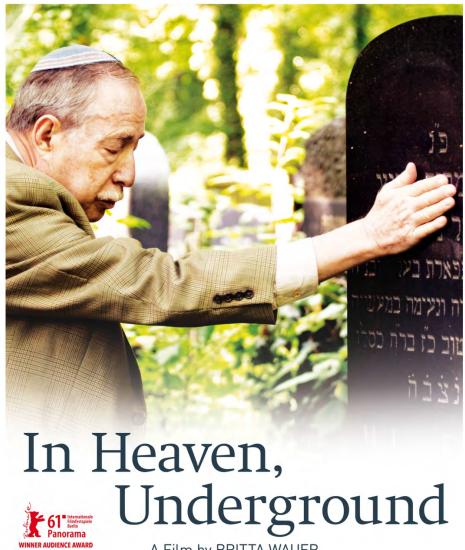
THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN BERLIN-WEISSENSEE



A Film by BRITTA WAUER

RECOMMENS BRITTA WAUER KAMERA KASPAR KÖPKE SCHUT BERTHOLD BAULE TON FELIX HEBGES, GARIP ÖZDEM REGEASSITRAJ ANA WESTMANN SIAMOFOTIS AMÉLIE LOSIER TONGESTRALING SEBASTIAN TESCH TONGESTRADON DIE BASSBERLIN ABCHOOMESTER MARTIN GRÜBE RECONTON DAGMAR MIELKE REARET. BIRGIT MEHLER REI, HANS-GÖVTHER BRÜSKE SIF PRODUKTIONES EINE REARINE BAUMERT HEBELLUMGESERING KARSTEN AURICH PRODUKTIONE BRANCH BRÜSKE SIF PRODUKTIONES EINE RANKE BAUMERT HERSTLAUMER SEBASTIAN ELIAS MASK ENGESPELTVOM BRANDENBURGSCHEN STAATSORCHESTER PRANKFURIT MIT UNITERSTÜTZUNG VON STIFTUNG NEUE SYNAGOGE BERLIN – CENTRUM JUDAICUM, FAMILIE-GUTER-MOLVIDSON-STIFTUNG, URSULA-LACHNIT-FIXSON-STIFTUNG EINE GENERISCHAFSPRODUKTION VON BRITZKA FILM MIT REBB UND SR IN ZUSAMMENAGER MIT FREUNDLICHEN INTERSTÜTZUNG DUGCH MEDIENBOARD BEFLIN- BRANDENBURG, DEUTSCHER FILMFÖRGERFONDS IM VERLEN DER EDITION SALZGEBER WWW.SALZGEBER.DE

THE BOOK "JEWISH WEISSENSEE JEWISH CEMETERY. MOMENTS IN HISTORY" IS PUBLISHED BY BEBRA VERLAG THE SOUNDTRACK IS RELEASED BY ALHAMBRA RECORDS



















Press Contact: Britzka Film

> Rosa-Luxemburg-Str. 30, 10178 Berlin, Germany Phone: +49-30-247 245 24 Email: film@britzka.de



Synopsis

In the north of Berlin, concealed in a residential area, surrounded by walls and covered with a primeval forest of trees, rhododendron and ivy - such is the Weissensee Jewish Cemetery.



It was created in 1880, is about 100 acres in size, currently contains 115,000 graves and is still being used for burials.

Neither the cemetery nor its archives have ever been destroyed – it is a paradise for gatherers of stories.

Britta Wauer and her camera man, Kaspar Koepke, went time and time again to the Jewish Cemetery and found it a very lively place - people from around the world visit and can tell of Jewish, Berliner and also the German history that this place is filled by.



Contents

The plan makes it look like a Renaissance garden: a geometry of right-angles, trapezes and triangles. But anyone entering these grounds feels that this is an enchanted place. Dew and mist, high trees, thickets. Between all this, pillars, stones, ivy and a small fox entering from the right. The Jewish Cemetery in Weissensee seems like a fairytale forest in the middle of the German capital. It is the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe that is still being used for burials. It could house some eighty-six football fields.

Walking over the cemetery is like walking through a history book. The list of famous artists, philosophers, lawyers, architects, doctors, religious teachers and publishers that are buried there is a long one. But above all, Weissensee is a very lively place: on its huge grounds

Argentinean extended families search for

the tomb of their predecessor, restorers paint graves with sparkling stars of David, whilst the slight man in the cemetery registry hands out documents about relatives to a busload of expatriates. The birds of prey expert counts the hawks' fledglings and an eighty-year-old tells of how he fell in love with a girl from his school here - during sport class on field A8, right there, where today the colourful graves of the Jews from the former Sowjet Union are found. The Weissensee Jewish Cemetery is now 130 years old and has never been closed. The cemetery belongs to the few insititutions in Germany which, even during the Nazi era, remained under Jewish administration. The most astonishing thing is that neither the cemetery nor the archives have ever been destroyed – it is a paradise for story gatherers.

Director's Statement

It is more than a challenge to fairly handle the fates of more than 115,000 departed souls and their relatives in a film. There is no chance of being comprehensive. A list of famous names, a sequence of lifetime achievements or recounting sad deaths do not make for an interesting film. Yet Weissensee has earned this.

The screen should not to be filled with graves, ivy and gravel, but with people telling of the rich lives that was once led in Berlin. For me it's a matter of personal connections. The idea was one of pursuing some few fates and letting protagonists who were personally connected to the dead tell the tale. People with memories, feelings and thoughts are central. They should play the main role in the film and make plain to the viewer what is precious about Weissensee. Naturally the era of Nazi dictatorship overshadows all other events. But the film does not want to restrict itself to recounting deaths from those years. To reduce the dead of Weissensee to their sad ends is a falsification. Many of those buried there completed unusual things, achieved something special or experience something strange. The film also wants to tell of funny, absurd and thoughtful moments, and of a great love - one without a happy ending.



BRITTA WAUER is an award winning director and producer for documentary films. She was born in Berlin in 1974, studied at the Berlin Journalist School and realized her first TV documentary in 1995. After working for Spiegel TV in Hamburg for two years, she studied film (directing/producing) at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb). Since then, she has directed documentaries focusing mainly on contemporary history, current affairs and biographies. In 2005 she founded her own production company "Britzka Film".





FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTED)

2001 Death Of A Hero Documentary, ZDF/ARTE, 55 mins German Television Awards 2001

2004 The Rapoports with Sissi Hüetlin Doc, ARTE, 60 mins Grimme Award 2005, MoMA, NYC 2006

2005 Berlin - A Square, a Murder & a Famous Communist
Documentary, ZDF/ARTE, 50 mins

2008 Gerda's Silence Doc, Zeitsprung Entertainment, 90 min Audience Award Best Documentary Schwerin, 2009

2011 In Heaven, Underground Documentary, Britzka Film, 90 min Panorama Audience Award Best Documentary Berlinale 2011

IN HEAVEN, UNDERGROUND

a Film by Britta Wauer Germany 2011, 90 Minuten

German, English, Russian with English Subtitles

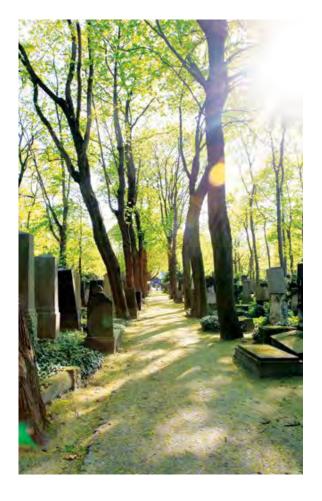
with Rabbi William Wolff, Harry Kindermann, Ron Kohls, Gabriella Naidu, Reinhard Maenne, Family Pobbig-Schulz, Hermann Simon, Alfred Etzold, Benny Epstein, Daniel Hakerem, Ronnie Golz, Michaela Panske, Gesine Sturm, Lev Tabachnik and others

Writer and Director	Britta Wauer
Cinematographer	Kaspar Koepke
Montage	Berthold Baule
SoundFelix	Heibges, Garip Oezdem
Sound designer	Sebastian Tesch
Sound Recording Mi	x Martin Grube
Music	Karim Sebastian Elias
	Jana Westmann
Line Producer	Karsten Aurich
Producer	Britta Wauer
EditorsDag	gmar Mielke (RBB/ARTE)
	Birgit Mehler (RBB)
Hans	s-Guenther Brueske (SR)

A Coproduction of Britzka Film with Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg and Saarlaendischen Rundfunk in Cooperation with Arte

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Britta Wauer wishs to thank Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum, Familie-Guter-Molvidson-Stiftung and Ursula-Lachnit-Fixson-Stiftung for their support.



World Premiere:

61st Berlin International Film Festival, Panorama Section, February 13, 2011

International Premiere:

2011 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, Special presentations, April 28 – May 8

Theatrical Release Germany: April 7, 2011

Accolades:

"The most beautiful film about a cemetery ever made" CINEMA, Germany

"Poetic and exquisite" THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Astonishing... an indelible must-see film" THE FORWARD

"A marvellous entertaining documentary... It is as charming and delightful a film as one will ever encounter."

THE HUFFINGTON POST

"In Heaven Underground is a delightfully upbeat look at death" THIS WEEK IN NY

"Stunning... gorgeously photographed" PASTE MAGAZINE

"A playful, poetic and all-around charming documentary" THE LA TIMES

"An engaging and surprisingly playful movie" NY MAGAZINE

"It's a wondrus, captivating and genuinely heartfelt documentary" NYC MOVIE GURU



The Book

"The Weissensee Jewish Cemetery, Moments in History" is a related book in German and English contains over 140 historic and current photographs

published by be.bra verlag, Berlin available at www.amazon.de



The CD

Original Soundtrack by KARIM SEBASTIAN ELIAS

BRANDENBURGISCHES STAATSORCHESTER FRANKFURT

published by Alhambra Records available at www.amazon.de