



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM**  
2016



# FADO

a film by Jonas Rothlaender



dffb

rbb<sup>1</sup>

Leucht  
stoff

medienboard  
Berlin-Brandenburg



PRIMEIRA  
IDADE

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## LOGLINE

Young doctor Fabian travels to Lisbon on the spur of the moment to win back his ex-girlfriend Doro. While the two of them are gradually getting closer again they are being haunted by their fears. Fabians jealousy once again puts their relationship to the test...





## SHORT FACTS

Germany / Portugal, 2016, feature film

100 minutes, color, digital (ARRI Amira), 1:1,66, DCP 24 fps

Dolby Digital 5.1. Stereo, German/English/Portoguese

with English or German subtitles

A StickUp Filmproduktion in Co-Production with German Film- and Television Academy (dff) Berlin, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, Primeira Idade and Atara Film

## SYNOPSIS

When young doctor, FABIAN (33), sees an uncanny resemblance in the face of one of his dying patients, he snaps out of his rut. On a whim, he leaves Berlin and travels to Lisbon, where his ex-girlfriend DORO (31) works as an architect. Doro is surprised by his sudden appearance in town and doesn't know how to handle the situation. The two of them had a very intimate, but also painful relationship.

Fabian fights for Doro. He wants to show her that he has learned from his mistakes and is serious about getting her back. He finds an apartment in Lisbon, starts taking Portuguese lessons and even quits his job in Berlin so he can start a new life with her. Fabian seems to enjoy life as he never had before and unlike in the past, is even able to keep his jealousy under control. Doro falls in love with Fabian all over again.



However, after their first night back together, Fabian's fears and anxieties return to the forefront. Fabian feels threatened by Doro's close relationship with her charismatic colleague, FRANCISCO (36). Fabian attempts to suppress his ever-growing jealousy, but fails to hide it from Doro and eventually returns to his old ways. In fear of being hurt by Fabian again, she gradually drifts away from him.

During a trip to the Atlantic coast, the tension between Doro and Fabian escalates from wild suspicions to actual threats. The couple is driven apart as a result. When Fabian finally realizes that he must let go to conquer his fears, he makes a discovery that launches him into a full-blown nightmare.



## LUISE HEYER AS DORO

**HÄRTE** (2014, Rosa von Praunheim)

**EIN GESCHENK DER GÖTTER** (2013, Oliver Haffner)

**JACK** (2013, Edward Berger)

**WESTWIND** (2010, Robert Thalheim)

## GOLO EULER AS FABIAN

**TATORT „IM SCHMERZ GEBOREN“** (2015, Florian Schwarz)

**DIE VERWANDLUNG** (2014, Igor Plischke)

**ANDERSWO** (2013, Ester Amrami)

**KASIMIR UND KAROLINE** (2010, Ben von Grafenstein)





## OTHER ROLES INCLUDE:

**ALBANO JERÓNIMO** as Francisco

**PIRJO LONKA** as Anita

**DUARTE GRILO** as Nuno

**ISABEL ABREU** as Maria

**SUZANA BORGES** as Patricia Saramago

**RUI MORRISSON** as Ricardo Costa



# TEAM

## DIRECTOR

Jonas Rothlaender

## SCREENPLAY

Jonas Rothlaender  
Sebastian Bleyl

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Luis Singer  
Dennis Schanz  
Ole Lohmann

## PRODUCER

Tara Biere

## CO-PRODUCER

Joana Gusmao  
Pedro Fernandes Duarte  
Robert Morgenstern  
Alexander Haßkerl

## LINE-PRODUCER

Andreas Louis

## PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Diogo Varela Silva  
Raquel de Silva

## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Alexander Haßkerl

## EDITOR

Dietmar Kraus (BFS)

## SOUND RECORDIST

Johannes Kaschek

## SOUNDDESIGN

Julian Cropp

## COSTUME DESIGN

Dorothee Bach

## SCENOGRAPHY

Raquel Santos  
Marta do Vale  
Celeste Lopes Alves  
Ricarda Schwarz

## MAKE-UP ARTIST

Ria Weber

## **BIOGRAPHY**

# **JONAS ROTHLAENDER**

Born 1982 in Lübeck, Germany. During his school time he wrote short stories which were published in different anthologies. After his graduation in 2003 he shot multiple shorts on his own and worked as an assistant director for other productions. From 2007 - 2015 he was studying directing at the German Film- and Television Academy Berlin (dffg). During that time he shot several short films, which premiered on several festivals. His short film THE SHIRT was selected for Next-Generation-Short-Film-Reel and toured festivals worldwide, beginning 2011 in Cannes. His first feature-length documentary FAMILIAR CIRCLES premiered during Max-Ophüls-Preis in 2015. It will come to cinemas in Germany and as a Video-on-Demand in the beginning of 2016. His feature film debut FADO, an international co-production, will premiere in 2016.



## FILMOGRAPHY

### **2015 Familiar Circles, 130 min.**

Documentary, German Film- and Television Academy (dffb)  
in Co-Production with Jonas Rothlaender  
Festivals: 36. Max Ophüls Preis, 19. Filmfest Schleswig-Holstein,  
25. Filmkunst Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

### **2014 Returning, 30 min.**

German Film- and Television Academy (dffb)  
Festivals: 56. Nordische Filmtage Lübeck, 10. Achtung Berlin -  
New Berlin Film Award

### **2011 Hunting Grounds, 30 min.**

German Film- and Television Academy (dffb) in Co-Production with  
RBB. Festivals: 53. Nordische Filmtage Lübeck

### **2010 The Shirt, 6 min.**

German Film- and Television Academy (dffb) in Co-Produktion with  
arte. Festivals: 44. Hofer Filmtage, Next Generation Kurzfilmrolle  
Cannes 2011, 16. Milano Film Festival



# INTERVIEW WITH JONAS ROTHLAENDER

## What inspired you to write FADO?

FADO is first and foremost about jealousy. I believe everyone has experienced jealousy to some extent in their lives – whether it be on the active or passive end of the spectrum. But the core exploration in the film is about the emotions and the fears that are hidden behind jealousy. Fabian constantly struggles with his fear of betrayal and abandonment. Because of his perception of masculinity, he cannot allow himself to show any weakness or to discuss his fears. He desperately tries to suppress his emotions and ends up becoming overwhelmed by them. The true tragedy is that Fabian stands in the way of his own happiness and destroys the love he so longs for in the process. He would rather risk his own demise than to show his emotions.

On first glance, it may appear that the film is a tragic love story between Fabian and Doro. However, their relationship is what in many way fosters Fabian's inner struggle. Most of all, I'm fascinated by the dynamics that develop in romantic relationships. These dynamics can often make one question whether what we consider to be love may actually be nothing more than dependency.

## Is the story based on personal events?

Although the film is not autobiographical by any means and Fabian's behavior is somewhat melodramatic, I can definitely relate to many of Fabian's inner conflicts and problems. I grew up in a middle-class environment where emotions were often suppressed. This observation is something I

explored in my documentary film, FAMILIE HABEN. There's a saying that goes "running from your problems is a race that you will never win." That is exactly what happens to Fabian. He tries to keep a cool facade of being in control. By avoiding his feelings and fears he only makes everything worse in the process.

## What led to your decision to shoot the film in Lisbon?

That is actually based on a personal story that inspired an early version of the script. When I was in my early twenties, I visited my girlfriend at the time in Lyon. Shortly after I arrived, she broke up with me. I felt alienated in many ways. In retrospect, this situation fascinates me. Not only was I alienated by the sudden distance between the two of us, but there was the additional

factor of being lost in an unknown place. As I was thinking about the setting for this love story, it was clear to me that it would have to take place abroad. Shooting in Lisbon was an intuitive decision. What's special about Lisbon for me is the specific atmosphere that the city has. I consider it a very meta-physical place. What makes it so unique is something entirely impalpable. You can only feel it. As this feeling constantly changes, it can never be tangible. That is what absolutely fascinates me about Lisbon. Sebastian [Bleyl] and I traveled there a number of times to explore the city more intensely and to find ways to merge it with our story.

**The film begins with a striking image of a wave. Why is water such a prominent theme in FADO?**

In the beginning, my gut instin-

ct told me that the picture of the wave needed to be included in the film. I didn't know why. I guess you could say it was an intuitive decision. Later, it was clear to me that the wave represents Fabian's inner struggle. The wave symbolizes Fabian's stewing emotions which he both fears and desperately longs for. At the end of the day, his emotions are uncontrollable like the natural force behind a wave and contrasts starkly to his obsession to control his emotions.

**How were you able to convey feelings of jealousy through pictures?**

What I think is fascinating about jealousy and what is particularly cinematic about it, is that there is a type of film created in one's mind when the imagination runs wild with jealousy. The really insidious thing about these imaginary scenarios is that they can feel very real. We tried to convey this in in the film by

making the difference between real and imaginary scenes very subtle. The audience finds it just as difficult as Fabian to distinguish between fantasy and reality. This makes the audience participate directly in Fabian's distorted perception.

**It's clear that the story-line of FADO demands an intense performance from the actors. What were the challenges while filming?**

The whole project was tailored for working with actors from the beginning. Everything was focused specifically on the actors, the filming location and the story. Because of this, it was important for me to shoot with a small, flexible team and to have a minimal technical setup. Of course it was not easy for both lead actors, Luise and Golo, to get into the role considering the grueling dynamics within the relationship of their roles? Working together with them to portray this



dynamic realistically was the greatest challenge during filming for me.

**There are a number of very explicit sex scenes in your film. What roll does this play in the production?**

The sex scenes have an important meaning for the plot. Luckily, the actors understood this immediately. Before we started filming, but also while we were on set, it was extremely important to me to keep the communication with the actors very open and direct. We always talked about the scenes and choreographed the action in detail before we filmed. As we shot the sex scenes, we differentiated between two different types of scenes. The first type portrayed sex as a fragile and vulnerable act for Fabian. The second illustrated Fabian's fears and anxieties of Doro having sex with other men. It was important for me to illustrate Fabian's painful and agonizing

perception in this second type as intense and explicit as possible as to reflect Fabian's jealousy and fears. When it comes to sex, I think that men feel a lot of pressure to prove their masculinity. And because of this, there's great potential for an inferiority complex to develop which can be a breeding ground for jealousy itself.

**What made you decide to use fado music in the film?**

What fascinates me about fado music is the emotion behind it. I have a vivid memory of sitting in a fado bar and not understanding the lyrics, but being deeply moved by the emotion of it. I'm amazed by how fado vocalists can sing in such a visceral way. Using this type of music in the soundtrack provides a strong contrast to Fabian's emotional unavailability. The most difficult thing about using fado music was to not cross the line in

making it kitsch or have it fall into a cliché. Going to a fado bar in Lisbon, may be considered something tourists do. However, at the same time, fado music is also a Portuguese expression of national pride and because of that it's also a highly sensitive subject.

## STICKUP FILMPRODUKTION

Ole Lohmann, Dennis Schanz, and Luis Singer founded StickUp Films in 2009. Our short films BULLET (2010) and AUF DEM LAND / IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE (2012) both received the commendation „Prädikat wertvoll“ from the German Filmbewertungsstelle and were shown at the Max-Ophüls Prize, the Interfilm Festival Berlin, and a number of other international film festivals.

In 2013, we co-produced our first feature-length film: SCHWARZER PANTHER / BLACK PANTHER. The graduation project of director Samuel Perriard is a sensitive portrayal of the secret love affair between a brother and a sister, set in the Swiss mountainside. The film premiered at the Filmfest Munich and was nominated for the newcomer prize First Steps Award in the category “feature-length fiction film” and at the Studio Hamburg Newcomer Prize.

With our latest feature film production FADO, by Jonas Rothlaender, we aim to build on the success of our first feature. It is another project of a film academy graduate, it is also set in a non-German environment, and it treats a daring topic in a powerful way: FADO is a tragic love-story and an in-depth exploration of jealousy that is set in contemporary Portugal.



# CONTACTS

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