



ABOUT LUIS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY LUCIA CHIARLA

PRODUCTION

ostlicht filmproduktion GmbH

CO-PRODUCTION

East End Film GmbH

STARRING

Max Riemelt | Natalia Rudziewicz

PRESSBOOK

ostlicht
filmproduktion

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FESTIVALS

WORLD PREMIERE



OTHER FESTIVALS



**ROME
FILM FEST 2024**
COMPETITION
PROGRESSIVE CINEMA

TECHNICAL DETAILS

ORIGINAL TITEL	Es geht um Luis
INTERNATIONAL TITEL	About Luis
FORMAT	Digital Scope 2.39:1
DURATION	97 Minutes
GENRE	Drama
DIRECTOR WRITER	Lucia Chiarla
PRODUCTION	ostlicht filmproduktion GmbH
PRODUCERS	Marcel Lenz, Claritta Kratochwil
COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION	Germany
YEAR OF PRODUCTION	2024
WORLD PREMIERE	Zurich Film Festival 2024 Feature Film Competition
WORLD SALES	tba



LOGLINE

CONSTANZE and **JENS** lead a loving but stressful life, that begins to unravel when their son **LUIS** gets bullied in school.

Torn between oppressive social norms and desperate attempts to protect their son, both clash in a conflict of values that threatens their relationship. Meanwhile Luis is left on his own and caught in a dangerous downward spiral.

SYNOPSIS

Constanze and **Jens** are a team, a couple, parents, but above all they are one thing: hard working people. Between night taxi rides and weekend shifts at the office, they just about keep their lives going, meeting for short conversations in Jens' taxi and driving their son Luis back and forth.

Until one day a phone call from school upsets their routine: Luis is being bullied. The reason is his beloved unicorn backpack. The school headmaster advises the parents to buy a new one, which creates a deep conflict in the couple. Should Luis conform or impose himself, even if it means catching attention?

The situation escalates and the taxi becomes a kind of boxing ring, a microcosm in which the parents fight over universal issues. Constanze and Jens want to do right by their son, but can only fall back on quick fixes instead of really being there for him. The pressure of everyday life is too great, the time they can devote to each other is too little.

While Luis continues to be humiliated and beaten at school and eventually turns from victim to perpetrator, the couple's relationship threatens to collapse in a spiral of accusations, feelings of guilt and helpless attempts to protect their son.

C A S T

JENS

Max Riemelt

CONSTANZE

Natalia Rudziewicz

HANNA

Franziska Troegner

DENNIS

Ruben Dietze

TAXI BOSS

Aziz Capkurt

AYMAN

Mahigir Naser

SAHRA

Adele Fuhrmann

SAHRA'S MOTHER

Elisabeth Wasserscheid

TEACHER

Anna Badorf

EASYLANE GUEST

Wili Sellmann

THEO

Fritz Röhl

THEO'S MOTHER

Katja Preuß

JULIA

Yun Huang

C R E W

DIRECTOR SCRIPT	Lucia Chiarla
PRODUCER	Marcel Lenz, Claritta Kratochwil
CO-PRODUCER	Tommy Niessner, Elaine Niessner
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Christoph Iwanow
EDITOR	Aletta von Vietinghoff
PRODUCTION DESIGN	Stephan von Tresckow
COSTUME DESIGN	Henrike Luz
KEY MAKEUP ARTIST	Dorothea Wiedermann, Selina Maria Wriessnegger
RE-RECORDING MIXER	Olaf Mehl
SOUNDDESIGN	Sebastian Schmidt
PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER	Marc Meusinger
MUSIC	Mario Weise
CASTING DIRECTOR	Karimah El-Giamal



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Every couple has its battlefield. The children are spectators, and in the duality, they seek unity. The relationship conflicts, their compromises, the need for security, or simply using the other as a sparring partner are starting points of this story. Aspects of a life that I know in all its nuances, and I suspect many of us do as well. When I read the play by Paco Bezerra, I was captivated by the principle of polarization that runs throughout the entire piece. The bullying that the son experiences at school becomes a trigger for a deeper conflict of values. Although both parents want the same thing: the well-being of their son. It becomes complicated when the unstable complexity of the modern working world is added to this confrontation. From this reflection, the characters of the film emerged: Constanze and Jens are themselves trapped in the nets of an increasingly aggressive society where the strongest push the weakest into a corner. The stress of securing their existence makes them inattentive and helpless regarding what is happening to their child. The film is a reflection on the effects of a constantly changing society on a family that loses its cohesion as a result. It is about two people for whom their child's problem becomes a vent for fears of loss—fears in which they are completely alone and where being together no longer provides support. This connection particularly intrigues me because the seemingly private dynamics become a starting point for a reflection on our society's value system. Are we able to recognize when and where injustices arise if we ourselves are constantly fighting for survival? And can we really expect new generations to provide a model of coexistence based on a different dialectic than the one we demonstrate to them every day?

Lucia Chiarla

TALK WITH THE DIRECTOR

Why did the material of the play THE LITTLE PONY by Paco Bezerra, motivate or intrigue you for a cinematic narrative?

While reading Paco Bezerra's play, I was impressed by how much the polarization of the characters surrounding the bullying incident at school serves as the central element of the work. The son and what happens in the classroom are told exclusively through the parents, who react completely oppositely. This narrative style in no way diminishes the violence of the events—due to the absence of the protagonist, there is also a lack of opportunity to identify with the victim—and thus, the story becomes more universal. As a reader, I was entirely at the mercy of the parents, torn between two ways of thinking. I recognized myself in them, took sides, and understood their weaknesses and deep instincts, even if I didn't always share them. I have always been a lover of theater. My first self-chosen readings were not novels but plays, particularly from the early twentieth century. Ibsen was my first discovery, followed by modern drama, which ultimately led me to study theater. In Paco Bezerra's piece, I found the taste and structure of a classic text combined with a highly relevant theme: diversity and the responsibility to protect it so that it is not suffocated by norms and violence directed at those who do not feel addressed by these norms. I wanted to take this story out of the theater's confines and give its characters a physical presence—to examine their conflict and thus give voice to the tension that this theme evokes in today's society.

What were the particular challenges in adapting for the film ABOUT LUIS?

The main challenge was finding the right setting without necessarily staying in an apartment, as is the case in the play. Nevertheless, I wanted to maintain the focus on the parents' perspective and not give in to the urge to show Luis, so that he remains a symbol of diversity and takes on a more universal dimension. It was about finding a place that offers the same intimacy as a room but is dynamic. A window to the world, where the world becomes a place that observes change and with which one can interact. A place that reflects and reveals people's instincts. A place that creates the same claustrophobia but from which one can also briefly step away to give the audience a moment to breathe. This led to my idea of using a taxi, Jens's night shifts, and meetings during breaks or before school. Thus, the aesthetic of the entire project emerged, providing the theatrical material with the necessary visualization that a film requires.

DIRECTOR & WRITER

LUCIA CHIARLA, born in Genoa, began her career by studying literature with a focus on theater and cinema at the University of Genoa. After a few semesters, she moved to Milan and graduated in Performing Arts at the "Scuola d'arte Drammatica Paolo Grassi" (1995) and took part at the International theatre Masterclass „Ecole des Maîtres“(1996).

In Italy, she worked as an actress in several national theaters and film productions and began her work as a screenwriter in Rome. Her first film, BYE BYE BERLUSCONI! (screenwriter and actress), was shown at the Berlinale (Panorama) in 2006. At this time, she moved to Berlin with her son, where she continued her education at the „Skript Akademie / DEKRA Hochschule für Medien.“ She received her first screenplay grant from the FFF (Film Fund Bayern) for the screenplay of REISE NACH JERUSALEM, which marked her debut as a director in 2018. The film premiered at the Max Ophüls Prize competition and won the award for best feature film at the Achtung Berlin film festival, among others. During the first lockdown in 2020, she founded the film collective "Primavera Productions", for which she wrote and produced the film “Primavera Duemilaventi (Spring 2020)”. The film won the German-language film critics’ Award in the FIPRESCI – Filmkunstfest MV 2021.

FILMOGRAPHY

2021

PRIMAVERA DUEMILAVENTI (feature film, 82 Min. DE)

Script: Lucia Chiarla

Director: Primavera Collective

Production: Primavera Productions GmbH

World Premiere: Filmkunstfest MV 2021

2018

THE CHAIRS GAME (feature film, 118 Min. DE)

Director | Script: Lucia Chiarla

Production: Kessfilm with Schiwagofilm

World Premiere: Max Ophuels Film Festival 2018, Competition

2006

BYE BYE BERLUSCONI! (Feature film, IT / DE)

Script: Lucia Chiarla and Jan H. Stahlberg

Director: Jan H. Stahlberg

Production: Schiwago Film

World Premiere: Berlinale – Panorama Special 2006



MAX RIEMELT

Role Jens

MAX RIEMELT, born in 1984 in east berlin, first gained attention in 1998 with a mini series ZWEI ALLEIN. After having his debut in german cinema in comedies such as MÄDCHEN, MÄDCHEN he changed to dramatic roles such as NAPOLA and DER ROTE KAKADU. Riemelt, who was honored as "shooting star" at Berlinale and received additional awards such as the Grimme-Award and Bavarian Film Award, has since demonstrated his versatility across a range of productions. On television, he contributed to Dominik Graf's series IN FACE OF THE CRIME. His performance in FREE FALL marked a pivotal moment in his career, paving the way for international projects such as AMENSIA, BERLIN SYNDROM, and the Netflix series SENSE8 by the Wachowski siblings. Riemelt does not avoid challenging topics, as evidenced by his role in KOPFPLATZEN. THE MATRIX RESURRECTIONS brought him back together with the Wachowski's, leading to another international success. However, smaller films and budgets have also been significant in his career.

In 2023, Max Riemelt was once again in front of the camera for several film productions, including the comedy TWO TO ONE by Natja Brunckhorst, in which he acts side by side with Sandra Hüller und Ronald Zehrfeld.

CINEMA (SELECTION)

2023 ES GEHT UM LUIS | L. Chiarla
 2023 ZWEI ZU EINS | N. Brunkhorst
 2020 THE MATRIX RESURRECTION | L. Wachowski
 2019 ALLE REDEN ÜBERS WETTER | A. Pinske
 2019 IVIE WIE IVIE | S. Blaßkiewitz
 2018 ERNESTOS ISLAND | R. Vietz
 2015 BERLIN SYNDROME | C. Shortland
 2014 AMNESIA | B. Schroeder
 2013 AUF DAS LEBEN | U. Janson
 2013 MIASTO 44 | J. Komasa
 2013 LICHTGESTALTEN | Ch. Moris Müller
 2012 FREIER FALL | St. Lacant
 2011 HEITER BIS WOLKIG | M. Petry
 2011 DER DEUTSCHE FREUND | J. Meerapfel
 2011 DIE VIERTE MACHT | D. Gansel
 2010 PLAYOFF | E. Riklis
 2008 13 SEMESTER | F. Wittich
 2007 TAUSEND OZEANE | L. Frieden
 2007 DIE WELLE | D. Gansel
 2007 UP! UP! TO THE SKY | H. Sturm
 2007 LAUF UM DEIN LEBEN | A. Köse
 2004 ROTER KAKADU | D. Graf
 2003 NAPOLA | D. Gansel
 2003 MÄDCHEN, MÄDCHEN – LOFT ODER LIEBE | P. Gersina
 2003 HALLESCHE KOMETEN | S. Zacharias
 2000 MÄDCHEN MÄDCHEN | D. Gansel

STREAMING

2022 SLEEPING DOG, St. Lacant, F. Meletzky
 2014-17 SENSE 8, A.+L.Wachowski, T. Tykwer, J. McTeigue, D. Glass



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NATALIA RUDZIEWICZ

R o l e C o n s t a n z e

NATALIA RUDZIEWICZ first appeared in front of a camera at the age of 14, alongside Wolfram Koch. Since then, she has appeared as an actress in over 80 television and cinema films. Following her acting studies at the “Bayerische Theaterakademie” in Munich, NATALIA RUDZIEWICZ played her first leading cinema role alongside Edin Hasanović in Lars-Gunnar Lotz's multi-award-winning debut film SHIFTING THE BLAME. For the tragicomedy VIVA FOREVER, in which she plays the lead role, she is nominated for the coveted “Förderpreis Neues Deutsches Kino” at the Munich Film Festival in 2021 for her portrayal of the neurotic “Francesca”.

In 2023, Natalia takes on the leading role in the feature film ABOUT LUIS alongside Max Riemelt, directed by Lucia Chiarla. Natalia is currently in cinemas as one of the leading roles in the comedy NOTHING AS IT WAS. The film premiered at the 2024 Munich Film Festival, where it won the “Bernd Burgemeister Television Award” for “Best TV Film”.

CINEMA & TV (SELECTION)

2023

ABOUT LUIS | DIRECTED BY: LUCIA CHIARLA
OSTLICHT FILMPRODUKTION GMBH

2023

NOTHING AS IT WAS
DIRECTED BY: Lars Jessen, Jan Georg Schütte | Florida Film

2023

WER WIR SIND
DIRECTED BY: Charlotte Rolfes | VIA FILM | Degeto, MDR, NDR

2020

VIVA FOREVER
DIRECTED BY: SINJE KÖHLER
FILMACADEMY BADEN- WÜRTTEMBERG (LUDWIGSBURG)

2020

CHARITÉ - 3rd Season
DIRECTED BY: Christine Hartmann | UFA Fiction

2017

DER STAATSFEIND
DIRECTED BY Felix Herzogenrath | Odeon Fiction GmbH

2012

SHIFTING THE BLAME
DIRECTED BY: LARS GUNNAR LOTZ
FFL FILM- UND FERNSEH-LABOR LUDWIGSBURG GMBH & CO. KG



© Max Motel

FRANZISKA TROEGNER

Role Hanna

FRANZISKA TROEGNER grows up in a theater family — her father is an actor and director, and her mother is a singer at the KOMISCHE OPER BERLIN. At the age of five, she makes her debut on the big stage of the BERLINER METROPOL THEATER with the poem “Imagine, I’ve seen the Christ Child!” At 14, she begins performing cabaret at the youth studio of the Berliner Kabarett DIE DISTEL. After graduating from high school in 1973, she receives acting training at the Berliner Ensemble and works there as an actress for 20 years until 1993. Since then she has worked freelance, including at the BERLINER SCHLOSSPARK THEATER and the HAMBURGER KAMMERSPIELE. Alongside her theater work, she has participated in about 100 cinema and television films and over 500 radio play productions throughout her artistic career. In various genres, she manages to create memorable characters in supporting roles that leave a lasting impression on audiences. For her portrayal of the character Jacqui in the film HEIDI M., she receives a nomination for the GERMAN FILM AWARD. In 2004, she appears for the first time alongside Johnny Depp under the direction of Tim Burton in the US-English film production CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY.

CINEMA (SELECTION)

2024

ABOUT LUIS | DIRECTOR: Lucia Chiarla
ostlicht filmproduktion GmbH

2013

THE DROP – A ROADMOVIE
DIRECTOR: Matthias Kubusch, Robert von Wroblewsky

2011

ZETTL
DIRECTOR: Helmut Dietl

2004

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
DIRECTOR: Tim Burton
Warner Bros. Entertainment

2001

VÄTER
DIRECTOR: Dani Levy

2000

HEIDI M.
DIRECTOR: Michael Klier
Nomination for GERMAN FILM AWARD 2001



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B A C K G R O U N D

O F T H E A D A P T I O N

ABOUT LUIS is based on the play THE LITTLE PONY (El pequeño poni) by Paco Bezerra, who was born in southern Spain in 1978. The world premiere of the theater play took place on February 12, 2016, at the Teatro Salón Cervantes in Madrid, and the German premiere was on April 13, 2017, at the Deutsches Theater in Göttingen. The play addresses themes of bullying, social exclusion, and the search for identity. It is inspired by a real case in the USA where a boy named Grayson Bruce was bullied at school because his backpack featured an image of a MY LITTLE PONY character.

C O N T A C T

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