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ALMA AND OSKAR

by Dieter Berner



"True dreams and visions should be as visible to the artist as the phenomena of the objective world"

Oskar Kokoschka

Status: in development / financing

Genre: Biopic

Language: German

Production Country: Austria, Luxembourg, Germany

Budget: 7 Mio.

Director: Dieter Berner

Screenplay: Hilde Berger, Dieter Berner

Script Consultant: Oliver Schütte, Elisabeth Gabriel

Production Companies: Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion GmbH

Amour FOU Luxembourg Sàrl

Wüste Film GmbH

Theatrical Release in Germany: tba

Domestic Distributor: tba

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SYNOPSIS

ALMA AND OSKAR (working title) is a movie about the passionate and existential relationship between the Viennese society Grand Dame Alma Mahler and the artist enfant terrible Oskar Kokoschka which began in 1912.

Oskar Kokoschka (1886 – 1980) was an Austrian expressionist painter and writer. Influenced by the elegant work of Gustav Klimt, he soon developed his own distinctive expressionist style. Kokoschka is now ranked amongst the greatest modern artists of the Austrian school, and considered as one of the finest expressionist artists of the 20th century.

Currently in development, the project is set to be directed by Dieter Berner who also wrote the screenplay together with Hilde Berger. Dieter Berner's previous feature film EGON SCHIELE – DEATH AND THE MAIDEN about another main artist of the Expressionist movement, was also sold internationally by PTI to more than 30 territories with some upcoming releases still pending (2018 also marks the 100th anniversary of Schiele's death in 1918).

Conceived as an Austrian-Luxembourgish-German co-production, ALMA AND OSKAR will be produced by Alexander Glehr (Novotny & Novotny – Austria), Bady Minck, Alexander Dummreicher-Ivanescu (Amour Fou Luxembourg) and Stefan Schubert (Wüste Film West – Germany).

DIETER BERNER Writer & Director

Director Statement

"I can see how you truly are", says Oskar Kokoschka to Alma Mahler and thereby exposes the tragic essence of their failed, but passionate love affair. Two vigorous characters trying to incorporate each other into their own mindscape, whose subjective, distorted view from one another only fuels their dramatic tale of a love affair.

During the process of developing the screenplay, Hilde Berger and I consciously decided on an alternating narrative perspective. For a while we follow Oskar's inner and outer experience, only to shift our focus on Alma's view and emotions at selected points. As a consequence this leads to the repetition of certain scenes, due to the variation of each narrators perspective. The film's allure turns out to be its subjectivity, the generation of suspense that creates an urgent need in the audience member for the protagonists to abandon their tragic self-referentiality. Indeed, throughout the course of the film they try to rid themselves, but end up failing over and over again. The lovers stand in each other's way of progression, therefore their only salvation lies in going separate ways.

The separation of narrative perspectives will not only take place regarding content, but aesthetics, too, respecting coloration, camera movement, editing rhythm, even the details of environment and costumes. There will be three aesthetic lines, similar to musical pieces, alternating and enacting with each other.

One derived from Alma's subjectivity, one from Oskar's subjectivity and the third represents Oskar's surreal phantasies, scenes and images he comes up with for his plays and paintings.

We are telling a love story, resembling the one of Romeo and Juliet, only instead of their families resentment towards each other, the polarity of their inner lives will be their downfall.

Director Biography

Dieter Berner was born in 1944 in Vienna. He studied at the Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna and Berlin. Since 1969 he is a director for theatre and film in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, including the ALPENSAGA, a TV miniseries, for which he was awarded with numerous international awards (including Silver Nymph Monaco, the "British Academy Award"), THE LURE (Berlinale Panorama 1989) and THE IMPRISONMENT OF JOHANN NEPOMUK NESTROY (golden Romy Austria 2000). He played the male lead role in Michael Haneke's first feature film THE SEVENTH CONTINENT. Dieter Berner is a lecturer in directing, screenwriting and film acting at several international universities: dffb Berlin, Film Academy Vienna, Zurich University of the Arts, HFF Munich. From 2004 to 2009 he was Professor for film acting at the HFF Konrad Wolf in Potsdam-Babelsberg.