

20th International Festival of German Film Heritage

Hamburg, November 17 – 26, 2023 at the Metropolis cinema, Kleine Theaterstr. 10

36th International Film History Congress

Hamburg, November 23 – 25, 2023 at the Metropolis cinema, Kleine Theaterstr. 10

Willy Haas Awards 2023

November 22, 2023

Dear colleagues,

On Thursday, November 22, 2023, the **36th International Film History Conference**, jointly organized by CineGraph and the German Federal Archives, opened at the Metropolis cinema in Hamburg. Traditionally, the opening of the conference serves as the occasion for the presentation of the annual **Willy Haas Awards**, which honor significant international book and DVD / Blu-ray publications on German-language film and film in Germany.

In 2023, the awards, named after the German-Czech author, screenwriter and film critic Willy Haas (1891–1973), were presented for the twentieth time.

This year's independent jury consisted of Christiane Habich (Kronberg), Kay Hoffmann (Stuttgart), Anne Jespersen (Copenhagen), Uli Jung (Trier) and Günter Krenn (Vienna).

The winners were each presented with an award certificate and an original drawing by artist and filmmaker Franz Winzentsen.

Further information on the award ceremony and *cinefest* can be found at www.cinefest.de.

The award in the category “book publications” was presented to:

Phantome der Nacht. 100 Jahre Nosferatu

by Jürgen Müller, Frank Schmidt, Kyllikki Zacharias (eds.).

Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Sandstein 2022.

The award in the category “DVD/blu-ray editions” was presented to:

The Whistle at Eaton Falls

USA 1951. Director: Robert Siodmak. Flicker Alley 2022.

Willy Haas Award 2023 – category “book publications”:



Phantome der Nacht. 100 Jahre Nosferatu

by Jürgen Müller, Frank Schmidt, Kyllikki Zacharias (eds.).

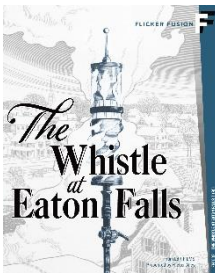
Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Sandstein 2022.

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Bram Stoker is considered the unnamed originator of *Nosferatu*, but this is only partly true. In fact, the visual likeness of cinema's first vampire figure was not the brainchild of F. W. Murnau, but rather of Albin Grau. The illustrator, set designer and author studied at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts, was a member of the occult community *Fraternitas Saturni* and designed not only the sets, costumes and advertising artwork, but also the iconic

make-up of one of the most famous movie monsters of all time, which can be recognized today even by people who have never even seen *Nosferatu* – a fact which is highlighted, alongside numerous other new discoveries and re-interpretations, in this lavishly illustrated volume. The 232 page color publication situates the German silent classic within the context of art history, from Goya's etchings to 20th century fantasy art and literature, and explores *Nosferatu's* impact on contemporary art and everyday culture.

Willy Haas Award 2023 – category “DVD / blu-ray editions”:



The Whistle at Eaton Falls

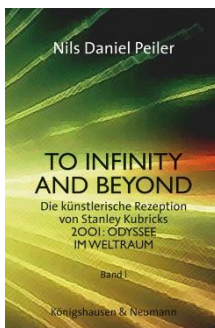
US 1951. Director: Robert Siodmak. Los Angeles: Flicker Alley 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

The Whistle at Eaton Falls is one of Robert Siodmak's lesser known films and his last to be made in the USA. Now it is finally available in home video format. Siodmak, who had fled Nazi Germany, confirms his status as a master of *film noir* with this impressive social drama with an obligatory love story, and a rare example of a Hollywood film that focuses on the working class. The plot revolves around a trade unionist (played by Lloyd Bridges) who is appointed head of a plastic factory upon which the entire town is dependent. He soon

finds himself forced to have to make some unpleasant decisions. Many genuine factory workers appeared in the film. Siodmak and director of photography Joseph C. Brun play masterfully with light and shadow, intensifying the dynamics of the story. Siodmak was disappointed by the working conditions and repeated changes demanded by the film studio. The film's producer, Louis de Rochemont, wrote: "It is our purpose... to dramatize in documentary fashion that labor is an indispensable ingredient in our capitalistic system." The accompanying booklet provides background information on the production as well as on the digital restoration.

Special mention:



To Infinity and Beyond.

Die künstlerische Rezeption von Stanley Kubricks 2001: ODYSSEE IM WELTRAUM

by Nils Daniel Peiler. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2022

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

"To infinity and beyond" sounds more visionary than "There and back again" and is attributed to the toy astronaut Buzz Lightyear from Disney and Pixar's *Toy Story* (1995). The fact that this is a reference to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) becomes clear when you hold Nils Daniel Peiler's monstrous work in your hands. One may be forgiven for initially wondering whether it was really necessary to devote a book of nearly 800 pages to the film, but Peiler's interdisciplinary approach is fascinating not least for the way in which the media scholar collates and analyses all the quotations from Kubrick's film

– in others films, TV series', video clips, advertisements, paintings, architecture, comics, and more besides – with a collector's untameable passion and an almost baroque sensuousness. No less impressive is the accompanying photo book, which itself spans 344 pages of well-selected illustrations. And should the allusion to *2001* in the recent *Barbie* movie evaded the author to date, then there is hope for a revised edition...

Nominees in the category “book publications”:



Dinge im Film. Stummer Monolog, verborgenes Gedächtnis

by Oksana Bulgakowa, Roman Mauer (eds.). Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

Things are present in all film images and are often not consciously perceived. Yet they can take on very different functions and shape a film's narrative: “The thing becomes the material carrier and trigger of the plot, a turning point in the dramaturgy, an identity marker or an animated metonymy of the protagonist, a speaking object, a secret” (Oksana Bulgakowa). 20 essays examine how things can be arranged in films in such a way as to become charged with emotion and perceived as such. Subjects include the films of Eisenstein, who was a virtuoso at ascribing complex meaning to things such as a naval doctor's pince-nez glasses, or the *films noirs* of Fritz Lang, in which the characters are distinguished by things. Other topics include “The railroad in film,” “The cell phone. Forms and functions in film,” “The bird cage and the cinema of the 1920s.” The fact that the book covers different film genres and eras, from silent movies to science fiction films, makes it an extremely inspiring and exciting read, and it serves to sharpen the eye at this crucial time when visual storytelling is tending to become increasingly one-dimensional.



Figures of Absence. The Films of Dore O.

by Masha Matzke (ed.). Cologne: Filmbüro NW / Strzelecki 2023.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

This volume provides a long overdue appreciation of the cinematic oeuvre of Dore O. (1946–2022), one of Germany's most important avant-garde filmmakers. Her poetic, deeply personal and radical films bear a unique signature, which this volume attempts to explore. It collects statements by the filmmaker, interviews (with Dore O. and Werner Nekes as well as with composer Anthony Moore), remarks by companions and contemporaries, and reviews of Dore O.'s films, plus essays by Dietrich Kuhlbrodt, Martin Langbein, Christine Noll Brinckmann, Marie-Hélène Gutberlet and others. Robin Blaetz examines the influence of Dore O.'s film *Lawale* (1969) on other female filmmakers. The reader learns a great deal about avant-garde filmmaking in the 1960s and 1970s, how the films were financed and received, the Hamburg Filmmakers' Cooperative, and the scholarly treatment of both avant-garde cinema and female filmmakers. The volume contains numerous illustrations as well as a fold-out reproduction of the 16mm reversal original of *Kaskara* (1974). A standard reference work on German avant-garde cinema!

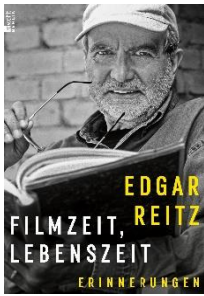


Lockruf des Kinos. Der Plakatkünstler Josef Fenneker

by Harald Neckelmann. Marburg: Schüren 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

For cineasts, this opulent book about poster designer Josef Fenneker (1895–1956) is a veritable feast for the eyes. While still an art student, Fenneker was already designing posters for cinemas. His specialty were the posters he designed for Berlin's luxury cinema Marmorhaus from 1919. *Lockruf des Kinos* reproduces a selection of the approximately 375 posters Fenneker designed between 1919 and 1925 in full color. Harald Neckelmann provides knowledgeably commentary on the films, art and culture in the metropolis, and the production process behind the posters. As a rule, Fenneker received stills of the films, which he interpreted and colored freely. He also designed a unique typography for each poster. This was all done under enormous time pressure in a matter of days. Fenneker focused on film poster design because it offered him “a great opportunity to use imagination and colors to create unforgettable posters of great charm and striking uniqueness.” Fenneker created posters that became classics in their own right.



Filmzeit, Lebenszeit. Erinnerungen

by Edgar Reitz. Berlin: Rowohlt 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

With his epic *Heimat* cycle, Edgar Reitz has inscribed himself in German film history in a way unlike his contemporaries. His extensive memoirs not only provide profound insight into his body of work, but they also trace the career path of the son of a watchmaker in Hunsrück who became a student in Munich with an affinity for the theater and later an internationally active industrial filmmaker. His working conditions at the Ulm Institute of Design, his collaboration with Alexander Kluge, his membership in the Oberhausen Group, and his filmmaking debut in 1967 are vividly recounted by Reitz with great narrative flair. In addition to Reitz' reflective self-assessment of his work, the autobiography bears witness to the author's profound, yet very precise love of storytelling, something Reitz claims to have inherited from his grandfather, thus paying him a loving posthumous tribute. Naturally, a great deal of space is devoted to the *Heimat* complex, whose production difficulties have been the subject of much speculation and little true reporting. Reitz provides clarity here, not least on the resistance he faced from TV stations and the amount of energy and time needed to overcome this. This validates the well-known bon mot of Orson Welles that the film director actually spends very little of his time directing films.



Die »filmende Bäckersfrau« Elisabeth Wilms. Amateurfilmpraktiken und Gebrauchsfilmkultur

by Alexander Stark. Marburg: Schüren 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

This book sheds light on a little-known pioneering female filmmaker, Elisabeth Wilms (1905–1981). In 1932, she married a baker, and they settled in Dortmund, which led to her being nicknamed “die filmende Bäckersfrau” (the filming baker’s wife)! Around 1941, she happened to witness a screening of an 8mm amateur film which was like a revelation to her and which she herself described as being a fever pitch. “I felt as if I was now close to the fulfillment of my most secret wishes.” Shortly thereafter, she began making her own films and continued to do so into the 1970s. She described her method as follows: “I filmed intuitively... without a concept or script.” What began as a hobby developed into something more serious, lying somewhere between amateur and professional filmmaking. Her earliest short films are so-called “Gebrauchsfilme” (utility films) featuring ordinary people and covering everyday subjects that were otherwise neglected and unfathomed: women spinning and weaving, cleaning carpets, a man on the street with a barrel organ, children playing, or scenes from her and her husband’s bakery. She often made her films under very difficult conditions and traded food for raw film stock. Although it was strictly forbidden, Elisabeth Wilms also filmed bombing raids on Münster and Dortmund. Elisabeth Wilms was a witness to both the Second World War and human suffering in the post-war years, and she documented the daily lives of people during these times. Alexander Stark’s book examines both Wilms’ unique position as an observer as well as her place in the wider context of amateur filmmaking practice.

Nominees in the category “DVD / Blu-ray editions”:



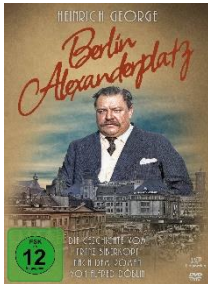
Alraune

West Germany 1952. Director: Arthur Maria Rabenalt. Anolis Entertainment 2023

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

Alraune (1952), directed by Artur Maria Rabenalt and based on the 1911 novel by Hanns Heinz Ewers, was the first film to be made in post-war West Germany that followed in the tradition of the expressionist horror films of the silent era such as *Nosferatu* or *The Student of Prague*. *Alraune*, a *femme fatale* created through artificial insemination, captivates men with her beauty and drives them to ruin. Here she is embodied with virtuosity by Hildegard Knef, who manages to keep the balance between the coldly calculating vamp and love-struck woman at the end of the film. Erich von Stroheim lends *Alraune*’s creator, Professor ten Brinken, an unsettling yet fascinating presence that conveys the dubious nature of his actions. Appearing in smaller roles are top-class actors such as Karlheinz Böhm, Harry Halm, and Trude Hesterberg. Friedel Behn-Grund's outstanding camera work produces effective, high-contrast black and white images, bathing the characters and locations in

a magical light. Presented in an exquisite mediabook, this blu-ray edition is based on a digital restoration by DFF and is distinguished by its excellent picture quality and informative extras. There is a booklet and an audio commentary by Dr. Rolf Giesen revealing a great deal of information about Hanns Heinz Ewers and how the film can be classified in the context of film history. A second audio commentary discusses the shooting and provides interesting facts about the director and the actors, especially Hildegard Knef.



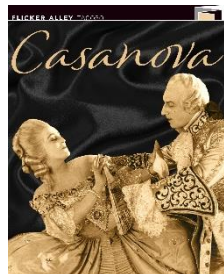
Berlin Alexanderplatz.

Germany 1931. Director: Phil Jutzi. Fernsehjuwelen / Alive AG 2022.

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Berlin Alexanderplatz (1931) is the first film adaptation of Alfred Döblin's eponymous novel published in 1929. The book was one of the first German examples of "big city novels" designed to reflect the energy, speed, lights, traffic, and soundscape of the modern metropolis. Early sound films like this, which recognized the possibilities the new technology had to offer, were particularly well suited to incorporating all the sounds of the city, making the city almost a character in its own right, independent and fascinating, but also dangerous.

This is the omnipresent character in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* that poses an unexpected challenge for Franz Biberkopf, who finds himself alone in the big, bustling city after having spent the last four years in prison. The film follows the pattern of the so-called "city symphony films" like Walther Ruttmann's *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927). Ruttmann's film undoubtedly also inspired Alfred Döblin, who was writing his novel when the film was released. The idea of adapting Döblin's successful novel for the cinema came immediately, resulting in this outstanding film, the screenplay for which was co-written by Döblin himself. The director was Phil Jutzi, who was known for his proletarian film *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück* (1929), while the leading role of Franz Biberkopf was played by Heinrich George. In addition to presenting the film in a restored version, this DVD release also includes a portrait of the actor Heinrich George and an informative booklet. The 1931 adaptation of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is a unique document of great significance for both the Weimar Republic and Weimar-era German cinema.



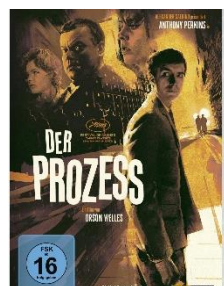
Casanova

France 1926/27. Director: Alexandre Wolkoff. Flicker Alley 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

To start with, the opulent 24-page souvenir booklet, which resembles a vintage program booklet in miniature, is remarkable. It contains a comprehensive description of the 1927 French costume drama *Casanova* by Russian director Alexandre Wolkoff, presented on this DVD and blu-ray edition in the reconstruction carried out by the Cinémathèque Française. *Casanova* and superlatives are synonymous. Regardless of whether the film really shows what boasts to be, at least at the time, the biggest set ever constructed for a film

production in Europe, *Casanova* is nevertheless impressive for its genuine shots of Venice (when the city was not yet a tourist hotspot) and its picturesque studio sets. Viewers can judge the orchestral score by veteran silent film accompanist Günter Buchwald for themselves. Professionals and amateurs alike will be fascinated by some of the stencil colored images, the cinematic perfection of the action scenes, and the untarnished screen presence of Russian action star Ivan Mosjoukine, who died of tuberculosis only 12 years later, completely impoverished.



Le Procès (The Trial)

France/Germany/Italy 1962. Director: Orson Welles. Studiocanal 2022.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

Franz Kafka wrote his novel *Der Prozess* (The Trial) in 1914 and 1915, but what was to become the author's most famous work would not be published until 1925, a year after his death. *The Trial* tells the bizarre story of Josef K., who is arrested and sentenced by the authorities without ever being revealed the crime he is supposed to have committed. The story follows the logic of a nightmarish dream and is an unsurpassed highlight of modern, dystopian literature. In 1962, Orson Welles took this great work of alienation and absurdity

and combined it with his own genius to create a truly unique film, which has now been reissued on DVD for the 60th anniversary of the film's premiere in the digitally restored version that was presented at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. The clear, black and white cinematography fits well with the nightmarish quality of the story, and

the restoration brings out the expressionistic atmosphere of the film. Orson Welles gave Kafka's story a clear ending for his film adaptation by having Josef K. die in an explosion. Welles justified his decision by explaining that the world in 1962 was a very different place to how it was in Kafka's time, 1915: "After the extermination of six million Jews, Kafka would have chosen a different ending. His version seems to me to be 'pre-Auschwitz'." As a bonus feature, the DVD also contains a 50 minute portrait, *This is Orson Welles* (2015).



Jaider, der einsame Jäger

West Germany 1970/71. Director: Volker Vogeler. Filmjuwelen 2023.

→ [publisher's homepage](#)

Volker Vogeler's film *Jaider, der einsame Jäger* belongs to the tradition of the so-called "critical Heimatfilm" that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s within New German Cinema, with titles such as Volker Schlöndorff's *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Krombach* or Reinhard Hauff's *Mathias Kneißl* (both 1971) coming to mind. Student rebellion against the established culture and politics of the German Federal Republic awakened interest in historical resistance groups. The clichés of classic post-war German

Heimat films, on the other hand, were consistently reversed: Heimat as a space of repression in which feudalism keeps the people in ignorance and exploits them.

On an aesthetic level, *Jaider, der einsame Jäger* unmistakably borrows from contemporary Italian "spaghetti westerns": a slow narrative rhythm, taciturn actors, barren mountain landscapes, poor dwellings for local inhabitants. Gottfried John plays the solitary avenger who stands alone against the oppressive authorities and carries out his revenge plan against all odds. Contemporary critics were very impressed by the film: "Here, the new German Heimatfilm has emancipated itself from the political parable, moving away from the criticism of this genre and its world view, to becoming an enjoyable redefinition and evolution. Vogeler didn't turn the Heimatfilm on its head, as he says, but really got it on its feet," writes Wolfgang Limmer in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (July 12, 1971). The film's DVD release has long been overdue, as it opens up an opportunity to rediscover and re-evaluate a film that had all but vanished into obscurity.