



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

Berlinale Panorama

ALLEGRO PASTELL

a film by
Anna Roller





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2026 / Color / Romance / 100' / Germany / 4608x3164 ARRIRAW HDE / 1.66:1 / Dolby 7.1

International Sales



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International press

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Production



Walker + Worm
Tobias Walker & Philipp Worm
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Logline

Novelist Tanja and web designer Jerome, both in their thirties, have perfected a balance of intimacy and separation in their long-distance relationship. When Tanja catches a glimpse of a settled future together, she wonders if it is really what she wants.

synopsis

Allegro Pastell tells the story of a long-distance relationship that is almost flawless. At its core lies the perspective of two lovers who have mostly had things go their way and who seem to have everything under control.

Tanja (33) lives in Berlin as an emerging writer. Jerome (35) works as a web designer and has returned to his Hessian hometown of Maintal near Frankfurt, moving into the bungalow his parents left behind. The couple visit each other often and remain constantly connected through email. A website for Tanja — meant as a 34th-birthday gift from Jerome — unexpectedly leads to the first rupture in their relationship. The two lovers drift apart, draw close again, then risk to losing each other once more...

A generational and mood-driven story, rendered in the pastel tones of a beautiful memory — thoughtful, entertaining, and tinged with melancholy.



Director interview

The film is based on the German bestseller by the same name written by Leif Randt, what drew you to work on this project?

"A general sadness regarding the passage of time, mixed with a warm euphoria, spread from his stomach to his chest. 'Pre-emptive wistfulness, he said suddenly."



Thoughts like these by Leif Randt were what fascinated me from the very first time I read Allegro Pastell. In so few words, he captures a feeling I know all too well myself.

Producer Tobias Walker and Leif had already taken the first step from novel to screenplay and were looking for a director. Tobias had seen my debut film Dead Girls Dancing and sent me the current version of the screenplay. Since the novel, despite all the hype surrounding its publication, had passed me by until then, I actually first encountered Tanja and Jerome not through prose but through their dialogue. At first, I found these characters surprisingly unlikable. I didn't want to identify with them; I found them arrogant and apolitical. But the more I read, the more I reluctantly recognized myself and people from my own environment in them. Perhaps in an uncomfortable way, but observed with almost dissecting precision. I bought the novel, and was incredibly moved by the end of Tanja's farewell letter. That's when I realized what the task of the adaptation would be: to preserve this tension of a cool, restrained mode of storytelling that nonetheless makes you want to cry over the end of love.

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Do you believe that Tanja and Jerome are relatable characters?

In the reception of the novel, Tanja and Jerome were often perceived as representative for an entire generation. To me, however, they come from a very specific bubble at a very specific moment in time and Leif Randt looks at both with equal parts gentle irony and soft nostalgia. This constant self-observation from the outside, like a fully articulated commentary monologue running through one's head. This striving for independence within a committed relationship; this pastel emotional palette of the early thirties that slowly settles over the wild colours of the twenties. The characters float in a kind of vacuum, chasing their ultimate happiness, convincing themselves they've found it, only to destroy it again. They resist the contours imposed on them from the outside, refuse to be defined by partner or profession, and yet search for means of self-definition through clothing, lifestyle, and their supposed individuality. At the same time, the novel looks back on a time before the pandemic, before Russia's invasion, before Trump's re-election. This feeling of nostalgia in the present moment—for a supposedly better past—is just as questionable as it is understandable and universal. Especially now, when at the beginning of 2026 it became a trend to post photos from 2016 on social media, it shows me how current this longing is for a past that lies barely a decade behind

us. Perhaps looking back reshapes the memory of who we were at that time. Perhaps we think that even then we were already sensing the *pre-emptive wistfulness* that Jerome speaks of—the feeling that we might soon look back on this time with nostalgia.

How was the collaboration with Leif Randt? How was it to translate his characters from words to life?

In our collaboration, Leif and me mainly tried to sharpen the dramaturgical lines through cuts, without losing the meandering, elliptical quality of the story. It was always clear to us that we did not want to dramatize the novel or make it more plot-driven. Emotional amplitudes that were too large would have betrayed Leif's tone. And yet, it was important to me to be allowed to move an inch closer to the characters—so that they are not merely regarded with ironic detachment, but become emotionally accessible, in order for us to feel with them in the end. Tanja in particular—whose sometimes selfish decisions can leave the audience taken aback—transforms into a character one wants to embrace by the end. Often, we only realize in hindsight the significance a relationship has had in our lives, and the same is true for her. Through her farewell letter, Tanja pays tribute to her shared time with Jerome.



"Tanja in particular—whose sometimes selfish decisions can leave the audience taken aback—transforms into a character one wants to embrace by the end."



"Throughout the entire film, Tanja's and Jerome's voice-overs guide us."

It is also the first time we hear her say “I love you” — allowing a degree of openness and vulnerability that enables us, as the audience, to feel empathy for her.

Throughout the film, the story is narrated by Jerome and Tanja’s voices. Why did you make the choice to work with a voice over?

Working on the screenplay with Leif was respectful and open throughout. There is, of course, the cliché of the novelist who cannot part with a single detail when their work is adapted for the screen. Whenever I wished for a change for dramaturgical reasons, a proposal would usually follow very quickly that exceeded my expectations. Throughout the entire film, Tanja’s and Jerome’s voice-overs guide us. At the beginning, they take the form of emails the two write to each other. In a long-distance relationship, this is often the most intense mode of communication — even though it can be far more curated than a heated conversation. All the more painful, then, when Tanja and Jerome find themselves at a loss for words in person, unable to resolve an unspoken conflict. I know this feeling well myself: when I write a lot, writing can turn into an inner monologue, even when the addressee falls away. In this way, the voice-over continues throughout the film as a layer of reflection — one that no longer reaches the other character, yet still brings the lives of the two together on a narrative level.

Chemistry between Tanja and Jerome is the core of the book. What type of preparations did you do Sylvaine Faligant and Jannis Niewöhner to ensure that it would translate on screen?

Both the novel and the film can look at the characters with irony, but the cast have to step inside them — and so the process with Sylvaine Faligant and Jannis Niewöhner was a gradual, careful approach. Even before we were able to rehearse together, I asked the two of them to spend over a month writing emails to each other, as if they were in a relationship in 2018. It was a shared journey back to a time before the pandemic, during which they could also slowly find their way into the language of the characters. Because the screenplay works with many omissions, often skipping even the most dramatic moments and focusing instead on their cooled-down aftermath, it was important to me to explore the spaces in between together with the cast. As an example, I wanted us to experience how the first breakup conversation — a moment that never appears in the script — between the two might have unfolded so that we could then draw on it on set. The commitment and joy of acting that

“I know this feeling well myself: when I write a lot, writing can turn into an inner monologue, even when the addressee falls away.”





"The word 'pastel' in the film's title might tempt one to avoid strong colors altogether, but we quickly decided instead to set signal color accents and use them in contrast to the harmonic quality of pastel gradations."

Jannis and Sylvaine brought to the process were a gift to me and there were moments when I almost wished we could just keep rehearsing eternally.

In the film, colors are very important. Why did you and the DOP, Felix Pflieger, choose to work with these bright nuances?

In the visual language of the camera, it was important to translate the novel's cool, sometimes ironic distance toward its characters. It is the fifth collaboration with my DOP Felix Pflieger and in contrast to our usually more sensual, handheld camera style, this time we chose a different approach. Except for the New Year's Eve scene, the camera maintains a static distance, and in a few shots we observe the action as if through a shop window. To create a coherent colour universe Felix and I worked closely with costume designer Belle Santos and production designers Lena Müller and Luisa Rauschert. The word "pastel" in the film's title might tempt one to avoid strong colors altogether, but we quickly decided instead to set signal color accents and use them in contrast to the harmonic quality of pastel gradations. For instance, the pale spring-green or warm sunset-orange color gradients of the bed linens provide an idyllic backdrop for the harmonious phase of Tanja's and Jerome's relationship. By contrast, Jerome and Marlene sleep together on a bright orange couch—a

signal color that had previously been associated with Tanja's costume. Especially with Tanja, it is often hard to pin down how she is really feeling emotionally in a given moment. That's why Belle and I thought about how her emotional state could be revealed through the surfaces and textures of her costumes. When does she wear reflective, repelling materials that serve as armour? When soft, fluffy ones that practically invite an embrace? When does she become the center of a scene through her signal red, and when does she almost dissolve herself in a mesh-like structure?

What important role does the music play in the film?

As in the novel, the music of the time and of the places, Berlin and Frankfurt, plays a major role. Alongside the score by Max Rieger, artists such as Roman Flügel, Gerd Janson, and Phillip Lauer (Tuff City Kids), among others, form the soundtrack to a pastel emotional landscape: cloud-rap melancholy, trashy, ironic Eurodance euphoria, and a touch of Robyn's "pre-emptive wistfulness".





*“In a way, we experienced everything.
Hard feelings, mediocre feelings,
revival feelings – and whatever the state
of things happened to be, I was in
love the whole time.”*

Tanja Arnheim



Director Biography

Anna Roller is a German director from Munich. She studied feature film directing at the University of Television and Film Munich. Her short films **PAN** and **THE LAST CHILDREN IN PARADISE** have been screened at more than 60 international festivals. With **GÖR**, she won the German Short Film Award in 2021. Her graduation film, **DEAD GIRLS DANCING**, premiered in Tribeca in 2023. She was part of the Future Frames program at the Karlovy Vary Festival and the Talent Village at the Les Arcs Festival.

Director Filmography

2017

PAN – Short Film

2019

THE LAST CHILDREN IN PARADISE - Short Film

2021

GÖR - Short Film – Winner German Short Film Award

2023

DEAD GIRLS DANCING – Debut Feature – Tribeca Film Festival



Producer Biography



Walker + Worm Film, one of the leading independent production companies in the German-speaking region, produces feature films that neither shy away from risk nor friction, but rather push boundaries regarding content and form. Their carefully curated portfolio ranges from debut films to major European productions.

The production house founded by Tobias Walker and Philipp Worm radically focuses on what a film really needs. Driven by creative excellence and sustainable impact, their films achieve great success at festivals and with audiences.

After ***WHAT MARIELLE KNOWS*** (dir. Frédéric Hambalek) in 2025, they are once again part of the Berlinale Competition this year, premiering their film ***ROSE*** (dir. Markus Schleinzer).



Main Cast

Tanja

Sylvaine Faligant

Jerome

Jannis Niewöhner

Marlene

Haley Louise Jones

Crew

Screenplay

Leif Randt

Direction of photography

Felix Pflieger

Editor

Andreas Wodraschke

Set designer

Luisa Rauschert

Lena Müller

Sound editing

Tilo Ehmann

Costume Designer

Belle Santos

Make up / Hair Design

Sabeth Kelwing Jimenez

Supported by

Hessen Film & Medien, Medienboard Berlin -Brandenburg, MFG Baden-Württemberg, German Federal Film Board, German Federal Film Fund, ARD Degeto and Bayerischer Rundfunk



Totem

is a Paris-based international sales and production company launched in 2019. We seek out talents that bring new perspectives. Films lead to emotions and emotions lead to reflection. We want films to travel and people to travel in film.

Totem Atelier

develops and produces early stage projects with a strong international potential.

Totem Films

sells Totem Atelier productions worldwide and acquires handpicked feature films and documentaries for international distribution.



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Selected filmography

TOTEM FILMS selected filmography includes among many others *COTTON QUEEN* by Suzannah Mirghani (Venice Settimana 2025), *DONKEY DAYS* by Rosanne Pel (Locarno Competition), *KIKA* by Alexe Poukine (Cannes Critics Week, 2025), *MEASURES FOR A FUNERAL* by Sofia Bohdanowicz (Toronto Centrepiece program 2024), *SUDAN, REMEMBER US* by Hind Meddeb (Venice – Giornate degli Autori 2024), *THE VILLAGE NEXT TO PARADISE* by Mo Harawe (Cannes Un Certain Regard 2024), *MY FAVOURITE CAKE* by Maryam Moghaddam & Behtash Sanaeeha (Berlinale Competition 2024), *CROSSING* by Levan Akin (Berlinale Panorama 2024), *BLACKBIRD BLACKBIRD BLACKBERRY* by Elene Naveriani (Cannes Directors Fortnight 2023), *THE HYPNOSIS* by Ernst de Geer (Karlovy Vary 2023), *SLOW* by Marija Kavtaradze (Sundance 2023), Juho Kuosmanen's *COMPARTMENT N°6* (Cannes 2021 Competition – Grand Prix) *WE* by Alice Diop (Berlinale Documentary Award 2021).

TOTEM ATELIER filmography includes *SHORT SUMMER* by Nastia Korkia (Venice 2025, Lion of the Future Award), *THE HYPNOSIS* by Ernst de Geer (Karlovy Vary 2023 - Best Actor, Fipresci Jury Award, and Europa Cinemas Label), *DEAD GIRLS DANCING* by Anna Roller (Tribeca 2023), *MARCEL!* by Jasmine Trinca (Cannes Official Selection 2022).

