



A E I O U

A FILM BY
NICOLETTE KREBITZ

 **72** Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

 **FIRST
HAND
FILMS**

A QUICK ALPHABET OF LOVE

She thought it would never happen to her again.
He didn't even know such a thing existed. A
woman, a boy and another impossible love story.

An actress is mugged in front of a trendy bar in West Berlin. Barging into her, a young man takes her handbag and runs off into the night. A short while later, they meet again. Anna (Sophie Rois) and Adrian (Milan Herms). This time she is his teacher and supposed to improve his speaking skills. Adrian is an orphan and considered a „difficult case“. Anna is an actress but hasn't been working for a while. Both have strayed from their path and don't quite fit in. The speech classes take place at Anna's apartment. Her flat belongs to Michel (Udo Kier), who owns the whole house. He is her biggest fan and dearest friend. Soon, the lessons turn into dinners, strolls and shared cigarettes. And eventually Anna and Adrian decide to take on the world. Cheered on by each others affection, without a penny to their name, they leave town. They want to go to France, to the seaside.



The Director

Nicolette Krebitz

Director's Biography

Nicolette Krebitz was born and brought up in West Berlin. She studied classical dance at Berlin's Ballett Centrum and obtained her acting diploma at the Fritz Kirchhoff Drama School in 1992. She has appeared in front of the camera in cinema and TV productions since 1982. In 1999, she realised her own film, JEANS, and has since then been working alternately as a director and actress. In 2019, she was awarded the Berlin Art Prize from the Academy of Arts in the Film and Media Art category.



Photo © Joachim Gern

Director's Filmography

2022

A E I O U - A Quick Alphabet of Love

2016

WILD

2010

Epigenetik (Short)

2009

The Unfinished (Short)

2006

The Heart is a Dark Forest

2000

Jeans

1999

Mon Cherie (Short)



Photo © Reinhold Vorschneider

Comments of the director

What was the starting point for A E I O U - a seemingly impossible love story or the portrait of main character Anna?

The starting point for this film was actually my last film. I wanted to continue from where I'd left off. In WILD I was particularly fascinated by the impossible love story between a girl and a wolf because it didn't have to be directed by existing images of relationships that you otherwise can't escape.

While this meant that Ania in WILD had to close the door on her social life, Anna and Adrian in A E I O U attempt to take on the rest of the world. They're a proper couple and more or less do very normal "couple things". And yet they're

still different to other people: Anna, because she makes absolutely no effort to trim herself into any female image; and Adrian, because he doesn't care about what people say, as no one ever cared about him – until he meets Anna and finds his voice.

So it's very similar to WILD as far as outlooks are concerned, but it's a little more social and to some people maybe more friendly.

With Sophie Rois, Milan Herms and Udo Kier you were able to win three outstanding actors for this special love story. How did this cast come about?

I've known Udo Kier for a very long time and have always looked for an opportunity to express my love for him in one of my films. In A E I O U, he plays the friend that all women would wish to have. He's also the outside view, but by no means your everyday or tedious commentary. I think he and his presence have been a gift to the film and

I would love to make a second part dealing just with him and maybe Adrian.

I met Milan for the first time in the sauna. A friend and I wanted to fit in a wellness day just before the end of the year; we'd just started preparing A E I O U and there was this young man in a bathrobe lying on a lounge opposite us; he was with his girlfriend. I saw him and in fact knew immediately that it was Adrian. I said to my friend: "That's the kind of Adrian I'm looking for!" And she said: "Then get over there and talk to him!" It wasn't that easy, in a robe, in the sauna. I didn't want to give off any Harvey Weinstein impression but my friend wouldn't let it go so I went over to him. I actually spoke more with his girlfriend and explained what it was about. He gave me his email address and we invited him to the casting.

I know Sophie Rois mainly from René Pollesch's plays so I've seen her a few times either before or after a performance and I've always been fascinated by her. It's clear in all her texts – even

those spoken in private – that she's very aware of the prevailing clichéd roles at the theatre and in life, so she's also opposing them. Sophie's a punk, and she's shy, which has always been an exciting combination. When you're actually face-to-face with her, you realise how beautiful she also is, how her bright blue, sometimes green eyes shimmer against her pale skin while she's talking all this super intellectual stuff. She's incredibly sexy. I was determined for everyone to see this and for Anna to be just like her.

Are there any works in film history that inspired the writing and staging?

As I was writing, I had great fun making my way through a general library of romance films, films that have shaped our mental image of romantic couples. As far as auteur cinema is concerned, that's mainly films from the 60s and 70s. I don't know if any of that has left its mark on our film, or if that's even interesting at all, but the idea

was to play with a general memory of images and situations from all our favorite love stories in cinema, and thereby concealing or hazing the inequalities of our film couple. For me, it's always the most wonderful thing during a film to forget that I'm wishing, say, Ann and King Kong a great future, although they really don't fit very well together as a couple. Films are often reproducing and manifesting the same images.

In A E I O U, I wanted to reference the classic, much-loved images but also to bring a few new unusual ones into the world.

France is a place of refuge in A E I O U. Why France?

France is the country of love; that's what people say, right? And also, if I think of cinema I immediately think of France. A E I O U was created at a time when most movies are watched on computers. We didn't just want to film a love story but also a declaration of love to cinema.

The Côte D'Azur felt like the perfect place for that. It was as if we could wander immediately through a whole array of films from the past. Even the extras acted as if they'd never done anything else. Everything just worked out there as if by itself, everything looked great, everyone always understood immediately what was going on.

To me, it came across as if shooting a film somehow went without saying there, as if it was simply part of life. And what was pretty astounding to me is that everyone listened to me just like that. I think being a director is a very respected profession in France. And it almost doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman.



Main Cast Biography

Sophie Rois

Sophie Rois was born in Linz, Austria, and studied acting at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna. She has been a member of the acting company at Volksbühne at Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin since 1993 and has worked with Frank Castorf, Christoph Marthaler, Luc Bondy, René Pollesch, Clemens Schönborn and Herbert Fritsch, and several times with Christoph Schlingensief. Rois received several awards for her lead role in the feature film *THREE* (director: Tom Tykwer), including the German Film Award for Best Performance in a Leading Role. She has also received numerous other awards for her acting in theatre, film, TV and radio.

Milan Herms

Milan Herms was born in 2002 and began his stage career with the Volksbühne Berlin's youth theatre company P14 in 2016. In the same year, he also worked with Frank Castro in "The Cabal of Hypocrites" at the Volksbühne. He has since performed in a wide range of venues and in addition continued to draw, scribble and play chess. He made his debut as a film actor in Joens Joensson's *WHAT'S MY NAME?* (2005). Further roles followed in *GHOST FILM* by Bastian Gascho and *BLOODSUCKER* by Julian Radlmaier. Herms has been studying Directing at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne since 2021 and continues to work as an actor.

Udo Kier

Udo Kier is an international actor who has appeared in more than 250 film and TV productions, and performed alongside Hollywood stars such as Bruce Willis, Nicole Kidman and Keanu Reeves. He has worked with some of the all-time great directors including Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Andy Warhol and Christoph Schlingensief. His extraordinary performance as Frankenstein in Paul Morrissey's *ANDY WARHOL'S DRACULA* won him enormous international fame in 1973 while his masterly performance in *MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO* (director: Gus van Sant) confirmed his position as a Hollywood great. He has co-starred in films by Steven Spielberg, Lars von Trier, Fatih Akin and David Schalko, among others. Two of his most recent roles have been in *BACURAU*, which won the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and in *SWAN SONG* by Todd Stephens, which earned Kier the Best

Actor award at the Monte Carlo Film Festival as well as a nomination in the Best Male Lead category at the Independent Spirit Awards, to be held in Los Angeles on March 6, 2022.



Main Cast / Main Crew

Sophie Rois

as Anna

Udo Kier

as Michel

Milan Herms

as Adrian

Nicolas Bridet

as Kommissar Gregori

Writer & Director: Nicolette Krebitz
Director of Photography: Reinhold Vorschneider
Editor: Bettina Böhler
Production Design: Sylvester Koziolk
Costume Design: Tabassom Charaf
Make-Up: Anne Moralis, Ragna Jornitz
Original Sound: Uve Haußig
Sound Design: Luise Hofmann
Music Consultant: Martin Hossbach
Re-Recording Mixer: Martin Steyer
Casting: Nina Haun
Commissioning Editors: Ulrich Herrmann (SWR), Andreas Schreitmüller (ARTE)
Production Manager: Gabi Lins
Line Producers: Daria Wichmann, Janina Schafft
Executive Producer: Ben von Dobebeck
Producers: Janine Jackowski, Jonas Dornbach, Maren Ade (Komplizen Film)



Coproducers: Jean-Christophe Reymond (Kazak Productions), Peter Hartwig (kineo Filmproduktion), SWR, Arte

Original title:

A E I O U - Das schnelle Alphabet der Liebe

Duration: 104 min

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Format: 2K

Sound: 5.1

Year: 2022

Original languages: German, French

Countries of production: Germany, France

Production Companies: Komplizen Film

Co-production Companies: Kazak Productions, kineo Filmproduktion, Südwestrundfunk, Arte

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Photos, press kit and further information at www.firsthandfilms.ch.

Sophie Rois Udo Kier Milan Herms Nicolas Bridet

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MAKE UP ANNE MORALIS RAGNA JORNITZ ORIGINAL SCORE UVE HAUBIG SCORE DESIGNER LUISE HOFMANN MUSIC CONSULTANT MARTIN HOSSBACH RE-RECORDING MIXER MARTIN STEYER CASTING NINA HAUW COMMISSIONING EDITORS ULRICH HERRMANN (SWR) ANDREAS SCHREITMÜLLER (ARTE)
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Komplizen Film

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arte

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