”, “Eine Frau, die weiß, was sie will!”, “Pierrot Lunaire”, and “Yiddish Revue”. In 2022 Dagmar Manzel also made her directorial debut at the Komische Oper with “Pippi Langstrumpf”, followed in early 2025 by her second directing work, “Hänsel und Gretel”.

In addition, Dagmar Manzel regularly records audiobooks. In 2013 she won the German Audiobook Award in the category Best Interpreter for her reading of the novel “August” by Christa Wolf. Other audiobooks include works by James Joyce (“Dubliners”), Judith Schalansky (“The Neck of the Giraffe”), Henry David Thoreau (“On the Duty of Civil Disobedience”), and most recently the acclaimed novels by Tove Ditlevsen, “Childhood”, “Youth”, “Dependency”, and “Faces”.

Harald Krassnitzer – *Kurt*

Harald Krassnitzer, born in 1960 in Grödig near Salzburg, is one of Austria’s most popular actors. He first became known to a wide audience through the title role in the television series “Der

Bergdoktor", and above all through his long-standing portrayal of Vienna "Tatort" detective Moritz Eisner, a role he has played since 1999.

Krassnitzer trained at the Elisabethbühne in Salzburg, where he was also engaged from 1980 to 1988. Further theatre engagements took him, among others, to the Schauspielhaus Graz, the Vienna Volkstheater, and the Saarland State Theatre in Saarbrücken. On stage he performed a wide repertoire of classical and modern roles, including works by Ibsen, Sophocles, Goethe, and Schiller.

Krassnitzer made his television debut in 1995 in "Fesseln", alongside Katharina Böhm and Jürgen Prochnow, directed by Xaver Schwarzenberger. In 1996 he took on his first regular series role in "Der Bergdoktor", in which he appeared until 1999. Since 1999 he has been part of the Vienna "Tatort" and has received several awards for his portrayal of Moritz Eisner, including two Romy Awards as Most Popular Series Actor. Together with Adele Neuhauser as the investigator duo Eisner and Fellner, he received the Grimme Award in 2014 for the episode "Angezählt", directed by Sabine Derflinger.

In addition to "Tatort", Harald Krassnitzer has appeared in numerous television films and series in recent years, including "Der Pakt. Wenn Kinder töten" (1996, Miguel Alexandre), "Der Briefbomber" (2001, Thorsten C. Fischer), "Die Mutter" (2001, Matti Geschonneck), "Ausgeliefert" (2003, Andreas Prochaska), "Stauffenberg" (2004, Jo Baier), "Mutig in die neuen Zeiten" (2005 and 2007, Harald Sicheritz), "Der Winzerkönig" (2006 to 2010), "Gier" (2009, Dieter Wedel), "Am Kreuzweg" (2010, Uwe Janson), "Der Wettbewerb" (2012, Michael Riebl), "Meine fremde Frau" (2015, Lars Becker), "Die Schattenfreundin" (2018, Michael Schneider), "Über Land" (2020, Franz Xaver Bogner), "Tödliche Gier" (2020, Thorsten Näther), and "Aus dem Leben" (2024, Katrin Schmidt).

August Zirner – *Bernd*

Few German-language actors can boast a filmography as extensive and diverse as that of August Zirner. Born in 1956 in Urbana, Illinois, USA, he trained as an actor at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna after finishing high school and, upon graduating, made his stage debut at the Volkstheater Vienna. From 1976 to 1988 he was a member of the ensembles of the Lower Saxony State Theatre in Hanover, the Hessian State Theatre in Wiesbaden, and the Munich Kammerspiele. This was followed by engagements at renowned venues such as the Burgtheater, the Residenztheater Munich, the Bavarian State Opera, the Vienna Volksoper, and most recently the Frankfurt Opera and the Hanover State Opera.

August Zirner first appeared in front of the camera in 1982 and has since worked in numerous national and international cinema and television productions. Among his most notable big-screen performances are appearances in Volker Schlöndorff's Frisch adaptation HOMO FABER (1991), which won the German Film Award in Silver, Margarethe von Trotta's DAS VERSPRECHEN (1994), Rainer Kaufmann's STADTGESPRÄCH (1995) and DIE APOTHEKERIN (1997), István Szabó's TAKING SIDES – DER FALL FURTWÄNGLER (2001), Züli Aladag's WUT (2005), for which Zirner received the Grimme Award, Stefan Ruzowitzky's Academy Award-winning DIE FÄLSCHER (2007), André Erkau's SELBSTGESPRÄCHE (2007), Sandra Nettelbeck's WAS UNS NICHT UMBRINGT (2018), Oliver Haffner's WACKERSDORF (2018), Saralisa Volk's SCHWEIGEND STEHT DER WALD (2022), and most recently EIN GANZES LEBEN (2023), Hans Steinbichler's highly acclaimed adaptation of the novel by Robert Seethaler.

August Zirner is an equally established presence on television. Productions that stand out from his extensive body of work include Hajo Gies' "Der Schakal" (1996), Heinrich Breloer's "Speer und Er" (2005), Adolf Winkelmann's two-part series "Contergan" (2007), Andreas Gruber's "Der Kardinal" (2011), Thomas Berger's "Die Flut ist pünktlich" (2014), Harald Sicheritz' "Clara Immerwahr" (2014), Isabel Kleefeld's "Was ich von dir weiß" (2017), Marcus O. Rosenmüller's "Die Affäre Borgward" (2018), and the award-winning miniseries "Herrhausen – Der Herr des Geldes" (2024).

In addition to acting, August Zirner's second creative passion is music, particularly jazz. He has been active as a flutist in this field for 25 years. He often combines jazz improvisation with narrative elements, performing with various ensembles that integrate texts, improvisations, and stories about jazz legends. He has released albums such as "Mingus" (with Sven Faller) and "Der Unsichtbare" (with Jim McNeely and the HR Big Band). His next album, "Coming Home", once again with Sven Faller, will be released on October 1. For the past eight years he has also toured with the program "The Little Prince" together with double bassist Kai Struwe.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Welf Reinhart – *Director, Screenwriter, Produktion*

Welf Reinhart was born in 1995 in Würzburg. He first studied in Kassel and later studied feature film directing at the University of Television and Film (HFF) in Munich. His short film “Eigenheim” screened at numerous Academy Award-qualifying festivals and won, among other honors, the Student Academy Award in Los Angeles in 2022. A FADING MAN is his first feature-length film. It celebrates its premiere in the competition section in Rotterdam.

Tünde Sautier – *Screenwriter*

Tünde Sautier, born in 1997, is a graduate of the University of Television and Film Munich (HFF). She lives in Berlin and writes screenplays for feature-length and short films, including Welf Reinhart’s “Eigenheim” (Silver Student Academy Award 2022) and A FADING MAN (International Film Festival Rotterdam 2026), as well as Kilian Armando Friedrich’s ICH VERSTEHE IHREN UNMUT (Berlinale 2026).

Micky Graeter – *Cinematography*

Micky Graeter was born in Munich in 1991 and works as a cinematographer for feature films, series, and commercials. After completing his Bachelor of Arts degree with a focus on cinematography, he has been studying visual design at the HFF Munich since 2017. He gained practical experience as an intern at ARRI Rental Munich and on the film INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE, among other things. He has been working freelance since 2016 and is a member of the BVK.

Ulrike Tortora – *Editing*

Ulrike Tortora was born in Freiburg in 1963 and has been editing feature films and documentaries since the mid-1980s. She is a lecturer, dramaturgical consultant, holds an honorary professorship at the HFF Munich, and lives and works mainly in Munich.

Philipp Maron – *Producer (MAVERICK FILM)*

Born in Munich in 1991, Philipp Maron earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Studies from the University of Regensburg and spent a year abroad in the USA at the University of Arkansas. He then completed his studies in Production and Media Management at the HFF Munich. Alongside his studies, he worked in film management at the HFF Munich, as a working student at MFA+ Filmdistribution, and as a festival coordinator at Wiedemann & Berg.

Tristan Bähre – *Producer (MAVERICK FILM)*

Born in Hanover in 1993, Tristan Bähre spent his youth in northern Germany and Bern. After graduating from high school, he moved to Munich and gained his first professional experience at the global distribution company Red Arrow International, the former streaming service maxdome, and Roxy Film, among others. In 2016, he began studying production at the HFF Munich, where he worked in film management alongside his studies.

Louis Merki – *Producer (Merki und Reinhart Film)*

Together with director Welf Reinhart, Louis Merki founded the production company Merki und Reinhart Film in 2020. Welf Reinhart's short film “Eigenheim,” produced by Louis Merki, won a Student Academy Award (Student Oscar®) in 2022. He worked as a junior producer at Odeon Fiction on the international Degeto miniseries “DIE SAAT – Tödliche Macht” (2023, ARD/Degeto/NRK). In 2024, he returned to Hager Moss Film as a producer, where he supervised the TV films “Heute fängt mein neues Leben an” (Today My New Life Begins, 2025, directed by

Katja Benrath, ARD/Degeto) and “Bloß nicht Liebe” (Don't Fall in Love, 2025, directed by Sebastian Stern, ZDF), among others.

MAVERICK Film – *Production*

Philipp Maron and Tristan Bähre founded MAVERICK FILM in September 2017 while studying together at the HFF Munich and converted it into a limited liability company in 2021. Maverick Film has produced several successful short films, which premiered at the Max Ophüls Prize, Flickerfest, and TIFF, among others. In 2023, SONNENPLÄTZE (Sunny Spots) became their first feature film and won the Bavarian Film Award for Best Newcomer Film and the VGF Newcomer Producer Award, among others. Several feature film debuts are already in post-production for 2026, and several projects are in development and financing.

Merki und Reinhart Film – *Production*

Merki und Reinhart Film was founded in 2020 by HFF graduates Louis Merki and Welf Reinhart. The company produces socially relevant, character-driven films with a clear signature style, focusing on fictional TV and cinema projects.

Their first production (“Die ehemaligen Grenzorte” (The Former Border Towns), 2020) was co-produced with the German Film Academy and the German Foreign Office. Merki und Reinhart Film gained international recognition with the short film Eigenheim (2021, BR/HFF/Merki und Reinhart Film, 23 min.), which won several international film awards and was awarded the Student Academy Award (Student Oscar®) in silver by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2022.

With A FADING MAN (MAVERICK FILM, BR, Arte), Merki und Reinhart Film co-produced its first feature-length film.

CAST

Hanne	Dagmar Manzel
Kurt	Harald Krassnitzer
Bernd	August Zirner
Samira	Lene Dax
Schatz	Thorsten Merten
Ines	Dionne Wudu
Heike	Marion Freundorfer
Ms. Engel	Catalina Navarro Kirner
Ms. Slansky	Ewa Patricia Klosowski
Police officer	Jessica Stautz
Dr. Lena Mai	Sara Sukarie

CREW

Director	Welf Reinhart
Screenplay	Tünde Sautier, Welf Reinhart
Producers	Philipp Maron, Tristan Bähre (Maverick Film)
	Louis Merki (Merki und Reinhart film)
Production	MAVERICK FILM
Co-production	BR
In collaboration with	ARTE Merki und Reinhart film gbr CinePostproduction Metz-Neun Synchron
Editorial	Natalie Lambsdorff, Theodor Fusban (BR) Daniela Muck (ARTE)
Production management	Heike Kresse
Cinematography	Micky Graeter
Set design	Lisa Geller
Costume	Miriam Waldenspuhl, Theresa Raab
Makeup	Nicole Förster, Jeanne Gröllmann
Editing	Ulrike Tortora
Sound	Xavier Fleming
Casting	Stefany Pohlmann
Music	Pablo Jókay
Supported by	FFF Bayern Hessen Film & Medien FFA DFFF
World sales	Bendita Film Sales

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Production	Germany, 2026
Aspect ratio	2.35:1 (Cinemascope)
Sound	5.1
Duration	102 min.