**PRESSEHEFT**

**  
AB 25.05.2017 IM KINO!**

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**PRESSEMATERIAL UNTER:** <http://www.mfa-film.de/kino/id/berlin-syndrom/>

**KURZINHALT**Die australische Backpackerin Clare zieht mit dem Fotoapparat durch Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, besonders die alten DDR-Bauten haben es ihr angetan. Als sie den sympathischen Englischlehrer Andi kennenlernt, verstehen sich die beiden sofort. Er zeigt ihr Schrebergärten und den Kiez. Was als Romanze beginnt, nimmt eine unerwartet finstere Wendung: Am nächsten Morgen, Andi ist schon in der Schule, will Clare seine Wohnung in einem ansonsten leerstehenden Altbau verlassen und merkt, dass sie eingeschlossen ist. Zunächst glaubt sie an ein Versehen. Doch Andi hat nicht vor, sie jemals wieder gehen zu lassen.

Mit BERLIN SYNDROM ist Cate Shortland (LORE & SOMERSAULT) erneut das beeindruckende Portrait einer weiblichen Selbstfindung gelungen. Basierend auf dem gleichnamigen Bestseller von Melanie Joosten sprengt BERLIN SYNDROM gängige Suspense-Konventionen und erzählt die Geschichte einer jungen Berlin-Touristin, die sich erst durch eine schier ausweglos erscheinende Extremsituation ihrer eigen Kraft besinnen lernt.  „Mich interessieren Charaktere in Extremsituationen und ihre Veränderungen“, sagt Cate Shortland. „Da ist Andi, der die einzelnen Teile seines Lebens in so klare Schubladen teilen kann, dass alles so vermeintlich vernünftig daherkommt. Und da ist natürlich Clare, die aus einer merkwürden Sehnsucht bei Andi bleibt und sich neu erfinden muss, als Kämpferin.“

Prominent besetzt mit Stars wie Max Riemelt, Teresa Palmer und Matthias Habich feierte BERLIN SYNDROM seine Uraufführung in Sundance 2017, seine Europapremiere im Panorama der diesjährigen Berlinale und wird bei den Fantasy Filmfest Nights 2017 gezeigt.

**TECHNISCHE DATEN**

**Regie:** Cate Shortland  
**Mit:** Teresa Palmer, Max Riemelt, Matthias Habich  
**Originaltitel:** BERLIN SYNDROME  
**Land:** Australien  
**Jahr:** 2017  
**Genre:** Thriller  
**Laufzeit:** 116 Min.  
**Sprachfassung:** DtF / OmU  
**Format:** DCP, Blu-ray  
**Kinostart:** tba  
**FSK:**  tba  
**Pressebetreuung:** Arne Höhne. Presse + Öffentlichkeit

**TERESA PALMER (CLARE)**

Teresa Palmer ist momentan dabei, eine der weltweit bekanntesten Schauspielerinnen zu werden. Sie hat bereits in vielen großen Filmen mitgespielt, darunter WARM BODIES zusammen mit Nicholas Hoult und John Malkovich, der auf dem berühmten Roman von Isaac Marion basiert, so wie in Micheal Bay und Steven Spielbergs Film ICH BIN NUMMER VIER an der Seite von Dianna Agron und Alex Pettyfer. Demnächst wird sie in Warner Bros. hoch erwartetem Remake von POINT BREAK neben Edgar Ramirez und Luke Bracey zu sehen sein, doch davor wird Palmer noch in der Lionsgate Produktion THE CHOICE mit Benjamin Walker mitspielen. Der Film basiert auf dem berühmten Buch des gefeierten Autors Nicholas Sparks (WIE EIN EINZIGER TAG).

Kürzlich war Teresa Palmer in dem Thriller TRIPLE NINE zusammen mit Kate Winslet, Casey Afflek,

Woody Harrelson uvm. als Teil eines Star-Casts im Kino zu sehen, ebenso in Terence Malicks

KNIGHT OF CUPS mit Christian Bale. Einer ihrer größten Kinoerfolge war jedoch der Horrorstreifen

LIGHTS OUT, der von James Wan produziert wurde, so wie Mel Gibsons HACKSAW RIDGE mit Andrew

Garfield, Vince Vaughn und Luke Bracey.

Weitere Filme von ihr sind PARTS PER BILLION mit Josh Hartnett; LOVE AN HONOR mit Liam

Hemsworth; WISH YOU WERE HERE mit Joel Edgerton; TAKE ME HOME TONIGHT mit Topher Grace

und Anna Faris; Jon Turtelbaubs Film DAS DUELL DER MAGIER von Walt Disney mit Nicolas Cage;

Adam Shankmans Komödie BEDTIME STORIES mit Adam Sandler; DECEMBER BOYS mit Daniel

Radcliffe und RESTRAINT mit Stephen Moyer.

2011 wurde Palmer mit dem „Australians in Film: Breakthrough Award“ für

Ihren großen Erfolg innerhalb kürzester Zeit ausgezeichnet. Screen International hat sie als einen von

Australiens „Stars von morgen“ bezeichnet. Ihren ersten weltweiten Erfolg hatte sie mit dem Film

2.37, einer australischen Independent Produktion, der sowohl auf den Filmfestspielen in Cannes

Als auch auf dem Toronto International Filmfest gezeigt wurde. Das Australien-Institut nominierte

Palmer als „Beste Schauspielerin“ für ihre komplexe Darstellung einer High School Schülerin mit

einem dunklen Geheimnis.

Neben ihrer Tätigkeit als Schauspielerin hat sie auch schon erste Versuche hinter der Kamera als

Regisseurin, Autorin und Produzentin gestartet.

**INTERVIEW MIT TERESA PALMER:**

***What is this story about for you?***

It's an exploration into the dynamic between two individuals. It delves into themes of love,

lust, control, sexuality, loneliness, personal suffering and growth.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

I loved the character of Clare and getting to explore her imperfections, her darkness and

then her ultimate discovery of self. I hadn't played such an introverted and internal

character before so it was a tremendous challenge for me. Above all, Cate Shortland was

the biggest draw card. I've been a long-time fan of hers ever since I saw Somersault, I've

been dying to work with her for years.

***How did you prepare for the role of Clare****?*

I prepped mostly with Cate and Max in the rehearsal room. We really took apart the scenes

and injected our own interpretations and discoveries of these characters and rewrote the

scenes together. We found some really daring and intense parts of these characters and

once we felt as though we had journeyed through all facets of them we knew we were

ready to get to work and play.

***How was it working with Cate Shortland?***

She has been my favourite director to work with thus far. She really knows how to highlight authenticity, it's what she is interested in and celebrates. I loved how excited she would be

by actions that we would take which would generally be subconscious, like the picking of our nails, the tucking of our hair, how we moved our feet etc. she wanted to capture these

moments as important character pieces. I've never worked with a director who still seems to see the world through the lens of someone discovering it for the first time.

***What was it like working with co-star Max Riemelt?***

Max was incredible to work with. We had to really trust each other and we had to become really enmeshed during this process. I feel he created a safe space for me to explore all sides of Clare, he was such a generous actor and he was truly chilling and complex in his portrayal of Andi.

***What was your favourite scene to shoot?***

My favourite scene to shoot was the Christmas scene. I play the accordion, we discuss our

relationship; as Clare tries desperately to find some humanity and connection with Andi.

Connection is her salvation so it's a really delicate scene, she can't push too hard but she

also needs to be bolder than before as she feels her time is limited. I really enjoyed playing

around with it.

***Which scene was the biggest challenge for you and why?***

The biggest challenge was probably finding the right balance of emotion, yet control during

the scene when Andi comes home once I've realized he has decided to keep me captive. I

had to ensure that all the right emotional beats were being hit yet Clare still has hope of

escaping and is in survival mode so I had to weave that in there too.

***What was it like transitioning between locations, Berlin and the studio in Melbourne?***

It was great! It was nice breaking up the exterior and interior shoots. Berlin was very much

about our meeting and that's where we started the shoot so it was organic to have Max and

I getting to know each other during that period, it worked for the filming experience. By the

time we got to Melbourne we knew each other really well and could delve in to the more

intimate scenes in the movie.

**MAX RIEMELT (ANDI)**

Max Riemelt wurde in Berlin geboren und entdeckte während seiner Schulzeit seine Liebe für das Schauspiel. Nach seinem V-Debut in Matthias Steuers Mini Serie ZWEI ALLEIN 1998, folgte bereits ein Jahr später der Fernsehfilm EIN WEIHNACHTSMÄRCHEN, so wie Dana Vavrovas Kinder-Abenteuer Film DER BÄR IST LOS.

Seinen Durchbruch hatte er 2000 mit seiner Rolle in Dennis Gansels Teenager Komödie MÄDCHEN MÄDCHEN und seinem Auftritt in Friedemann Fromms Fernsehfilm BRENNENDES SCHWEIGEN. Seitdem ist er regelmäßig in Film und Fernsehen zu sehen. 2004 setze er seine Rolle des Flins in MÄDCHEN MÄDCHEN 2 fort, bei dem Peter Gersina Regie führte. Durch seine Rolle des 17-jährigen Friedrich Weimar in Dennis Gansels NAPOLA – ELITE FÜR DEN FÜHRER erhielt Riemelt neue Aufmerksamkeit der Presse und wurde für seine Darstellung bei dem Karlovy Vary Filmfest als „Bester Schauspieler“ ausgezeichnet und stellte den Film persönlich als einer der „Rising Stars“ auf den Hamptons International Film Festival vor.   
  
In Dominik Grafs DER ROTE KAKADU spielte Max Riemelt an der Seite von Jessica Schwarz und bekam für diese Rolle den Bavarian Film Award als „Bester Schauspieler“ so wie die Auszeichnung als „Bester junger Schauspieler“ auf dem Marrakesch International Film Festival. 2006 wurde Riemelt von der Euopean Film Promotion als einer der europäischen Shooting Stars der Berlinale bezeichnet. Der Film DIE WELLE vereinte ihn wieder mit dem Regisseur Dennis Gansel, für den sie 2008 zu dem Sundance Film Festival eingeladen wurden. Für seine Rolle in MARKO bekam Max den Austrian Undine Award als „Bester junger Schauspieler in einem Spielfilm“.   
  
2011 übernahm er die Hauptrolle in der deutschen Fernsehserie IM ANGESICHT DES VERBRECHENS, die von der russischen Mafia in Berlin handelte und ihm seinen ersten deutschen Fernsehpreis und seine erste Nominierung als „Bester deutscher Schauspieler“ bei der Goldenen Kamera beschaffte. Mit den Regisseuren Eran Rikilis (PLAYOFF 2011) und Jeannine Meerapfel (UN AMIGO ALEMAN 2011) fing er seine ersten internationalen Projekte an.   
  
Erst kürzlich erhielt Riemelt internationales Aufsehen für seine Rolle in dem Kultfilm FREIER FALL, für die er auch den Gunter Rohrbach Preis als „Bester Schauspieler“ erhielt. Sein deutsches Post-Kriegs Drama AUF DAS LEBEN wurde mit dem Vienna Film Award 2015 als „Bester deutscher Spielfilm“ ausgezeichnet. Im Juni 2015 wurde die Netflix Serie SENSE8 veröffentlicht, mit Max als einem der 8 internationalen Hauptdarsteller. Die Serie wurde auf der ganzen Welt gedreht, Regie führten Lana und Andi Wachowski.

**MATTHIAS HABICH (ANDIS VATER)**

Habich wuchs in Hamburg-Harburg auf und besuchte die [Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Drama](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hochschule_f%C3%BCr_Musik_und_Theater_Hamburg). Er studierte 1966 ein Semester lang am [Conservatoire de Paris](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatoire_de_Paris" \o "Conservatoire de Paris) und nahm Schauspielunterricht bei [Lee Strasberg](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Strasberg) in den [USA](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vereinigte_Staaten). Danach spielte er an Theatern in [Chur](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chur), [Baden-Baden](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theater_Baden-Baden), [Basel](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basel), [Wuppertal](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuppertal), [Zürich](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Z%C3%BCrich) und [München](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BCnchen).

Sein erster großer Erfolg ist 1973 die Hauptrolle im Fernseh-Sechsteiler [DIE](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_merkw%C3%BCrdige_Lebensgeschichte_des_Friedrich_Freiherrn_von_der_Trenck) MERKWÜRDIGE LEBENSGESCHICHTE DES FRIEDRICH FREIHERRN VON DER TRENCK unter der Regie von [Fritz Umgelter](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_Umgelter). Danach folgen mit [DIE](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_unfreiwilligen_Reisen_des_Moritz_August_Benjowski) UNFREIWILLIGEN REISEN DES MORITZ AUGUST BENJOWSKI und [DES CHRISTOFFEL VON GRIMMELSHAUSEN ABENTEURLICHER SIMPLICISSIMUSs](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Des_Christoffel_von_Grimmelshausen_abenteuerlicher_Simplicissimus) gleich zwei Vierteiler unter dem gleichen Regisseur mit ihm (beide ausgestrahlt 1975). Spätestens jetzt ist er einem breiten Fernsehpublikum in Deutschland bekannt. Sein Kinodebüt gibt Habich 1976 als eiskalter preußischer Offizier in DER FANGSCHUSS. Es folgen Rollen in Kinofilmen, mit denen er sich seinen Ruf als eindrucksvoller Charakterdarsteller verdient.

Nach zahlreichen Rollen in Theater und im Fernsehen spielt er sich 1999 mit der Hauptrolle in der TV-Serie [KLEMPERER](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klemperer_%E2%80%93_Ein_Leben_in_Deutschland) – EIN LEBEN IN DEUTSCHLAND endgültig in die erste Liga der deutschen Charakterdarsteller. 2001 erhält er den Deutschen Filmpreis für seine Leistung in [Caroline Links](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline_Link) vielfach preisgekröntem Drama [NIRGENDWO](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nirgendwo_in_Afrika) IN AFRIKA. Im Kino ist er 2009 neben der internationalen Produktion [DER](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Vorleser) VORLESER, an der Seite von [Kate Winslet](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Winslet) und [Ralph Fiennes](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Fiennes), auch im Drama WAFFENSTILLSTAND zu sehen. Für seine Rolle im Fernsehfilm [EIN](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ein_halbes_Leben) HALBES LEBEN erhält Habich gemeinsam mit seinen Schauspielerkollegen [Josef Hader](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Hader) und [Franziska Walser](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franziska_Walser) sowie Regisseur [Nikolaus Leytner](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolaus_Leytner) den [Grimme-Preis](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grimme-Preis). Nach zwei Kinofilmen 2010 wirkt Habich vor allem wieder in Fernsehproduktionen mit, u.a. 2012 im Thriller [DAS](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Das_Kinderm%C3%A4dchen_(2012)) KINDERMÄDCHEN, als Familienpatriarch, der mit der dunklen Vergangenheit seiner Familie konfrontiert wird. Unter der Regie von [Margarethe von Trotta](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margarethe_von_Trotta) spielt Habich 2015 in [DIE](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_abhandene_Welt) ABHANDENE WELT schließlich wieder eine Kinohauptrolle, als Witwer, der auf einem Zeitungsfoto seine angeblich tote Frau wiederzuerkennen glaubt. Mittlerweile hat Habich in circa 100 Film- und Fernsehproduktionen mitgewirkt.

**CAST**

**Clare Havel** TERESA PALMER

**Andi Werner** MAX RIEMELT

**Erich Werner** MATTHIAS HABICH

**Franka Hummels** EMMA BADING

**Jana** ELMIRA BAHRAMI

**Peter** CHRISTOPH FRANKEN

**Elodie Zadikian** LUCIE ARON

**Aaron Hurwitz** NASSIM AVAT

**Lene Junnell** MALIN STEFFEN

**Billy Dharma** THUSO LEKWAPE

**Josie Lamarque** MORGANE FERRU

**Silke** LISA MARIE MÜLLER

**Junge 1** ELIAS ESSER

**Junge 2** CLAUDE HEINRICH

**Mutter** NADINE PESCHEL

**Jakob** MATTHIAS RÜSSEL

**Mascha** MASCHA WOLF

**Benni**  VIKTOR BASCHMAKOV

**Junge Frau**  CHARLY THORN

**Natalie** SASHA SELEZNEVA

**Squatter** PETER YOUNG

**Coal Man** RENÉ BARRA

**Russian Girl**  KRISTINA KOSTIV

**Young Girl** MARIELLA JOSEPHINE AUMANN

**Stall Owner** ENGIN KARAVU

**STAB**

**Regie:** CATE SHORTLAND

**Produzent:** POLLY STANIFORD

**Drehbuch:** SHAUN GRANT

**Buchvorlage:**  “BERLIN SYNDROME” von MELANIE JOOSTEN

**Executive Producer:** ANGIE FIELDER

**Director of Photography:** GERMAIN MCMICKING

**Schnitt:** JACK HUTCHINGS

**Produktions Design:**  MELINDA DORING

**Kostüme:** MARIA PATTISON

**Make Up/Haare:** CHIARA TRIPODI

**Sound Designer:** LUKE MYNOTT & ROBERT MACKENZIE

**Musik komponiert von:** BRYONY MARKS

**Music Supervisor:** JEMMA BURNS

**Casting:** ANJA DIHRBERG, KIRSTY MCGREGOR

**Executive Producer:** TROY LUM, OLIVER LAWRENCE, FLORENCE TOURBIER, SCOTT ANDERSON, PHOTOPLAY FILMS, EMILIE GEORGES, NAIMA ABED, TANJA MEISSNER, NICHOLAS KAISER

**CATE SHORTLAND (REGIE)**

Cate Shortland hat einen Bachelor auf Arts von der Universität Sydney und ein Abschluss Diplom von

der australischen Schule für Film und Radio. Für die preisgekrönten Kurzfilme PENTUPHOUSE

(1998), FLOWER GIRL (2000) und JOY (2000) schrieb sie das Drehbuch und führte Regie – genauso

wie bei ihrem Spielfilm-Debut SOMERSAULT. Der Film feierte seine Premiere 2004 auf dem

Filmfest Cannes und bekam zahlreiche Preise.

Ihr zweiter Spielfilm LORE, bei dem sie Co-Autorin und Regisseurin war, basierte auf dem Roman THE

DARK ROOM von Rachel Seiffert und hatte seine Premiere auf dem Sydney Film Festival 2012, lief auf

zahlreichen weiteren Festivals. Cates dritter Spielfilm BERLIN SYNDROM basiert auf dem gleichnamigen Buch von Melanie Joosten und wird 2017 veröffentlicht werden.

Shortland hat bereits bei einigen Fernsehserien Regie geführt, z.B. THE SECRET LIFE OF US und THE

SILENCE. Sie verfilmte Chris Tsiolkas Roman THE SLAP für ABC TV und wurde dafür mit dem BAFTA AWARD und den Emmy nominiert und erhielt 2012 einen AWGIE für die “Beste adaptierte Mini-

Serie“. Zu Ihren weiteren Produktionen gehören THE DEVILS PLAYGROUND; DEADLINE GALLIPOLI

und THE KETTERING INCIDENT.

**INTERVIEW MIT CATE SHORTLAND**

***What is this story about for you?***

Berlin Syndrome is the story of a young woman, desperate to explore a cooler, more

cultured place than “backwards” Australia. She wants to reinvent herself as an artist,

hoping that Berlin will take away the stench of suburban Brisbane. She doesn’t realize -

like most of us - that the ordinary, the mundane, the simple is often filled with its own

magic. When she meets Andi, he seems to encompass the European ideal – she is

enraptured and soon entrapped. For him, she is a vessel to hold and fill with fantasies. He

wants nothing of the real. Andi and Clare are the answer to each other’s dreams. But Clare

does not want violence; she wants inspiration and love. She is addicted to love. He is

addicted to control.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

I was interested in the characters and the extreme situation.

Clare is obsessed with details. Details end up making her days. She escapes her physical

body and becomes her mind to survive. She is fragile and self conscious and becomes

strong and resourceful. Nothing is clear-cut with her. Nothing makes sense. As the film

progresses she realizes she may die. She also realizes the beauty of what she left behind

in Australia: family and the place that created her. She is an extreme version of many of us:

rejecting her childhood life and then coming to see the beauty of it. She goes through

various stages in the film: fighting to get out, living in fear, and then coming to acceptance.

But this acceptance shifts suddenly, when death is shoved in her path. She becomes a

fighter in the end.

Sociopaths interest me, so I was fascinated by a character like Andi that can completely

compartmentalize his life. Someone who can bury his transgressions and remake himself

– both these characters reinvent. That interests me: the idea that underneath the

construction we are fluid. Clare reinvents out of need, she watches him, listens and reacts.

Out of pure survival. Andi reinvents himself by hiding what he is from society. An English

teacher who romanticizes his ideal woman but then wants to entrap her, make her his

perfect study, utterly under his power. Andi is the product of his environment, brought up in

the GDR, a shadowy utopia, missing his mother, and perhaps hating her for leaving.

***What themes do you explore in this film?***

Various themes are intertwined in this story: sex and violence, the idea of power, and the

idea of creating and metamorphosis. Both characters are running from the ordinary. Clare first longs for intimacy and then freedom.

Andi longs for perfection. He wants his dream relationship and will subjugate and violate to

obtain it. When Clare, his subject becomes too familiar he longs to get rid of her, to replace

her with a new model. Violence and murder a bi-product of his goal.

***How did you prepare for the shoot, what was involved?***

I spent a lot of time working on the script. In Berlin, I worked closely with Franz

Rodenkirchen – a great script editor and inspirational mind, who I also worked with on

Lore. And at the same time Polly, production designer Melinda Doring and I were exploring

locations. We discovered so much during this time that later inspired the design choices of

the film. We kept seeing all these exercise bikes and running machines in deserted

wallpapered rooms in East Germany. I loved their forlorn shapes, the dreams these

strange mechanized objects seemed to hold. Perfect body, perfect mind, now lost. I had

the idea that Andi should have a massage chair. I really loved shooting the scenes around

this chair - its vibrating mass of black vinyl.

We had a solid rehearsal period with the actors in Berlin and then a week when we came

back to Melbourne. We had a difficult but inspiring time exploring ideas and working on the

script and this made each of the actors feel like they had ownership of the characters. It

really grounded and connected us. We worked with the Choreographer Danielle Micich for

a full day on the violence and sex - on ways of inhabiting the characters without judging

them. Just feeling. This was one of the best days, she taught us all so much. And

constantly asked why? Why would he do that, why would she move there? Everything had to

come back to instinct.

***Where was the shoot, how long was it, and what was involved?***

We shot in Berlin and Melbourne for 6 weeks. It was a difficult shoot as we had strict

scheduling restraints and a lot of location moves. Thankfully it was made possible by the

wonderful crews we had both in Berlin and Melbourne, and our key creatives who traveled

with us to both locations. Everyone worked really hard to piece together the puzzle of two

countries pretending to be one.

Polly Staniford and I knew that making two countries work as one was going to be difficult.

I fought to shoot it all in Berlin, but in the end I took Polly’s advice and was relieved at how

well the Melbourne studio shoot went - it really focused us. Once in the studio, we shot

with Max and Teresa for 3 weeks and mostly shot in sequence.

***What is your favourite scene in the film?***

Shooting at Andi’s father’s house was a highlight, as this was one of my favourite locations.

We became friendly with the owner whose parents had built the house just before WW2

and as a teenager he had lived there under the GDR. He had many stories and the most

wonderful garden and ceramics.

I always love shooting in nature so shooting in the forest was also a great day. We shot in

one location all day – heaven.

I also liked the Christmas scene where Clare speaks of home – of the Cicadas in

Queensland. This dialogue came out of rehearsal, so felt really fresh and real to me. Clare

was both vulnerable and strong here and Andi hates her for revealing her humanity. Her

history. She makes him realise how lonely he is. It is the moment he decides to kill her.

But I have to say that working with Germain McMicking made every day good. He is a really

intelligent and calm person. He is unafraid and willing to take great creative risks.

***What was it like working with Max and Teresa?***

Max and Teresa are good people and both wanted to do something raw and truthful. I came

to like them both enormously. We could be vulnerable around each other, so we could

explore without trying to be impressive. Like many directors, I wanted them to be

comfortable enough so they could stop trying and just be the characters. We laughed a lot.

They supported and respected each other tremendously, which made each day a joy. At the

end they gave me a beautiful bangle engraved with “meine” which means mine, a line from

the film. We all have a piece of each other, after such an intense time.

**POLLY STANIFORD – PRODUCER**

Polly Staniford is an award-winning creative producer, writer and director and co-founder

of film and TV production company Aquarius Films.

Polly has produced 8 award-winning short films, which all sold internationally and have

screened in high profile film festivals all over the world including Venice, Berlin and

Sundance.

Polly has worked in many areas of the Film and Television industry for a variety of

companies including Fremantle Media, and Inside Film. Employed for nearly 3 years by

award-winning production company Matchbox Pictures, Polly worked on a number of film

and television projects with internationally renowned producers Tony Ayres and Michael

McMahon. Whilst working with Matchbox Pictures, Polly also produced 4 documentaries

for the ABC including the second series of ANATOMY and MISS SOUTH SUDAN AUSTRALIA.

Polly was one of the writers on NOWHERE BOYS, the AACTA and Logie winning children’s

drama series produced by Matchbox Pictures for ABC3 and she also wrote and directed

BRAIN, a 30-minute documentary for ABC1 about Jamie and Andrew Daddo (part of the

fourth series of ANATOMY). Most recently she wrote a one-hour documentary for the ABC

about internationally acclaimed architecture firm Denton Corker Marshall called THE

DIPLOMAT, THE ARTIST AND THE SUIT.

Along with business partners Angie Fielder and Cecilia Ritchie, she is currently developing

an exciting slate of feature films including romantic comedies THE POST OFFICE written by

Lou Sanz and THE ASSISTANT written by Tristram Baumber as well as three TV series,

THE NIGHT GAMES written by Tom Holloway with director Samantha Lang which is being

developed with support from Screen NSW and two projects supported by Screen Tasmania

- a 13 part gothic/ thriller TV series, VERA GRAY and crime thriller THE PARCEL.

Polly is a Masters graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts School of Film & TV in

Melbourne and has also participated in the internationally acclaimed Berlin Talent

Campus.

***What is this story about for you?***

Berlin Syndrome is a cautionary tale about love and the desperate measures people will go

to get it and keep it. It’s essentially a very dark love story that explores obsession and the

loneliness that can be found both in a foreign city full of strangers and in an apartment

shared by two people. It’s an exciting, intoxicating, claustrophobic thriller that will

ultimately make us all question decisions we’ve made and wonder who we can trust.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

As soon as I read the novel I could see the huge potential for a film adaptation. The story

was tense, taut, evocative, surprising and original and had a commercial, high concept

premise. It was also a fairly contained story - a lot takes place inside Andi’s apartment and

I felt it was a project that could be developed fairly quickly. I was drawn to the unusual

relationship between the two main characters - the complexity, danger and intensity of

their union and I also loved the setting - Berlin is a wonderful city with a rich and dark past

and it’s this history that serves as a kind of metaphor for what’s happening in Andi’s

apartment. Like the imposing wall that divided the city for so long, the walls of Andi’s

apartment close in around Clare leaving her feeling trapped and unable to escape the

oppressiveness of the unfortunate predicament she unwittingly finds herself in.

***What was the process of getting the film off the ground?***

I optioned the book in 2011 and soon after attached Shaun Grant to write it. Shaun had just

won the AACTA award for his work on Snowtown and I was excited by his ability to bring

beauty to very dark material. I then sent Cate Shorthand the first draft of the screenplay

and the book for consideration. I knew we needed a great director to helm this project –

someone who could work intimately with our two lead characters and bring a sensitive and

emotional style to the genre. Luckily for me Cate responded to the material and came on

board. The attachment of Cate as director of this project represents the marriage of a

multi-award winning auteur director to what is inherently commercial material which

made it a very enticing and distinctive proposition for sales and distribution. We had a huge

response when I took the project to Cannes in 2013 - and had offers from a number of

leading sales agents. We decided on Memento Films International who are based in Paris

and had handled Cate’s previous film, Lore. Locally eOne boarded the project for ANZ

distribution.

Shaun, Cate and I worked very collaboratively during the development phase. We received

4 rounds of development funding from Screen Australia and held regular script workshops

to discuss the story as a team. During the final phase of development Cate became more

involved and wrote a couple of drafts in the lead up to production.

We secured finance in April 2015 from Screen Australia, Film Victoria, Fulcrum Media

Finance, DDP Studios, Memento and eOne and went into production in September of the

same year.

***What was it like transitioning between locations?***

Very challenging. We shot all the exteriors and distinctively German locations in Berlin and

then built Andi’s apartment as a set back in Melbourne at the Docklands Studios. However

the exterior of Andi’s apartment including the courtyard and POV’s from the window were

also shot in Berlin so the continuity was extremely tricky and important. Luckily we had an

incredible production design team led by Melinda Doring and a fantastic cinematographer

Germain McMicking - the transitions are seamless but a lot of work went into the planning

of this to make sure it worked. We also worked with a great VFX team from DDP Studios.

***What was involved in the casting process?***

In Berlin Syndrome there are two active protagonists struggling against each other within

the confines of a powerful and chilling premise. We knew we needed two fantastic actors

for the roles of Clare and Andi - they needed to really carry the film. We also needed to

completely believe their connection and also experience the fear and horror of the

situation that unfolds for Clare. Unlike many thrillers, we also get to know Andi - his work

life, his family, his past and come to understand a little about what makes him tick. We

were so lucky to find Teresa and Max - they literally embodied their characters both

physically and emotionally. Both undertook a dramatic transformation and during intensive

rehearsals with Cate really let go of all ego, vanity and any pre-conceived ideas and laid

themselves bare. We worked with Anja Dihrberg in Berlin for the role of Andi and Kirsty

McGregor in Sydney for the role of Clare and saw a lot of actors for both parts. Teresa and

Max both surprised us with their performances and they worked so beautifully together

throughout the whole shoot. They definitely exceeded my expectations and I feel blessed

we found such a wonderful cast for the film.

***What is your favourite scene in the film?***

I think the scene when Andi comes home to find the apartment in disarray is a favourite.

Clare has finally truly realised her predicament but still thinks she can negotiate with Andi.

The scene moves through so many great emotional beats - as Clare tries everything she

can to reason with the man she had trusted but she soon discovers he is far from who she

thought he was. I also love the scene where they meet on the streets of Berlin - this scene

is very true to the original novel and it’s a moment we can all relate to. The charm and

seduction of a handsome stranger in a new city. The promise of something exciting, the

early seeds of a new relationship. It’s a happy, joyful scene with all the colour and life of

Kreuzberg where we shot the scene.

***What were the biggest challenges of the shoot?***

We had big ambitions for the film and as is always the case not enough time or money as

we would have liked. Shooting over two countries was a big challenge but we had such a

talented team of creatives who helped make this as smooth as possible.

**SHAUN GRANT – SCREENWRITER**

Shaun Grant’s chilling debut feature film, SNOWTOWN (directed by Justin Kurzell) was

released in 2011 and saw him win the AACTA Award for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2012.

Produced by Anna McLeish and Sarah Shaw, SNOWTOWN was Warp Film Australia’s first

feature release and has established Shaun as one of Australia’s most exciting

screenwriters.

First screening at the BigPond Adelaide Film Festival, it won the Audience Award for Best

Feature Film, and went on to Critics Week at Cannes, Toronto Film Festival and London

Film Festival - winning numerous awards along the way including the AWGIE for Best

Adapted Screenplay and the Greg Teppar Award for Outstanding Achievement in the

Victorian Screen Industry.

A graduate from RMIT in Creative Screenwriting, Shaun was one of four writers who wrote

and developed the drama series KILLING TIME and among other works, won another

AWGIE award for his work on the critically acclaimed mini series, DEADLINE GALLIPOLI

(directed by Michael Rymer and produced by Matchbox/NBC Universal).

Shaun recently completed two adaptations of best selling novels. JASPER JONES (directed

by Rachel Perkins and produced by Porchlight Films) and BERLIN SYNDROME (directed by

Cate Shortland and produced by Aquarius Films), both slated for release in the second half

of 2016/ early 2017.

Shaun is currently writing multiple projects including; a new untitled feature film for See-

Saw Films, THE LAST DUEL for Studio 8 with Francis Lawrence (HUNGER GAMES)

attached to direct and TRUE HISTORY OF THE KELLY GANG reuniting with Justin Kurzell to

direct.

Shaun currently splits his time between Australia and the USA.

***What is this story about for you?***

For me Berlin Syndrome is about many things, be it man’s never-ending search for

meaning and connection in life, or the destructive impact that past events can have on you

if you let them. I also wanted to touch on the loneliness and isolation I’ve felt when

travelling, despite being surrounded by people.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

Melanie’s novel is so beautifully written that it drew me in straight away. Also at the time, I

had just seen a relationship end and became interested in dramatising the breakdown of a

relationship, where one person wishes to escape but where the other desperately clings

onto the idea of what the couple could be.

***How did you approach the adaptation? What were the biggest challenges?***

Like I do any adaptation I looked to convey the tone and heart of the source material

without limiting myself to its plot, action or characters. Thankfully, the author was

supportive of me ‘opening up’ her work and bringing to it my own ideas, beliefs and

themes and crafting the best possible screen story that I could.

**GERMAIN MCMICKING – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Germain McMicking has worked extensively within the commercial and entertainment

industry, shooting documentary, narrative film and television and is a much sort after

Director of Photography.

In 2012 Germain worked with director Rachel Ward and producers Goalpost Taylor

Productions, shooting the TV movie for ABC TV THE ACCIDENTAL SOLDIER, which

garnered Germain a 2013 ACCTA nomination for Best Cinematography. Germain also shot

in 2012 COCKLESHELL, a segment of THE TURNING feature film for Director Tony Ayres

and based on the Tim Winton novel.

Prior to this, Germain shot the feature film screen adaptation of Christos Tsiolkas’ award

winning novel DEAD EUROPE, directed by Tony Krawitz for Porchlight Films and See Saw

Films. This film premiered in competition at Sydney Film Festival 2012, and also screened

at the Toronto and London Film Festivals. This was the second collaboration with director

Tony Krawitz, Germain shot Tony’s award winning feature documentary THE TALL MAN for

Blackfella Films. The film focuses on the infamous death in custody of Cameron

Doomadgee on Palm Island in 2004. Germain was nominated for an AACTA award for Best

Cinematography in a Documentary in 2012.

Other credits include HAIL, directed by Amiel Courtin Wilson with Flood Projects. HAIL is a

love and vengeance story featuring a cast of brilliant non-actors. It premiered at Adelaide

Film Festival in 2011, and has screened at numerous international festivals since, including

Venice Film Festival. Germain also collaborated with Amiel on his short film CICADA, and

his feature documentary about Jack Charles called BASTARDY which screened on SBS TV

and was released theatrically to critical acclaim in 2009. TV credits include the second

series of WILFRED for SBS TV, John Safran’s RACE RELATIONS for ABC TV, JOHN SAFRAN

VERSUS GOD for ABC TV, and Eddie Martin’s LIONEL.

In 2013 Germain shot the feature film PARTISAN with director Ariel Kleiman and producers

Warp Productions, winning the 2015 World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for

Cinematography at the Sundance Film Festival. Latest projects include the epic TV series

GALLIPOLI for producers Southern Star Productions, the Nine Network and director

Glendyn Ivin; the feature film HOLDING THE MAN, for producers Goalpost Pictures and

director Neil Armfield. In 2016 Germain will shoot the highly anticipated 2nd series of TOP

OF THE LAKE, with writer/director Jane Campion.

***What is this story about for you?***

Berlin Syndrome is about two characters that meet by fate on the street one day. Clare is a

backpacker from Australia and Andi is an English teacher, Berlin born and bred. They’re

sort of inextricably drawn to each other through past traumas. Both seeking love and

intimacy, but both with very different ways of approaching this. Clare approaches it with

openness, and Andi approaches it with a need to control, which leads him to lock her up in

his apartment.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

When I first read the script I was blown away, it was such a page-turner. I couldn’t put it

down. It’s a survival story, a love story and it has a lot of intimacy to it that was extremely

powerful. I was particularly interested in the characters in the film and the way they are

drawn to each other, despite being on different ends of the spectrum of good and evil.

***How did you prepare for the shoot? What was involved?***

My pre production time on Berlin Syndrome was quite intense. From the moment we

landed in Berlin, I spent almost every day with Cate, going through the script, looking at

visual references, and absorbing the world in Berlin and living out the story. We spent a lot

of time travelling around together, feeling out each environment, absorbing the light,

observing the people, and trying to get a feel for the characters. We were very focused on

figuring out who Andi was and where he would have grown up, and how it would feel to be

Clare with wide eyes looking at this new world, how she would see things, and how she

could potentially be vulnerable in this situation.

***What camera did you shoot on?***

We worked with a couple of different types of Arri cameras: the Alexa, the Amira and the

Mini, pared with Leica Summilux lenses.

***What were the biggest challenges of the shoot?***

Like a lot of Australian films, the biggest challenge on Berlin Syndrome was time. Trying to

get it all shot in the time that was available to us. It inevitably creates this environment

where you have to get things done very, very quickly and be quite immediate in trusting

your instincts and just going for it. It’s always a bit of a rollercoaster ride trying to get

through it in a day, and incredibly stressful wondering whether you’ve made the right

decision. It’s a constant grind on you just trying to make sure you’re doing the very best you

can for the film, the director, the actors, and the whole team.

***What was your favourite scene or filming location during the shoot?***

Usually shooting on location is my favourite thing to do, being out in the real world, in real

locations. The feeling you get from this is very hard to emulate in a studio. Particularly, the

excitement you get out of reacting to natural light and the real things that happen that

force your hand in a way. On this film, we got to film on some amazing locations in Berlin,

but shooting in the studio in Melbourne was especially enjoyable. Largely because of the

scheduling restraints, we were quite time poor, so we had to be able to work very quickly,

and often on a shoot moving around from one location to the next soaks up a lot of time

that you could be using to experiment. So once we got back to Australia, where we shot all

the interiors of Andi’s apartment, we found that we had a bit more time to play. I found it to

be a great challenge having to emulate the light from Europe from Summer through to

Autumn and Winter and it was lots of fun.

**JACK HUTCHINGS – EDITOR**

Jack Hutchings is a freelance editor who is based in Melbourne. Jack’s first short film

CRACKERBAG, written and directed by Glendyn Ivin, won the Palme d’Or at the 2003

Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for Best Editing for a Non-Feature Film Award at

the 2003 Australian Film Institute Awards. Jack’s next short film NATURE’S WAY, written

and directed by Jane Shearer, was in competition at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival and won

the Jury Prize for Best Short Film at the 2007 Paris International Film Festival. Next Jack

worked with Dustin Fennelly on his short HAWKER, which was selected to premiere at the

London International Film Festival.

In 2007 Jack edited JERRY CAN, a short film for director Julian Avery which won the July

Prize at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival. Other credits include the Michael Spiccia short film

YARDBIRD which was selected for the 2012 Cannes Film Festival.

In 2008 Jack edited his first feature film LAST RIDE, directed by Glendyn Ivin, which

premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. Following on from this, Jack worked

with director Amiel Courtin-Wilson on his documentary BASTARDY, receiving a 2009 AFI

Nomination, Best Editing for a Documentary.

Following from this Jack teamed up again with director Julius Avery on his first feature

film SON OF A GUN; and then director Ariel Kleiman on his first feature film PARTISAN,

which premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Jack is currently working on BERLIN

SYNDROME with Aquarius Films and director Cate Shortland.

Jack also regularly cuts TV commercials through his production house The Butchery

(http://www.thebutchery.com.au/?page=showreel&reelID=22) and many of the

commercials Jack has edited have won major awards around the globe and a commercial

for Boots Pharmacies, directed by Garth Davis, has been included in the permanent

collection of film at MOMA, the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

***What is this story about for you?***

The story for me is a psychological love story. There are elements of Clare as a person

looking to find something that is outside of her home, and I could relate to that having

travelled at a similar age. She’s seeking connection, and it can be a wash of emotions

being away from family and friends in a foreign place. You can feel very lonely. She finds a

connection with someone that is essentially preying on this vulnerability. I remember

thinking when I first read it that it’s also about someone who is obsessed with the idea of

perfection. Andi uses his camera later in the film and it’s revealed that it's in a ritualistic

way for him and the film comments on the ideas and themes of pornography being an

image and the idea of something which the character can’t actually deal with the reality of.

Obviously the abandonment issues and issues of a country divided which perhaps caused

this are touched on but we are really sheltered from the exact details in a way that Andi

has repressed and hides these things way way down in his being. Still waters run deep as

the saying goes.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

I loved how Clare and Andi connected on a number of levels, and obviously the physical

connection was strong. I liked how things were revealed from his side of the story and drip

fed piece by piece until you realise that things that might have seemed entirely innocent at

first glance, or perhaps were only tinged with a sense of 'something not being right’ were

actually hiding very dark parts of his personality and past. I remember thinking that it all

relied on the chemistry between the two characters, and that if that worked during the

shoot, then we’d have something magic. When the rushes started coming back i knew we

had something special, as the tension between the characters felt quite electric.

***How did you prepare for the edit? What was involved?***

Cate mentioned a few films at our meeting; so I did rewatch a few films again; and

searched out one or two that I hadn’t seen. The most commercial film Cate mentioned was

MISERY; and I realised watching that film, that not a frame is wasted. It’s incredibly taught

and literally every shot is telling the next part of the story and it’s very lean. We ended up

somewhere between that as a guide, the idea of not letting the story slacken and to keep

the interest up in a genre trope way, and a love story which at times needs to just ‘sit’ and

be with them totally immersed in their passion, or their stillness whether alone or

together.

We also rematched scenes from Audiard’s RUST AND BONE, more of a stylistic cutting

sense of Cate wanting me to remember that the emotional cut is the most important

aspect at all times, and not to worry about matching things; feel free. We also referenced

the killer whale scene in relation to the moment that Andi connects with Franka in the

gym, paying particular attention to the music and sound design. The moment is literally

our character seeing something that should be incredibly innocent but we portray this is a

way that allows us to get inside his head and feel that he’s realizing this young teenage girl

could be something more than just a student in his classes, in his warped world. The

moment needed to slow down; and things fall into place both visually and metaphorically.

It’s a beautiful moment of innocence colliding with this dark character who is capable of

anything… which is essentially a good analogy for the film as a whole.

***What program did you edit on?***

We cut on Avid Media Composer at DDP Studios in Melbourne. We had an assistant for the

shoot and assemble stage (Paul), and then one for the later edit stage of the film

(Andrew).

***What was your favourite scene of the film?***

Favourites would be the Gymnastics scene, the IKEA chair assemble scene and the scene

on the couch with Andi cutting Clare’s fingernails. All of the action scenes were fun to cut,

door slamming etc as were the sex scenes and the post coital chat scene.

One sequence that really jumped out at me in the script as being transcending in style and

which really lifted off the page was the chat with the father in the kitchen about Andi’s new

girlfriend - and then showing the reality of that situation. That was changed around a bit

during the edit and at one point wasn’t showing Clare while they spoke, but we went back

to it and I think it’s strong and affecting; and it was fun to cut.

***What were the biggest challenges during the edit?***

The biggest challenge at first was the post schedule, we started off with 11 weeks but

ended up pushing out to 12 weeks, which was invaluable as there were still a lot of big

decisions being made in that last week of the cut. Other than that the challenges were;

condensing the start of the film to get them to the apartment quicker, we had to cut out

several moments, sometimes whole scenes, from the script and find a neat way to

condense the story.

The scene with the Schrebergarten was one of the biggest challenges to cut - it was the

first scene shot with Max and Theresa, and the light was going as it was approaching

evening, so overall the coverage was a challenge on this one. But we got there in the end!

We also had the usual repetition of information in places in the film that were easily fixed

and then some making sure that Clare’s character felt like she was at the right place in

'her journey' once inside the apartment - this required a fair bit of careful manipulation to

get the arc right.

Besides a few tricky scenes, it really was a hugely pleasurable experience working on the

edit with Cate, Polly, Angie, Troy Lum and the overseas Memento guys.

**MELINDA DORING – PRODUCTION DESIGNER**

Since graduating with an MA in Film & TV Design from the Australian Film, Television and

Radio School in 1998, Melinda Doring has designed a number of highly regarded Australian

feature films and Television projects.

Melinda has just completed work on the Australian/Irish Co-Production feature,

STRANGERLAND directed by Kim Farrant, produced by Dragonfly Pictures and Fastnet

Films starring Nicole Kidman, Hugo Weaving and Joseph Fiennes. The film was shot on

location in Sydney, Canowindra and Broken Hill.

Melinda designed the critically acclaimed film TRACKS, See Saw Films adaptation of Robyn

Davidson’s epic journey across Australia, directed by John Curran, shot on location by DOP

Mandy Walker in the Flinders Ranges and the Northern Territory. TRACKS premiered at the

2013 Venice Film Festival and was picked up by the Weinstein Company for international

distribution.

Melinda won the 2013 AACTA & APDG awards for Wayne Blair’s musical feature THE

SAPPHIRES, produced by Goal Post Pictures, inspired by Tony Brigg’s successful play and

based on the true story of 4 indigenous women who performed soul hits to the American

troops in Vietnam in 1968. Filmed in both Australia and Vietnam THE SAPPHIRES received

a standing ovation at the 2012 Cannes film festival.

In 2012 she designed the telemovie, UNDERGROUND, based on Julian Assange’s early

years as a hacker, Mendax in Melbourne in the late 1980’s, directed by Robert Connelly for

Matchbox Pictures.

In 2011 Melinda completed work on Matchbox Pictures mini series, THE SLAP. This multi

award wining show based on Christos Tsiolskas novel gave her the opportunity to work

with some incredible directors including Robert Connolly, Tony Ayers, Jessica Hobbs and

Matt Saville. In 2010 Melinda designed Paperbark Films’ ambitious feature, THE EYE OF THE STORM,

set in Sydney in 1972 and based on the Nobel Award winning novel by Patrick White and

directed by the legendary Fred Schepisi. Melinda won the inaugural 2012 AACTA award for

her work on this film.

In 2009 and early 2010 Melinda designed ORANGES AND SUNSHINE, a UK/Australian coproduction

for Sixteen Films and See Saw Pictures, directed by Jim Loach (based on

“EMPTY CRADLES”, the incredible, true story of the UK Nottingham social worker/

whistleblower, Margaret Humphreys and her investigations into the Child Migration Policy

which led her to Australia in the mid 1980’s.

In 2008 Melinda was production designer on the UK/Australian co-production (Miramax/

Tiger Aspect/Southern Light Films) THE BOYS ARE BACK, which called for a complete

build of the central characters house. The film was shot on location in South Australia and

London and directed by Scott Hicks.

Prior works include: The supernatural UK/ Australian Thriller TRIANGLE directed by

Christopher Smith, the stop animated feature $9.99 directed by Tatia Rosenthal for See

Saw Films, THE HOME SONG STORIES directed by Tony Ayres, for which she won both an

AFI award and an IF award for Best Production Design in 2007, UNFOLDING FLORENCE a

feature documentary directed by Gillian Armstrong, the AFI awarded short feature by

Porchlight Films JEWBOY, directed by Tony Krawitz and the critically acclaimed

SOMERSAULT, directed by Cate Shortland for which Melinda won an AFI in 2004 for Best

Production Design (the film was selected for Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2004).

Melinda is also a well-regarded costume designer, her credits include, SUBURBAN

MAYHEM directed by Paul Goldman, and LITTLE FISH directed by Rowan Woods.

***What is this story about for you?***

Berlin Syndrome is the story a young Australian woman about to embark on a trip of a

lifetime, she wants to experience life to inform her creative process to be inspired and

invigorated by all that travelling the world offers, with all it’s diversity, culture and history.

Something that many young Australians do as a right of passage. Unfortunately for Clare at

the beginning of this journey she takes a very quick unexpected turn. Clare's brief

passionate liaison with a handsome Berlin man becomes the fight for her life.

***What was it about this story that you were drawn to?***

What drew me to this story was that I myself did a very similar journey to that of Clare.

Having left art school in the early 1990’s, I felt I had to explore and experience the world so

I could become world-wise and inspired. Berlin was one of those cities I was desperate to

see and experience and since it was not long after the wall had come down, it really had

this amazing atmosphere of change and a lot of young artists like myself wanted be apart

of that unique moment in the city’s history. Berlin has always attracted artists and I loved

that Clare is drawn to the city to explore that past, and document something she has a real

passion for.

I backpacked all around Europe on my own, often finding myself in tricky situations. As a

young woman travelling on your own you often feel vulnerable, and it’s easy to see how

situations could have gone bad. I think many women can place themselves in Clare’s

situation and wonder "what if that had happened to me” scenario. Unfortunately it is very

easy to see how this kind of thing can happen, and "if it happened to me" – “how would I

deal with it? Would I have survived?”

***What was it like working with Cate?***

I have worked with Cate many times. We first met in 1998 after I had just graduated from

AFTRS and someone recommended I meet Cate for a short film she had just received

funding for, which was PENTUPHOUSE. From our first meeting I had such a wonderful

connection to her. She had such exciting ideas and incredible enthusiasm. We both have a

background in visual arts so that gave us an immediate point of connection. What I loved

was that Cate showed me visual references that up to that point, I had not explored as

inspiration in filmmaking, photographers such as Todd Hido and Nan Goldin. Cate has this

ability to push you into new ways of seeing things, she really knows how to bring you into

the world she wants to create for a film and inspire you.

Later that same year (1998) we worked on another short film FLOWER GIRL. Many of that

team went onto work on Cate’s first feature SOMERSAULT. This film was my first feature as

production designer and gave me my first AFI award. After SOMERSAULT we worked on

another project called THE SILENCE a two-part mini series for the ABC.

Between THE SILENCE and BERLIN SYNDROME we had about 10 year gap where we were

both been busy on other projects. Yet I still found working with Cate on this film so

effortless as we have this amazing short hand from past projects, and having had a break

just meant that we could both bring other experiences to the working relationship.

On BERLIN SYNDROME we would meet several times in pre-pre to talk about the kind of

film Cate wanted to make, we shared many reference images trying to work out the

character of Andi and Clare and how we wanted the film to look. We both collected

reference images individually and as we went into pre this image collection grew. Cate is

very interested in detailing things that will help identify the characters and help with the

story telling. Seeing her image collection helped understand the types of details that would

be important in the design of the film. As we got closer to making the film we spent a lot

of time trying to develop the character of Andi and understand how that character would

live and the thought processes involved in the environment he has created to imprison

Clare.

***What is it like working in Berlin? In what ways has the city inspired your design choices*?**

Berlin was a great city to work in. It is such a wonderful place with so much energy and

creativity. It would be hard not to be inspired by Berlin. Everything from the apartment I

stayed in to the locations we visited, people we met and worked with, all of this had an

impact on choices we made in terms of design.

One of my favourite things to do was visit one of the many flea markets that Berlin has - so

much of a young Berliner’s style is found at these markets. The area of Kreuzberg where I

was staying also had some interesting shops - I made friends with a wonderful guy who

had a unique collection of lights. His lifelong passion has been collecting designer vintage

light fittings from all over Europe… it was like visiting Aladdin’s cave of light fixtures. I

purchased several old DDR designed light fittings from his store and the flea markets to

help make our Berlin set in Australia feel authentic.

I think the first location recce to Berlin we did 6 months before initial pre was the most

inspiring part of my design process, during this period we visited several locations and

absorbed so much, photographing every detail - as you never no later on down the track

what information you gather may prove to be important. All those photos we took of

various old derelict apartments and other scripted locations help create the set we needed

to build or provided inspiration for colour palette or ideas for details in the film. I also used

this time to research elements of DDR architecture and interior design that was some of

the backstory of the film and one of the reasons the character Clare is drawn to Germany.

*How did you find working between locations and a studio set?*

It was extremely challenging shooting half the film in Melbourne whilst the film is set

entirely in a very distinctive European city. It was also challenging having to portray various

season changes to show time passing.

As a chunk of the film is set in Andi’s apartment we created a studio set for the interiors.

This proved difficult in many ways. First we needed to find an existing Berlin apartment

block that felt unoccupied and un-renovated and finding abandoned apartment blocks in

Berlin was not as easy as it may have been 20-30 years ago. Berlin is a hugely populated

city that is rapidly developing, and so abandoned properties were hard to come by.

The first step in designing an interior set build for Andi’s apartment was to find the exterior

we needed to match it too. Cate’s biggest fear was that the apartment studio set had to be

absolutely believable - not only for the audience but for the cast as well.

So prior to the actual pre production Cate, Polly and myself went on a location recce in

Berlin in order to find the apartment block and other key locations. We had a fantastic

location scout Marei Wenzel who found us 3 apartment blocks for us to look through, each

offered pro’s and con’s, but one thing that became evident was that building a set for the

interiors was essential - as the un-renovated ex DDR apartment blocks of the old eastern

parts of Berlin, looked great but would have proved very difficult to shoot in.

When it came to our actual pre, only one of the apartment blocks we had looked at was

actually available for shooting and what made it also tricky was that parts of it were still

occupied, so we had to create the illusion of the block feeling totally empty, by working

with the residents and boarding up windows etc.

Working in Berlin did present a few challenges - I had a wonderful local team, including

Art Director Silke Fischer who worked with Cate on the film LORE, and Set Designer

Stephen Speth who was involved in drafting the set so that we could get the build

underway in Melbourne whilst we were still shooting in Berlin.

Janie Parker my Australian Art Director came to Berlin for a short while to make sure we

had the set elements that needed matching for direct continuity - for our Melbourne set

build at Docklands Studio. This involved buying construction elements to be used in both

our Berlin apartment set and the Melbourne build, recreating scenic finishes, matching

door furniture, light switches, doors, windows, even the stairwell and parts of the facade.

Other issues involved special FX and VFX creating various seasons whilst shooting in the

studio and on location (shooting winter in Berlin during Summer/Autumn). This required a

combination of in-camera FX in Berlin and VFX for elements shots with green screen in our

studio apartment set.

***Did you have a favourite scene, set or location?***

My favourite set would have to be Andi’s apartment as it was the biggest design challenge

of the film. But my favourite location was Erich’s house (Andi’s father’s house). This was

one of the first locations we found on our initial recce before we started on official pre.

What I love about shooting on location is some of the people you meet, people who actually

inhabit the places that we film in, who let us come into there lives and takeover their

homes for a while. The owner of Erich’s house was a wonderful man and we spent several

days getting the house ready for filming, bringing in character details and changing

elements to suit our colour palette, using snow FX around the exterior of his house to

make it feel like Winter when we were actually shooting in the tail end of Summer,

plucking leaves off trees at the front of his house.

***What was your biggest challenge during pre-production or filming?***

The biggest challenge was working between two countries and two different time zones,

building a set in one country whilst shooting in another.

My Art Director Janie Parker would email me a bunch of questions during her day (my

night) and then we would try to Skype when we could get a time that would work for both of

us. Fortunately Janie and I have worked together on numerous projects so we have a short

hand and I could totally trust her to make decisions without me if required to keep things

moving.

Dealing with the different ways a crew works in another country is always a challenge,

especially when you don’t speak the language. Art departments are run slightly differently

in Germany, so it took a while to get use to the different ways of doing things. In Berlin they

use prop stores to source most of the set dressing elements whereas is Australia we tend

to buy most things from scratch. I had a wonderful crew in Berlin, a very small hard

working team but when my Berlin Art Director Silke Fischer ended up in hospital during

our first week of shoot that added even more pressure onto the art department team in

Berlin. So it was a very hectic time!

***What were the overarching visual concepts, themes or palettes that you explored in the film?***

Cate, Polly, Germain and I all got together early in pre and created our own visual mood

look books for the film. This helped us communicate ideas on everything from details in

the set, to colour palette and style and character.

My mood boards were very inspired from details from our earlier location recces and a

variety of other imagery including elements of old DDR design to everything that is apart of

Berlin-style now. We identified from these images what would help us understand Clare

and Andi and how the spaces around them would reflect these elements of their character.

One of the main design elements of the apartment set that we had to consider was that it

had to portray both Andi’s home and Clare’s prison. So we had to work out how this

apartment would look based on those two things and how it evolves due to the passage of

time and the changes in their relationship over the period of Clare’s imprisonment.

Germain, Cate and I spent a good deal of time working out colours, textures and lighting

for the set - making sure that the layout of the set worked for the drama and the shooting

style. This approach was in all our character sets, Erich’s house had a very muted colour

palette that leaned towards his DDR background, the characters Peter and Jana had a

really vibrant creative Berlin style apartment full of colour and life which we hoped would

portray a stark contrast to the half life Andi has given Clare.

**MARIA PATTISON – COSTUME DESIGNER**

Maria’s latest credit is as Costume Designer on acclaimed director Cate Shortland’s

feature BERLIN SYNDROME, shot in Berlin and Melbourne in 2015, starring Teresa Palmer

and Max Riemelt - currently in post-production.

In late 2015, Maria was nominated for an award for Best Costume Design at the 5th Annual

AACTA Awards for her work on PARTISAN (dir. Ariel Kleiman) starring Vincent Cassel that

was in competition at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival.

Costume Design credits include SATELLITE BOY (dir. Catriona McKenzie) and SUMMER

CODA (dir. Richard Gray). Maria also worked as Assistant Costume Designer with Cappi

Ireland on feature film BALIBO (dir. Robert Connelly) starring Anthony La Paglia and Oscar

Isaac – nominated for an AFI for Best Costume Design.

Other credits include Costume Buying for the Sundance World Cinema Jury Prize Winner

ANIMAL KINGDOM, Aaron Eckhart feature I, FRANKENSTEIN, critically acclaimed

television series THE SLAP, Glendyn Ivin’s GALLIPOLI – Winner of the 2015 APDG award for

Best Costume Design in a television drama and Garth Davis’ highly anticipated feature

LION starring Dev Patel, Nicole and Rooney Mara- to be released in 2016.

Maria has a Bachelor in Creative Arts and has recently completed graduate studies in

Anthropology at the University of Melbourne.

***What is it about this story that you were drawn to?***

When reading the script, the concept of the 'ideal' in Andi's perspective is both incredibly

twisted and yet intriguing - the interplay between this and the real life experience of

Clare's interaction with Andi makes us question our ideals. Also, I found myself drawing on

personal experiences of when I was 24 and backpacking through Berlin, and how I felt

during that time as a young woman, hungry for life experiences and totally at the mercy of

where this could lead you.

***In what ways did Berlin inspire your design choices?***

Berlin is an inspiring city to work with and within. This has a lot to do with it’s dense history

and the contemporary change surrounding this. It’s incredibly rich culture makes it a great

place to achieve a specific visual ambition. From my initial meeting with Cate and Melinda,

we established early on the importance that the history of Berlin plays in this film. The

East and West was a place that seemed to both grate against and inform the character of

Andi and his environment. Choices were made based on colours and photographs of the

'Wall' period, and I was informed by this in terms of colour and style, both generally and

specifically, for example in the costuming of Andi and Franka's school. A lot of the ideas for

the colour palette grew from here.

***How did you find translation between working on location in Berlin and on set in Melbourne?***

Working in a new city or a new country, with a new team, and different systems, without

your usual contacts is always a huge challenge. But then sometimes restrictions inspire

creativity and I definitely found that to be the case for Berlin Syndrome.

***Did you have a favourite scene or favourite costume?***

I think that Andi’s father Erich incorporated a lot of history and contributed to the character

development of Andi, so it was a joy finding elements in the costume for this character that

really helped us discover Erich. For example, Erich’s leather jacket in the lecture theatre -

it was a subtle element but says a lot.

***What was your biggest challenge during pre-production or filming?***

The biggest challenge was walking the line between pushing a visually stimulating look

and tone in with the mood/ story, and telling the story of the journey of time passing and

what is unseen whilst also keeping it real.