



# hot contenders

Discover the Next Generation

Berlinale Series Market & Conference 2020



Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin  
German Film and Television Academy Berlin



experience the  
writers' room



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Photo: photocase.com/mirrorimages

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# Content

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In 2020 for the first time, the Berlinale Series Market & Conference features a joint presentation of young talents from six key European series programs. In a session titled **Hot Contenders 2020: Discover the Next Generation**, graduates from six prestigious training programs present their current series projects and enter into a discussion with top-class industry professionals.

This booklet presents the series makers and their projects and provides an overview over the six featured training programs.

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# Stefan Gieren & Max Zähle

## Raju

Berlinale Talents



Hannah Berger, a nurse from Germany, travels to Calcutta, accompanied by her husband Kris, a geologist, to adopt the orphan Raju. When the boy disappears, they learn that his parents are still alive. Jamal Gosh, who works for an NGO, helps them to find Raju, although the boy's fate is not his prime interest. He wants to make use of the fresh traces of Raju's abduction to disclose a ring of corrupt police officers. He has been chasing them for years, trying to find his daughter, who was kidnapped 15 years ago. He blows up the traffickers, which only leads him to a much more powerful enemy: Salim Khan, the alleged head of a violently built up empire that is beyond governmental control.

While they attempt to reunite Raju with his biological parents, Hannah and Kris get caught in the crossfire of the mafia. Putting their relationship to the test. They become hunted in a power struggle that extends beyond their imagination. Salim Khan acts as a front man for the unscrupulous Sheela Mishra, chair-woman of the Mishra Foundation and a descendant of a formerly powerful Maharaja dynasty, who founded her power and wealth on human trafficking in the guise of humanitarian aid.

When Kris gets killed, Hannah accompanies Jamal into the swamp. Jamal supports her, shows her how the system works and teaches her the necessary means and methods. The traces that lead to the Bengal government take them to Jörn Michaelis, a college friend of Kris, who works as a project coordinator for the KFW in West Bengal, a German agency that provides development aid. He forges docu-

ments and expert' studies to raise millions for Sheela Mishra's Foundation – money that drives the local farmers into financial dependence from micro-credits – a conspiracy that Kris was about to reveal while searching for Raju.

The Bengal state secretary Amid Amand depends on Sheela's influence in the region, at first glance, to avert a natural disaster. At second glance, they're slowly disposing and deporting the local population in order to build a giant deep sea port. As soon as they can't service their loans, they offer their children to the Mishra Foundation as a pledge resulting in increased child trafficking activities – a secret, that must be kept at any cost.

Suddenly, Hannah is confronted with the disturbing question: How is the fate of her adoptive child intertwined with the whole structure? Who profits from her husband's death? What about her complicity and guilt in a system in which humans are degraded to become commodities? And how far would she go to have a child?

» Based on a short film which was nominated for an Oscar as Best Live Action Short Film on the 84th Academy Awards. We want to take the spectator to the demiworld of illegal child trafficking in Calcutta. Layer by layer, the series reveals an inhumane industry deeply rooted in European interest. RAJU plays with the moral compass of the audience and impels them to rethink their values.

04

- » Genre: Drama, Thriller
- » Format: 6 x 60 minutes

### Tagline

How far would you go to have a child?

### Logline

A German couple travels to Calcutta to adopt an Indian orphan and find themselves in the middle of an illegal child trafficking affair.

05

### Stefan Gieren & Max Zähle

Stefan Gieren and Max Zähle created the story of "Raju" as a short film which received a Student Academy Award and an Oscar nomination for Best Live Action Short Film in 2012. Since then, Max has directed German TV and cinema films such as ("Scrapin!") and most recently Grimme Award nominee "Are You Happy?". While Stefan has produced "Toz Bezi" (Berlinale Forum 2016), "Kardesler" (Karlovy Vary 2018), "Whatever Happens Next" (Berlinale Perspektive 2018) and "Progress In The Valley Of The People Who Don't Know" (Berlinale Forum 2019).

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Agata Koschmieder

# The Polish Aliens' Republic

MIDPOINT TV Launch



On a cold December night, the inhabitants of the Emilcin village gather together to celebrate the opening of a new astronomy observatory located in the isolated hills. For the entire community, it's quite a big deal – in the dull communist village, observing distant galaxies seems to be the only amusement they can allow themselves. Especially excited about it are the “Flying Saucers” – an amateur high school group of UFOlogist friends with nerdy 16-year-old Peter as its leader. Bored to death by growing up behind the Iron Curtain, they constantly daydream about a spectacular space invasion (which sounds like a lot more fun than a Soviet one!). It's not easy being a teenager in a country alienated from the rest of the world, but tracking UFO signs brings a pulse of excitement worth longing for.

Later that night, John Wolski, Peter's 65-year-old uncle experiences a mysterious event at his farm. This simple kind of a man – who has never tried Coca Cola in his entire life but listened to Elvis Presley song once or twice if this counts – has no idea that the event he takes part in is called “Alien Abduction” by American UFOlogists. Next day Wolski reports to local authorities that he was kidnapped and examined by creatures with grey wrinkled skin.

This bizarre and literally out of this world accident turns the steady universe of the community upside down. Some of the inhabitants think Wolski went crazy. Some of them are sure he simply got possessed by the devil. The town begins to outcast him, and even his extended family gets caught in the aftermath. But Peter doesn't care about what the town thinks

about him or his family – he's simply thrilled that he and the Flying Saucers have a real UFO case to investigate in their own backyard.

But soon it turns out they are not the only ones interested in the controversial case. Chris (56) – an extrovert and experienced UFO hunter with very American and annoying behaviour – comes to the village to examine Wolski. The inhabitants don't give a warm welcome to the suspicious stranger who proclaims conspiracy theories here and there. Flying Saucers and Chris secretly team up to reveal undisclosed connections between Soviets, KGB agents, the Solidarity Movement and...the aliens. It's time to identify lying objects.

The unusual investigation is suddenly disrupted when the martial law is introduced by communists. Suddenly all freedom is taken away. The village comes to realise that the real danger is posed not by aliens but by humans. Disappointed by God, who doesn't listen to their prayers, they struggle to find a way to contact the aliens and ask them for help in overcoming the struggles of communist rule. UFO-mania spreads across the skeptical inhabitants like a viral infection – the Polish People's Republic transforms into the Aliens' Republic in front of our eyes.

Based on real events imagined by people.

06

- >> Genre: Period Sci-fi Dramey
- >> Format: 8 x 50 minutes

### Tagline

Scared of aliens? You must've never met people.

### Logline

1981, Poland. When a mysterious alien abduction is reported in a small village, a group of teenage amateur UFOlogists start their own investigation. Repressed by the communist regime and longing for freedom, they struggle to find a way to make an alliance with aliens against ... communists.

>> *Serious story told in a serious way? Booring. What if I can tell you a heartbreaking story of communist Poland from a point of view of teenage ufologists? Sounds absurd? Perfect! Discovering surprising angles in seemingly well-known stories is kind of a creative freedom I'm trying to experience also in this project.*

07

### Agata Koschmieder

In 2019 Agata was selected as one of the top 4 finalists for the In Development Drama Writer's Pitch Forum in Cannes – co-organized by the MIPTV and CANNESERIES – with a project she develops for CANAL+. During her career she cooperated with other leading polish production companies such as TVN, Watcouth Studio, ATM, Telemark, Akson Studio. She was a participant of many writing workshops: MIDPOINT TV Launch, Canal + Series Lab, Canal+ FINN LAB, and the very first edition of Series Mania Writers Campus for up-and-coming European talents.

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Tobias Gerginov

# We See Evil

Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg /  
Series Producing



A small town somewhere in Germany. Kehlheim, which counts about 2,000 inhabitants. And a forensic psychiatry based right in the city center, housing sex offenders, violent criminals and murderers. Cut off from the outside world. The citizens want to protect themselves from the inmates by all means. The reason: Twenty years ago, a six-year-old girl was raped and murdered by an inmate on day release. The security initiative "Us or Them", founded at that time, ensured that day releases were no longer permitted. But now, after two decades, this ban is declared invalid. A patient sued successfully, and suddenly day releases are happening again in the small town. Hate and fear are therefore on the rise again. Citizens who will soon attack each other. A normal everyday life? Impossible. Slowly a collective paranoia is emerging, and no one can escape it anymore. The town is soon ripped apart by fear and hatred.

In the middle of all this, we accompany an ensemble of six characters who couldn't be more different from each other. From high school teenager to new-to-town therapist in the forensic psychiatry. From single mother working in the local pub to offbeat teacher in the local high school. From arthouse cinema owner to unofficial first lady of the town. From being very tolerant and wanting the inmates to be able to participate in society to "I don't care at all" to absolute control and wanting the inmates to disappear forever. Meanwhile the fear of the citizens is spreading. But they still try to carry on as usual. Until events are overturning: Three inmates do not return from their day release. Shots are fired in the forest. A wooden box lined with children's wallpaper is found. Search

patrols hunt for the missing inmates. A part of the security initiative is radicalizing into a vigilante group. A little girl seems to have disappeared without a trace. And two teenagers discover their first big, but dangerous love.

The situation is coming to a head for the apparently completely normal people. Since the danger is happening first and foremost in the citizens' minds. Perpetrators become victims while victims become perpetrators. Ordinary people who are eventually capable of anything. For evil dwells in all of us. And danger seems to be lurking everywhere. Caught between are our six characters who are just like you and me. And yet they all end up killing one of the inmates on day release together.

A journey to a place where evil spreads with no mercy and hope relentlessly heads for the abyss.

Based on true events, the story is told horizontally and through multiple perspectives to create an immersive and powerful narrative as right and wrong can't be distinguished that easily this time. Spread over three seasons, countless stories can be told in a world with this special history. Always united by one irrepressible force – the fear of the citizens.

08

- >> Genre: Psycho Drama / Thriller
- >> Format: 10 x 55 minutes

### Tagline

A small town in Germany – ripped apart by fears and paranoia.

### Logline

A small town in Germany. Based in the city center, a forensic psychiatry houses violent criminals, sex offenders and murderers. The citizens try to protect themselves by all means. But 20 years after a horrifying incident, authorities allow day releases for the inmates again. A ticking time bomb?

09

>> *Personally, I believe in the power of stories. From an early age I have loved the magic that comes from telling stories. I am especially interested in the energy of evil and the abysses in people. In terms of upcoming projects I'm focussing on developing heart-wrenching stories for the national and international market.*

### Tobias Gerginov

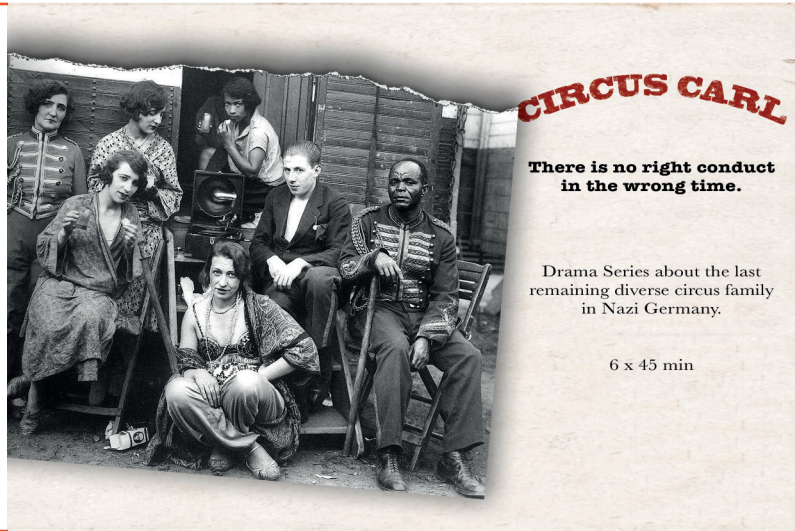
Tobias is a producer born in Frankfurt with a German-Israeli background. He studied film production at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Ryerson University Toronto & UCLA. His projects have been shown at numerous festivals around the world and have been awarded several prizes. In the meantime he gained further practical experience at ZDF and working as a producer for Studio71 and his own production company Mister Wombat, which he founded in 2018. Tobias is focusing on story-telling and development for a national and international market.

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# Paul Bullinger Circus Carl

Filmuniversität Babelsberg / Winterclass



“The circus has always been a home for people who don’t belong.” (Rebecca Simoneit-Barum, former Director of Circus Barum)

The same is true for Circus Carl. It is 1937. The circus comprises the dissident director, Johann Carl; his daughter, Susanna; his grandchild with Down’s syndrome, Edith; his National Socialist son, Gustav; his sister-in-law and pre-terminated circus heiress, Käthe; the former criminal and fire breather, Justus; the black clown, Carlo Vitelli; and the hidden Jewish artists, Peter and Natalia Strassburger. They all live and work together in the circus. As different as their beliefs are, they are one family. The circus is their home.

Until things go awry ...

When a fascist mob attacks, the fire breather, Justus, defends the circus by shooting one of them in the back. Unfortunately, the victim is an SS candidate, and Circus Carl comes under fire from the SS Junior Assault Leader, Konrad Stollberg. The director, Johann, bribes the opportunist SS Senior Assault Leader, Heinrich Stracke, Konrad Stollberg’s superior, to keep Stollberg on a tight rein. But the corpse of the SS candidate is still unaccounted for, and Stollberg remains resolute. He exposes Stracke’s corruption, arranges his suspension and assumes his position. When he arrests Johann, a power struggle breaks out in the circus. Käthe subordinates herself to Stollberg and with his help finally becomes the rightful director of the circus. In doing so, she puts at risk the discovery of the two Jewish artists, Peter and Natalia, who are being hidden by the circus members.

Susanna does everything she can to save them. She tries to get the whole staff to rally behind her and overthrow Käthe. With Stollberg’s help, however, Käthe manages to fill the empty seats in the circus, pay higher wages and crush Susanna’s attack. In return, she enters into a dangerous agreement with Stollberg: She agrees to a guest performance with the Aryanised circus in front of the Führer in Berlin – even though this means turning over Peter and Natalia. To prevent this, Susanna discovers a dark secret of Käthe’s and forces her to leave the circus. Courageously, she stands up to Stollberg and cancels the guest performance.

Stollberg, on the other hand, has already announced the performance and is offered a high position in the SS Main Office in return. He has his back to the wall and puts pressure on Susanne by sending Susanna’s 12-year-old Down syndrome daughter to the euthanasia program. Enraged, Susanna takes Justus’ shotgun and goes to find Stollberg. Only her father Johann is able to prevent this catastrophe by making a deal with his arch-enemy Stollberg: With all his staff – including Käthe, Peter, and Natalia – Johann leads the circus to Berlin to perform in front of the Führer Adolf Hitler ...

10

- >> Genre: Period Drama
- >> Format: 6 x 45 minutes

### Tagline

There is no right conduct in the wrong time.

### Logline

1937, Circus Carl is the last remaining diverse circus family in fascist Germany: Jews, Socialists, National Socialists, homosexuals, ... When the director is arrested, however, infighting breaks out, and everyone faces the unanswerable question: What do you do when your closest partner becomes your worst enemy?

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>> *Circus is family, and circus artists must be able to trust each other with their lives. What if the political system turns your family member into your worst enemy? You still need to trust them. Because the show goes on. And seven matters above the ground, nothing matters more than holding on to each other ...*

### Paul Bullinger

Between 2012 and 2016, Paul studied Dramatic Writing at Berlin University of the Arts, which included a one-year exchange in Film & TV at Swinburne University, Melbourne. Several of his plays premiered in Germany and Austria, among them at the Theatre Osnabrück and the Salzburg State Theatre. Back in Germany, he worked as a unit manager and production assistant. He has been studying Film Production (MA) at Film University Babelsberg since 2017 and has developed serial concepts for WunderWerk, UFA and Producer’s at Work.

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## Ivan Knezevic

# The Pretenders

DFFB / Serial Eyes



1939. The eve of WWII. The Serbian Royal Family courageously flees to London, with well-wishes for the Serbian people and four tons of gold. After the war, the communists abolish the monarchy and the Family is barred from ever coming back.

Flash forward eighty years and three generations. The Serbian Royal Family is down to five members. They are members of London's trash elite, holding on to the little reputation they have left. After a series of bad investments, a failed charity scam and a suspicious connection to an international art theft ring, they've lost their high-level connections and are considered social poison.

After George, the oldest son, accidentally kills a high-ranking member of an Albanian drug cartel, the family comes under close scrutiny from Scotland Yard. Fearing the family investment in the Albanians' cocaine business will come to light, Peter, the family patriarch and the heir to the Serbian throne, reluctantly decides to move the family back to Serbia. In a matter of days, they find themselves in a weird foreign country they've only heard about in stories. They're broke, confused, with no grasp of the language or what they're supposed to do now.

But the oblivious people greet them as saviors, old-style royalty that will bring Serbia onto a new path of progress and dignity. So the Family needs to maintain that image – clashing with what they really are: a trashy British semi-celebrity clan totally disconnected from the once-powerful dynasty.

Peter finds out that the family has claim over a number of expensive real estate properties that were taken away by the communists. However, this puts the Family on a collision course with some very powerful people from the government, criminal underground, and the all-powerful Serbian Orthodox Church. Meanwhile, Interpol is hot on their trail, and the revenge-obsessed Albanians from London aren't giving up.

The Family has no connections. No crew. No money. But they have eighty years of pretending hardwired in their DNA. And they're not going down without a fight.

It's The Crown meets Schitt's Creek meets Chernobyl.

12

>> Genre: Crime / Comedy

>> Format: 8 x 50 minutes

### Tagline

Back home.

### Logline

Under heavy investigation for connections to organized crime, art theft and charity fraud, they need to leave London fast. After an eighty-year-long exile in the UK, the Serbian Royal Family returns to their homeland.

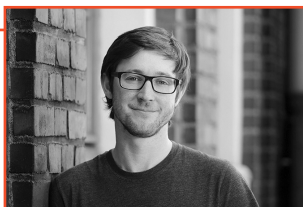
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>> *Working and living internationally, I always try to keep a balance between my chaotic Serbian and my orderly European side. And that's a theme that always pops up in my work, and something I feel very comfortable in. A jarring, uncomfortable clash of cultures and world views. Which makes for great drama, in life and in fiction.*

### Ivan Knezevic

Born 1984 in Novi Sad, Serbia. Works as a screenwriter, editor and producer. Graduate of the 2017/2018 SerialEyes program at the dffb in Berlin. Currently working on projects with HBO Europe as creator and lead writer, and also developing a couple of TV series with the Munich-based H&V Entertainment.

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## Michael Griebler

# Amazement Park

ifs / MA Serial Storytelling



Remember the magic of visiting an amusement park as a kid? Of diving into a fascinating world of imagination, fun and fairytales? This is the feeling Amazement Park provides. Only here, the magic is real. From Zombie Planet to the Vampire Empire, from Underwatergate to the Harvest Moon Woodlands: every area of the gigantic Amazement Park is inhabited and run by actual monsters and mystical creatures.

They're economic refugees, politically persecuted beings or lost souls on the search for a better life. Being pursued and chased away from their natural habitats by humans, this is a place where they can hide. After all, encountering a vampire in an abandoned castle in Transylvania might seem reasonable; encountering a vampire selling ice cream in front of a roller coaster ... not so much. However, the creatures have to be careful not to blow their cover. And caution doesn't really lie within their nature. With various conflicts unfolding between the different monsters and thousands of human visitors flooding into the park every day, chaos is bound to break loose.

We follow the adventures of 14-year old Timmy, the sarcastic son of the Amazement Park founders, who helps his parents with running the park. He is accompanied by his best friend Midfoot, an immature and clumsy misfit – and son of the infamous Bigfoot. Both in their teenage years, Timmy and Midfoot not only have to deal with the problems and special needs of the park's monsters, but with changes in their own lives.

Every episode deals with a different monster living in the park who faces a difficult situation or crisis:

– Vampires and werewolves start a fight amongst each other over an ominous "Twilight" Blu-ray.

– The zombies of Zombie Planet get threatened by blood-thirsty visitors after Timmy's mother accidentally sets free a scent that makes humans crave for zombie flesh.

– The situation in Underwatergate spins out of control as the fish people get high on seaweed.

– When the inhabitants of Amazement Park are unable to have any more dreams, Timmy and Midfoot embark on a journey inside the sandman's mind.

While Timmy and Midfoot almost always succeed in solving the monster's problem by working together in their very specific ways, they will learn what it means to be human by spending time with their supernatural friends – and by doing so discover painful truths about their parents' past. A longer series arc explores the arrival of an amusement park investigator who turns out to be the son of Timmy's Dad's old nemesis who is up for vengeance.

On the surface, Amazement Park is a show about subverting the stereotypes of the monsters and mystical creatures we know – and having fun with that. But in the very core, this is a show about growing up. And everything that comes with it. The value of friendship. The complications of family. The pain of love. The loss of innocence. And monsters.

» When I was 12, I read Stephen King's "It". In its preface, he writes that books are truths amidst lies and the simple truth of this book is: The magic is real. A good story is magic that's unleashed one word at a time. Years later, I rediscovered this kind of magic in series like "Mr. Robot". I write to find it again and again.

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» Genre: Animation / Adventure / Comedy

» Format: 16 x 23 minutes

### Tagline

Hiding in plain fright.

### Logline

A cynical boy and his gullible monster friend look after the supernatural inhabitants of his parents' unconventional amusement park.

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### Michael Griebler

Born in 1990, Michael grew up in a small town in Lower Austria. He finished a BA in Media Management and worked for newspapers and advertising agencies as a content manager, copywriter, and editor. Having written stories from a very young age, Michael first started screenwriting during a semester abroad in Dublin. After finishing his MA in Serial Storytelling at the ifs internationale filmschule köln and receiving the Nürnberger Autorenstipendium in 2019, Michael is currently working on a feature script and developing several series concepts for Amazon and other companies.

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# Featured Series Programs

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## >> Berlinale Talents

Berlinale Talents is the festival's laboratory for exchange, and a lively community with 8,500 alumni to date. Creatives from the film and art worlds enter into a dialogue with 250 invited talents from all fields. In an extensive programme of around 100 talks, labs and workshops, the programme encourages discourse about films, series and how they came into being. Every year over 3,500 film and drama series makers apply to Berlinale Talents. Selected by an independent jury, the participants are not right at the start of their careers. With an average age of slightly over 30, they bring both the diversity of their cultures and their professional experiences with them to Berlin. The Talents pursue collaborative learning in the events on offer or attend one of the four Talents Labs to further develop and promote new feature, documentary and short form projects and series. The annually 40 lab projects are presented to potential co-producers and financiers, and benefit from the network possibilities offered through the Talents community. Close cooperations with the European Film Market, the World Cinema Fund and the Berlinale Co-Production Market lower the hurdles for financing projects and getting access to other talent developers worldwide.

## >> Berlinale Series Market & Conference

Berlinale Series Market & Conference is the European Film Market's trade initiative dedicated to all aspects of serial content. Together with the Berlinale Co-Production Market and Berlinale Talents and in close collaboration with Berlinale Series, Berlinale Series Market the initiative comprises a programme of screenings, an exclusive selection of projects, expert talks as well as networking events. Since 2015, the Berlinale Series Market & Conference has established itself as one of the key events in Europe for drama series producers, financiers, commissioners and buyers.

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- >> [www.berlinale-talents.de](http://www.berlinale-talents.de)
- >> [www.berlinaleseriesmarket.com](http://www.berlinaleseriesmarket.com)



## >> Midpoint Institute

Midpoint Institute is an international audiovisual training and networking institution organizing a wide range of programs focused on script and project development as well as post-production. Its programs are dedicated to both short and feature narrative films and long or short form series.

The offered programs focusing on series:

### Project Based

MIDPOINT TV Launch offers project development and development executive training to emerging European professionals. The program accepts both limited or ongoing, and both long or short form series. The 9 selected projects go through a 3-module program and are built from the "bottom-up": defining the series concept and theme, completing the pilot, creating season arc, season outlines, pitching documents and a financing strategy. The projects are showcased and pitched within Industry@Tallinn & Baltic Event. The best long form project receives the HBO Europe Award of 5.000 USD. The development process that the projects go through is used as a platform to train 3 development executive participants.

### Participant Based

MIDPOINT Writers' Room is open to writers and creative producers (with some experience in writing and the ambition of becoming creators/showrunners). The program, open to European participants, is designed to support the training of specialized skills and to offer practical knowledge about the organization of a writers' room. The 4-day workshop consists of lectures, plotting and writing training as well as a simulation of a writers' room.

MIDPOINT Cold Open is designed to train the skills of independent European producers interested in shifting from feature films to TV content. The one-off event is set up within When East Meets West Co-production forum and consists of lectures, group sessions and individual consultations addressing the current TV and platform landscapes, genre and slot preferences within different territories as well as hands-on skills connected to creating and financing of drama content.

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- >> [www.midpoint-center.eu](http://www.midpoint-center.eu)

# Series Producing

FILMAKADEMIE  
BADEN - WÜRTTEMBERG



## >> Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg / Series Producing

Sitcoms, dailies, weeklies, docu-soaps and telenovelas – in the year 2000, the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg recognised the need for highly qualified up-and-coming talent in this area, and to this day is the only film academy in Germany to offer a special course in which series are not only planned, but also produced!

“Series producing” is the name of a programme of study which specifically prepares students specialising in screenwriting and production for the demands of modern series production for television and the Internet.

The department is led by the renowned and experienced managing director of UFA Fiction and UFA Serial Drama, Prof. Joachim Kosack, who has extensive experience in the development and production of successful TV series. Under his guidance, students of Production and Screenwriting jointly develop a series concept, for which a teaser or pilot episode is subsequently produced.

This course also includes numerous theoretical seminars on topics such as series dramaturgy, comedy, crime, family and medical series, and hybrid series formats. Experts from diverse fields such as production, screenwriting and editing are invited to share up-to-the-minute overviews of series production and of the contemporary broadcasting landscape. In addition, representatives of the leading channels with in-house productions share insights into the work of their series editorial teams on the special “Sendertage” (Broadcaster Days).

In the seminars – in addition to the fundamentals of series-based storytelling – students learn what makes a story or a plot suitable for a series and viable in the German market. However, the lecturers also believe it is important to remove the pressure of pure market focus from the study course. Rather, the program functions as a kind of “series lab” in which students are given the opportunity to develop their own artistic signature and test their ideas.

>> [www.filmakademie.de](http://www.filmakademie.de)

# Winterclass

## Serial Writing and Producing



FILMUNIVERSITÄT  
BABELSBERG  
KONRAD WOLF



ERICH POMMER  
INSTITUT



## >> Filmuniversität Babelsberg / Winterclass

The advanced training for Master’s students and TV professionals imparts practical core capabilities in writing and producing high-end drama series.

Every year six Master’s students of Film University Babelsberg and around 20 selected professionals from the German-speaking film and TV industry (scriptwriters, producers, directors etc.) attend the program. In intense workshops between October and March each student develops a concept and/or a bible for a high-end drama series, the development workshops convey also methods of collaborative writing and writers’ room skills.

In addition to the students’ track two compact industry modules provide national and international expertise for TV professionals in case studies, panels, lectures and workshops, from international co-production to funding, from distribution and sales to legal framework, from showrunner skills to creative tools for successful series development.

Experts from past editions were e.g. US showrunners like Alex Gansa (“24”, “Homeland”) or Kelly Souders (“Salem”, “The Hot Zone”), writers like Jeppe Gjervig Gram (“Borgen”, “Follow The Money”) or Michal Aviram (“Fauda”), and German experts like Anna and Jörg Winger (“Deutschland 83/86/89”), Jantje Friese (“Dark”) or Lisa Blumenberg (“Bad Banks”).

The application process for German-speaking professionals starts every July.

The Winterclass is a program by Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf and Erich Pommer Institute (EPI) Potsdam, in close cooperation with German industry partners like Audible Original, Real Film, Sky Germany, Story House Productions and UFA.

>> [www.epi.media](http://www.epi.media)



## >> DFFB / Serial Eyes

Europe's premier postgraduate training programme for television writers and producers.

Serial Eyes prepares the next generation of TV writers to bring first-class serialized storytelling to television screens. Running from September to May, this full-time course provides intensive training in writing and creative producing, with a specific focus on European markets.

Classes are taught in English in Berlin, with three workshops in London, Copenhagen and at Séries Mania. The writers' room model is at the core of the training. Participants get equipped with techniques and methods to work as a team while benefitting from a faculty of high-profile international showrunners and industry professionals.

Serial Eyes brings together the top professionals in the field today, and provides opportunities for successful exchanges between TV writers, producers and decision-makers.

The Serial Eyes Alumni Network (SEAN) connects the programme's graduates and creates a strong presence for its members at major festivals. Alumni include Jana Burbach (Writer of "Bad Banks" for ZDF/ARTE, Co-Creator of "Tribes of Europe" for Netflix), Dennis Schanz (Creator of "Skylines" for Netflix), Alexander Lindh (Head Writer of "Druck" / aka "Skam" Germany for ZDFneo), among many others.

Serial Eyes is organised by Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (DFFB), in collaboration with the London Film School and The National Film School of Denmark. Partners include Creative Europe-MEDIA, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, RTL Television, Vivendi/Canal+ Group, Sky Deutschland, Atlantique Productions, Makeover Productions, RealFilm and Big Light Productions.

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## >> ifs internationale filmschule köln / MA Serial Storytelling

The MA Serial Storytelling at ifs internationale filmschule köln is Europe's only Master's program focusing on collaborative series writing. The two-year international master's course guides talented writers in exploring, mastering, and expanding forms and methods of serial narration for TV and digital platforms. Accompanied by renowned series creators, script consultants, and media scholars, students analyze the success of popular series and learn to develop their own innovative series concepts. Series dramaturgy, character development, and collaborative writing processes ("Writers' Room") are at the center of their practical work.

In addition to narrative and theoretical expertise, the program conveys the basics of transnational markets and new media platforms, supporting young professionals in exploring innovation in contemporary serial storytelling.

For major writing assignments, students choose to write either in English or in German, focusing on international or German series markets respectively. The program works with partners such as RTL, ZDF, Sky Deutschland, Series Mania, Série Series, and the Film Festival Cologne.

Guest lecturers for previous cohorts included James Manos ("Sopranos", "Dexter"), Lisa Albert ("Mad Men"), Jane Espenson ("Game of Thrones", "Battlestar Gallactica"), Frank Spotnitz ("X-Files", "The Man In The High Castle"), Kath Lingenfelter ("Westworld", "The Leftovers"), Hagai Levi ("The Affair", "In Treatment"), Annette Hess ("Ku'Damm 56"), Jeppe Gjervig Gram ("Borgen", "Follow The Money"), John Yorke ("Life On Mars", "Into The Woods"), Morgan Gendel ("The 100", "Drop Dead Diva"), Peter Nadermann ("The Killing", "The Team"), Janna Nandzik ("About: Kate"), Johnathan Young (HBO Europe), Jens Richter (Freemantle), and many more.

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This MA Serial Storytelling accepts new students every other year. Recent alumni work for Netflix, Amazon, ZDF and WDR, created writers' collectives such as prettygoodideas.studio, and write serial narratives for games, theme parks, and other transmedia projects.