

Oberhausen Manifesto

- 26 signatories
- Declared old style films (Opas Kino) dead
- Fifties films too commercial
- Fifties films too uncritical
- Ushered in New German Cinema

New German Cinema

- Rainer Werner Fassbinder
- Wim Wenders
- Ula Stoeckl
- Werner Herzog
- Volker Schlöndorff
- Margarethe von Trotta

Initial American reception

- Amateurish
- Technically clumsy
- Obscure
- Distanced, detached, cool (cold)
- Very low budget
- Lack entertaining quality of French films
- Lack sweetness of Czech films
- Lacked philosophical depth of Bergman

Critics comments



Volker Schlöndorff 1966

“cold, hard, gray, and monotonous in pictorial tone and quality”



THE CHRONICLE OF ANNA MAGDALENA BACH
(CHRONIK DER ANNA MAGDALENA BACH)

(Jean-Marie Straub, Germany, 1967) (F)

Utmost economy of means, a feeling of stillness, concentration on a single point: a perfect representation of the spirit of this "minimal" work. The director's refusal to move the camera, condense "irrelevant" action or create "artful" compositions is an assault on our cinematic value systems.

Artists under the Bigtop - Confused

- “At the conclusion of this West German whatzit ... an actor stoically looks at the camera and begins outlining the plot of *Il Trovatore*. That one we know. Good old Verdi.”

Even Dwarfs Started Small

Werner Herzog 1970



“obnoxious, revolting,
an atrocity”



R. W. Fassbinder 1970

“The clumsiest most
mannered movie ever
made about soldiers
and their girls”

Reversal of opinion

- By early seventies opinions changing
- Winning awards at film festivals
- Found critics to defend them
- Seemed fresh and daring
- By 1979, Schloendorff wins academy award for *The Tin Drum*

WERNER HERZOG (b. 1942)

- STILL MAKING FILMS
- MOST BIZARRE OF NGC

STYLE AND THEMES

- LOCATION SHOOTING
- REALISM MIXED WITH MYTHIC
- STRIKING IMAGERY
- STYLIZED ACTING
- BRECHTIAN ELEMENTS
- CHARACTERS ON THE BRINK
- MADNESS
- GREATNESS
- SOCIO-POLITICAL

MAJOR FILMS

- EVEN DWARFS STARTED SMALL 1969
- AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD 1971
- ONE FOR ALL AND GOD AGAINST EVERYONE 1974
- STROSZEK 1976
- NOSFERATU 1978
- MY BEST FIEND KLAUS KINSKI 1999

WIM WENDERS (b. 1945)

- MOST HIGHLY REGARDED OF NEW GERMAN DIRECTORS
- STILL MAKING FILMS
- MOST TECHNICALLY/FILM ORIENTED OF NGC

STYLE AND THEMES

- LOCATION SHOOTING
- REALISM
- SELF-REFLEXIVE
- HOLLYWOOD ACTORS/PLAYS ON THEIR PERSONA
- LOOSE RAMBLING NARRATIVES
- LEISURELY PACING
- HIGH PRODUCTION VALUES
- FOCUS ON LANDSCAPES
- OPEN (CHARACTERS ENTER AND LEAVE SCREEN SHOT)

STYLE AND THEMES (CONT.)

- RELATIONSHIPS
- BUDDY MOVIES
- SEEKING/SEARCHING NOT NECESSARILY FINDING
- QUESTIONING
- STATE OF FILMS/INDUSTRY
- EFFECT OF FILMS
- STATE OF CULTURE
- INTERNAL STATE OF CHARACTERS

MAJOR FILMS

- DER AMERIKANISCHE FREUND 1977
- KINGS OF THE ROAD 1975
- PARIS, TEXIS 1984
- HIMMEL UEBER BERLIN 1987
- IN WEITER FERNE , SO NAH 1993
- BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB 1999
- MILLION DOLLAR HOTEL 2000

VOLKER SCHLOENDORFF

- MOST COMMERCIALY SUCCESSFUL OF NGC
- STILL WORKING
- HEAD OF BABELSBERG STUDIO

STYLE AND THEMES

- HIGH PRODUCTION VALUES
- NAME STARS
- LITERARY ADAPTATIONS
- POLITICALLY ENGAGED
- HISTORY
- POLITICS
- FEMINISM

MAJOR FILMS

- THE YOUNG TOERLESS 1966
- MICHAEL KOHLHAAS 1969
- DIE VERLORENE EHRE DER KATHARINA BLUM 1975
- DIE BLECHTROMMEL 1979
- THE HANDMAID'S TALE 1989
- LEGEND OF RITA 2000

RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER

1945-1982

- BEST KNOWN OF NGC
- OVER 40 FILMS
- MOST CONTROVERSIAL OF NGC

CONTROVERSY

- LIFE STYLE
(BISEXUAL/ALCOHOLIC/DRUG ABUSER)
- POLITICS (EXTREME LEFTIST)
- PERSONALITY
(MOODY/MEGALOMANIA)
- PHILOSOPHY (PESSIMISTIC)
- FILM STYLE (IDIOSYNCRATIC)

FILM STYLE

- DARK, UNDERLIT FILMS
- MIXES MELODRAMA AND DISTANCING
- PREFERENCE FOR UNDERCLASS AND LOWER MIDDLE CLASS
- STATIC (EARLY FILMS ESPECIALLY)
- STYLIZED ACTING
- EXAGGERATED EMOTIONS
- REPULSIVE CHARACTERS
- CAMP/BRECHTIAN (OVER THE TOP/ALIENATING IMAGERY)

PLAYWRIGHT

- ANTITHEATER
 - RUNS COUNTER TO EXPECTATIONS
 - SPONTANEOUS
 - AGGRESSIVE
 - HASTY PRODUCTIONS
 - STARK
 - APPEALS TO THIRST FOR NOVELTY
 - SAME PATTERN FOLLOWED IN FILMS

MAJOR FILMS

- KATZELMACHER 1969
- DIE BITTEREN TRAENEN DER PETRA VON KANT 1972
- ANGST ESSEN SEELE AUF 1973
- FONTANE EFFI BRIEST 1974
- DIE EHE DER MARIA BRAUN 1978
- IN EINEM JAHR MIT 13 MONDEN
- BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ 1980
- LILI MARLEEN 1981