



# FRIEDA

JULIA JENTSCH | NAILA SCHUBERTH | DANA PLAUL | RAFAEL STACHOWIAK  
MARKUS HERING | HEIKE HANOLD-LYNCH | JUDITH ALTENBERGER  
BETTINA STUCKY | ANNE WEINKNECHT | DARJA MAHOTKIN



## ABOUT THE FILM

Southern Germany. 1984. Under the growing pressure of the Cold War, eleven-year-old FRIEDA begins to sense that her family conceals a secret, passed down through generations. Searching for the truth about her missing sister, she pushes back against the adults' silence with the power of her imagination.

Told through the eyes of a child, the film explores female generational trauma, inherited silence and magical realism – as the fear outside finds its echo within her own family. Frieda's world unfolds in three chapters and three aspect ratios – and features a remarkable cast led by young talent Naila Schuberth and acclaimed actress Julia Jentsch in the role of her mother. Aneke, the blind girl at the heart of the family's secret, is portrayed by Dana Plaul, who has been blind since birth and makes her screen debut.

FRIEDA is Felix Hassenfratz's second feature film. The screenplay was nominated for the German Screenplay Award and developed during his Villa Aurora Fellowship in Los Angeles.

## FACTS

|                          |                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Written & Directed by:   | <b>Felix Hassenfratz</b>                                                                               |
| Director of Photography: | <b>Michael Kotschi</b>                                                                                 |
| Editing:                 | <b>Niki Mossböck</b>                                                                                   |
| Production Design:       | <b>Christian Strang</b>                                                                                |
| Costume Design:          | <b>Caterina Czepek</b>                                                                                 |
| Hair & Make-up:          | <b>Verena Morocutti</b><br><b>Judith Kröhrer</b>                                                       |
| Sound Design:            | <b>Nora Czamler</b>                                                                                    |
| Commissioning Editors:   | <b>Stefanie Groß (SWR)</b><br><b>Christina Voss-Michalke (WDR)</b><br><b>Alexandra Fritsch (SR)</b>    |
| Produced by:             | <b>Daniel Reich</b><br><b>Christoph Holthof</b><br><b>Christian Bachmann</b><br><b>Veit Heiduschka</b> |
| Length:                  | <b>102 min</b>                                                                                         |
| Aspect Ratio:            | <b>1.37:1 – 1.85:1 – 2.39:1</b>                                                                        |
| Status:                  | <b>final post-production</b>                                                                           |
| Completion:              | <b>August 2026</b>                                                                                     |

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

FRIEDA is a poetic excavation of memory, trauma and childhood imagination, set against the political backdrop of the Cold War. As both writer and director, I approach this film not only as a historical narrative, but as a deeply personal myth — told through the eyes of a child who senses more than she understands.

The story is rooted in rural Southern Germany, 1984. But its emotional terrain is timeless. Frieda's world is shaped by absence — of truth, of emotional clarity, of a sister she was never allowed to know. Her response is to fill these gaps with fantasy. Through this act, we enter a parallel world that is no less real than the political one.

What interests me is not the Cold War as a historical backdrop, but fear as something that enters a family: its bodies, its rooms, its dreams. What is spoken — and above all, what remains unsaid.

This film is not about war in the conventional sense. It is about emotional warzones passed through generations. It is about how children carry the weight of what adults suppress. And it is about the radical, transformative power of imagination as a form of resistance and attempted healing.

The reality of the Cold War and magical realism are the defining elements of FRIEDA. Reality and fantasy merge into a cosmos in which what really happened and what might have happened can never be fully separated. Frieda's rituals, her theories and the giantess Wirrwarr create a universe of their own, governed by rules different from those of the adult world.

With the discovery of Aneke, the denied girl at the centre of the family's silence, the balance of power begins to shift. The blind actress Dana Plaul brought a unique presence to the character of Aneke, precision and truth that could not have been invented from the outside. Her way of perceiving space, listening and being present changed the way the scenes were staged and felt.

Inclusion is not an external theme of FRIEDA, but part of its emotional truth. Frieda's search for Aneke becomes an encounter with a person the adult world refuses to see. Through Dana, Aneke is not a symbol, but a strong voice, a mystery and reality of her own.

FRIEDA is a story made of several realities. A construction of revelation, memory and imagination. Of actual and imagined truth. Truth, in this story, is a fleeting substance.

My vision was to create a film that speaks to adults through the clarity and pain of a child's gaze. A film where the political becomes personal, and the personal becomes myth. Where memory, history and fantasy collide — not to escape reality, but to reveal its deeper truths.

## FELIX HASSENFRATZ

Felix Hassenfratz, born in 1981, is a German writer and director based in Cologne. He studied film directing and screenwriting. His work often explores hidden emotional structures and the fragile border between childhood perception and adult reality.

His graduation film SUSPECT / DER VERDACHT won the German Short Film Award and the Studio Hamburg Young Talent Award and screened at international festivals including Montréal, Palm Springs and Buenos Aires. The hybrid documentary series SCAVENGER HUNT IN THE HOLY LAND / SCHNITZELJAGD IM HEILIGEN LAND received a Grimme Award in the Children & Youth category.

LOST ONES / VERLORENE, his first feature film, premiered at the Berlinale Perspektive Deutsches Kino and received several awards, marking Hassenfratz as a distinctive new voice in German cinema.

In 2019, Hassenfratz was a Villa Aurora Fellow in Los Angeles, where he developed FRIEDA. Nominated for the German Screenplay Award, his second feature continues his exploration of personal memory, silence and the political forces that shape intimate lives.

## KURHAUS PRODUCTION & WEGA FILM

kurhaus production is an award winning company based in southern Germany founded by Daniel Reich and Christoph Holthof in 2007. The company develops and produces feature films and documentaries for cinema and television, focusing on distinctive stories and contemporary realities. Its productions include FREE FALL (2013), NIGHT FOREST (2021) and THE EMPTY GRAVE (2024). With FRIEDA, kurhaus production continues its work with author-driven cinema.

Based in Vienna, Wega Film is an established Austrian production company associated with internationally acclaimed auteur cinema and European co-productions. Its filmography includes major works by Michael Haneke such as THE WHITE RIBBON, CACHÉ and AMOUR. With FRIEDA, Wega Film joins kurhaus in a German-Austrian co-production.



## CONTACT

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