

26. Oldenburg International Film Festival
September 11 – 15, 2019



The Oldenburg International Film Festival honors Burkhard Driest with a Tribute

The Oldenburg International Film Festival honors author, filmmaker and actor Burkhard Driest and is looking forward to an exceptional artist whose body of work was comprised of cinematic twists and turns

Burkhard Driest is a hedonistic jack-of-all-trades: »One can study law during the day, but at night go over to the other side to learn all about it, too. One does not have to limit oneself to the existence of a dour juror.« May 1965, at the age of 26, he robbed a bank near Hannover at gunpoint – three weeks before taking the oral state examination as a jurist.

Violence was a theme that accompanied him – born 1939 in Stettin – since his early childhood, as well as an artistic preoccupation with it. After his parents got divorced and he himself was in conflict with a variety of official institutions, painting, jazz music and boxing gave balance to a young man who – after being kicked out of schools and a stay in a reformatory, decided to study the law – for his father's sake. In return, he got a studio. The student revolts of the 1960s drew Driest to Berlin a semester later, where his interest in political and public performance went into full gear.

The adaptation of his own novel »The Brutalisation of Franz Blum« (1974) by director Reinhard Hauff marked the beginning of his own career as a writer and an actor. Driest processed his own experiences in prison, delivered the screenplay and played a leading role along Jürgen Prochnow. Several novels, screenplay and also roles in the Theater followed – including a turn under Peter Zadek, who cast him as Stanley Kowalski in »Slow Attack«. The central theme that connects Driest's works: life in conflict with the norm and the law – often drawing on his own biography.

He worked with directors like Werner Herzog (»Stroszek«) and Sam Peckinpah (»Cross of Iron«). His collaboration with Reinhard Hauff turned into four films that he co-created as an author and as an actor. At the end of the 70s, Driest had relocated to the US and worked with the writer Lukas Heller (»Whatever happened to Baby Jane«, »Flight of the Phoenix«) for studios like Paramount, Universal und 20th Century Fox, among others. Their co-written satire »Son of Hitler« (1979) was filmed starring Bud Cort and Peter Cushing.

His principle to perform and live more than one role is something he always stayed true to: novelist, actor in films or on the stage, screenwriter, director, producer and painter. It is hard to console that with a dry student of the law when you are talking about a man who swept Romy Schneider off her feet during a live TV Show or who was arrested while wearing a costume paying homage to Belmondo in »Breathless«.

His collaboration with Rainer Werner Fassbinder on his last film is also quite legendary. The drafts

Driest submitted to Fassbinder for »Querelle« were summarily rejected. However, while the film – which he co-produced and starred in next to Jeanne Moreau, Brad Davis and Franco Nero – was being ready to be shown, Fassbinder passed away – in 1982, just before the premiere in Venice.

In 1984, Driest followed up with his directorial debut »Annas Mutter«, which shed light on the criminal case of Marianne Bachmeier, which was based on a mother shooting her daughter's murderer in court, which caused quite a stir in Germany.

The now 80-year-old Buddhist is still working as an artist, putting paint to canvas – according to what moves him now and moved him then. You can see references to his cinematic oeuvre in his paintings, in his cycles »Romy« and »Querelle«.

Burkhard Driest will be in Oldenburg from September 11 to 15. His films »The Brutalisation of Franz Blum«, »Querelle«, and »Annas Mutter« will be screened within the Tribute dedicated to him.

Photos and more information about these films are available at
<https://www.filmfest-oldenburg.de/press/download-films-directors/>

For further material and questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Oldenburg International Film Festival

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