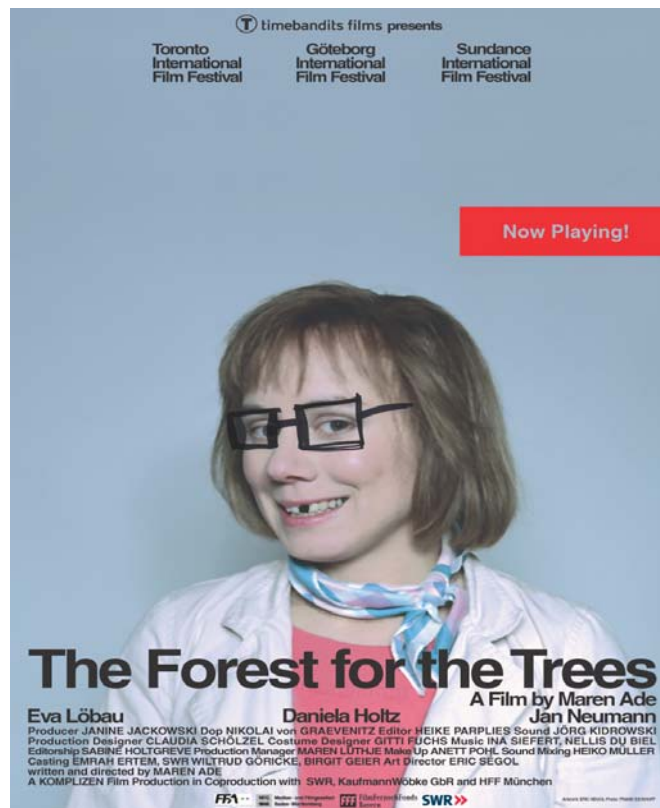




FILMMOVEMENT

THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

A film by: Maren Ade



Germany/German/81 min. /2003

WINNER – Special Jury Prize, World – **Sundance FF 2005**
WINNER – Best Picture – **2005 Cinema Jove FF (Madrid)**
WINNER – Best Picture and Best Actress – **Newport Int'l FF 2005**
WINNER – Best Picture – **2005 Indie Lisboa FF (Portugal)**
WINNER – Best Actress – **Buenos Aires Ind. FF 2005**
Official Selection – **Toronto Int'l FF, Vancouver FF, SF FF**

Distributor Contact: Josh Levin

Film Movement Series

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Synopsis:

Bursting with idealism and high hopes, mousy Melanie dumps her boyfriend and leaves home to start her teaching career, armed with alternative methods and bright-eyed optimism. At her first day of school she gives a very ambitious speech for her colleagues. She wants to be a "fresh breeze" to the school. But her old established colleagues are just annoyed by Melanie's new teaching methods. Soon enough, storm clouds begin to form: she's consistently tortured by rebellious students and rejected by her colleagues. There's no comfort in her personal life, either, as the loneliness of the big city begins to take its toll. Eager for some kind of companionship aside from the creepy Thorsten, the only co-worker her age, Melanie orchestrates a "chance meeting" with her attractive neighbor and begins to insinuate herself into her neighbor's life. Just like at work, her efforts at a social life fail spectacularly, and Melanie slowly dissolves into desperation and a final, unexpected act.

About the Production, by Director Maren Ade

THE FOREST FOR THE TREES is my graduation film from film school, and was inspired by my parents, who were both teachers.

We shot the film in 26 days, in Karlsruhe and Baden-Baden. Although I originally wanted to shoot chronologically, we had to start with the school scenes, to take advantage of the students' holidays. At the beginning it seemed impossible to shoot such an important part of the film first, not knowing what the other part would be like. But in the end it turned out that it was good to start at the school -- it was our concept from the beginning to make a very realistic film, and the students set the level of reality we could orientate on.

Even though there was a written script, we improvised around the scenes, changed them or added new things. I think it is important to benefit from the fantasy of an actor and their feeling for a character.

For that reason it was no makeshift solution to shoot on video, it was a wish. I shot all my short films on film stock, and found it unsatisfying because one cannot afford the film stock to try everything. In that way, it was a relief to shoot on video. To work out all the nuances and gradations that are so important for the dramaturgy of the story, we tried a lot and shot a lot. In the end we had 50 hours of material, including 10 hours of school scenes. The documentary character of the film is a credit to Nikolai von Graevenitz, who usually works for documentaries.

The idea for the film started as a comedy about a young teacher fighting with her profession. As my parents were teachers, I listened to lots of stories about teachers struggling with students and daily school business.

The other idea was dealing with an artificial friendship between two women, in which one of them is crossing social boundaries to be close to the other one. This part of the story was drawn up as a drama. I could not decide which story to choose, so I combined both of them and they fitted easily.

My parents were the best experts to read the school scenes, and they corrected the written scenes several times. Generally there is a strong connection between the film and my hometown Karlsruhe, as I used the dialect spoken there, and I wrote most of the script there.

CAST

Melanie Pröschle	EVA LÖBAU
Tina Schaffner	DANIELA HOLTZ
Thorsten Rehm	JAN NEUMANN
Frau Sussmann	ILONA C. SCHULZ
Tobias	ROBERT SCHUPP
Lutger Reinhardt	HEINZ-RÖSER DÜMMING
Renate Pföhler	MARTINA ECKRICH
Bine	NINA FIEDLER
Gerd Postweiler	HANS RÜDIGER KUCICH
Elvira Fischer-Walter	RUTH KÖPPLER
Bernd	ACHIM ENCHELMAIER
Mutter Melanie	MONIKA HIRSCHLE
Vater Melanie	VOLKER JECK

CREW

Production	KOMPLIZEN FILM GbR
Producer	JANINE JACKOWSKI
Co-Production	KAUFMANN WÖBKE GbR
	SWR / SABINE HOLTGREVE
	HOCHSCHULE FÜR FERNSEHEN und FILM

MÜNCHEN	
Script/Director	MAREN ADE
Director of Photography	NIKOLAI VON GRAEVENITZ
Production Design	CLAUDIA SCHÖLZEL
Costum Design	GITTI FUCHS
Sound	JÖRG KIDROWSKI
Music	INA SIEFERT, NELLIS DU BIEL
Editor	HEIKE PARPLIES

Festival History:

International Hofer Filmtage, Germany 2003
Max-Ophüls-Preis Saarbrücken, Germany 2004
Cologne Conference, Germany 2004
Toronto International Film Festival, Discovery, Canada 2004
Vancouver Film Festival, Canada 2004
Valladolid International Film Festival, Spain 2004
Cairo International Film Festival, Egypt, 2004
Opening Film of the International Festival of Film Schools, Munich, Germany, 2004
Kinofest Lünen, Germany 2004
Cairo International Film Festival, Egypt, 2004

2005

Sundance Film Festival, USA, 2005
Göteborg Film Festival, Sweden, 2005
Hong Kong International Film Festival, China, 2005
International Film Festival of Uruguay, 2005
Women's Film Festival in Seoul, Korea, 2005
Buenos Aires Independent Film Festival, Argentina, 2005 - Competition
San Francisco Film Festival, USA, 2005
Independent Film Festival Lisboa, Portugal, 2005 - Competition
Newport International Film Festival, USA, 2005 – Section: Emerging Filmmakers
Sydney International Film Festival, Australia, 2005 - Competition
New York BAM, USA, 2005 – Section: Best Film of Year 2005
Jerusalem International Film Festival, Israel, 2005
Los Angeles IFP, USA
20th Cinema Jove International, Valencia, Spain - Competition
Munich Film Festival, Germany
Cambridge Film Festival, UK – Competition
Reykjavik International Film Festival, Island
Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, Taiwan
Rio de Janeiro, International Film Festival, Brasil
Northern Lights Film Festival, Newcastle, UK
Leeds International Film Festival, UK
Festival of the German Films, London, UK

VARIETY

"The Forest for the Trees" is a precisely modulated first film about an idealistic young educator ostracized for her lack of teaching skills and civil graces. Equally adept at sidestepping genre expectations and creating an atmosphere of oddly bracing bleakness, this unheralded late-Toronto discovery will segue with ease to other discerning fests, and could transcend its sludgy vid palette to earn specialized arthouse dates and leafy ancillary.

In fact, it's difficult to say when exactly Melanie goes off the rails, and it is the fearless performance of Eva Lobau, that charges the film with tension and unease."

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

"A sober psychological drama about a novice teacher in meltdown, Maren Ade's low-budget The Forest for the Trees builds slowly but assuredly to produce an unsettling final kick. An introverted but commanding lead performance by Eva Lobau should put her name on the map, as well as that of debut feature maker Maren Ade, whose graduation film this is... Cinematographer Nikolai von Graevenitz – whose documentary experience informs the film – shoots crisply and economically, with a touch more expressionist looseness as Melanie cracks up, while to-the-point editing boosts the narrative drive. This insightful, affecting and tightly realised piece bodes well for Maren's future career."

ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Film Movement is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement has members in over 50 states and 1200 cities. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

The Film Movement Series is a new theatrical film series featuring some of the best in original world cinema. Created by the team that invented the groundbreaking Shooting Gallery Film Series, Film Movement will release 6 of its 12 films per year in leading independent cinemas in major US cities to help outstanding filmmakers find the audience they deserve. All films are available to members exclusively on DVD upon theatrical release so that they may participate regardless of where they live.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Movement Series. The schedule includes the following films:

- Wiebke von Carolsfeld's *Marion Bridge*
- Eric Eason's *Manito*
- Scott Hamilton Kennedy's *OT: our town*
- Donovan Leitch & Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Party's Over*
- Tjebbo Penning's *Morlang*
- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*
- Vicente Amorim's *The Middle of the World*
- Jacques Doillon's *Raja*
- Tony McNamra's *The Rage in Placid Lake*
- Rolf de Heer's *Alexandra's Project*