



## Last film in our German Season

Eden Court Cinema  
7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at  
7.15pm

Review by Dominic  
Thierry (InFifa), film  
notes compiled by  
Mark MacLennan  
(InFiFa).

## The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum

1975, Germany, Colour Drama, Running time: 106 mins. Rating: 15

Directed by Volker Schöndorff and Margarethe van Trott

Cast: Angela Winkler, Mario Adorf, Dieter Laser

This film came out at a time when cinema was taking its lead from the concerns of the time. The actual and psychological 'whiff of cordite' was in the air. The political upheavals of Paris 1968, the social changes in the culture of Europe and the U.S. were influences whose effect was evidenced in the lives of many. There were demonstrations against American hegemony, and in Germany itself the Bader-Meinhoff gang which became the Red Army Faction, seizing and killing leaders of industry.

The traditional centres were seen as being under threat, and certainly perceived themselves as such. This film can be seen as sharing with other movies of the time such as 'Network', 'Being There' and 'Videodrome' a concern with the manipulation of truth by the organs of the press on behalf of

those who sought to control society.

As you watch the film look for all the numerous hints and clues as to who the book and the film hold as responsible for the violent and fearful reaction to those that are deemed as threatening to the status quo which see themselves as being shaken on all sides.



Katharina Blum (played by the actress Angela Winkler) is the film's protagonist, introduced to us in the inverted mystery movie trope, not of a crime but a confession. So we know from the beginning 'whodunnit'; what we do not know is why? As the film unfolds we are to be told of the events leading to this point.

As the protagonist, Katharina is the very opposite of how she is portrayed, not by the film itself, but rather by those who seek to evidence her culpability not merely by association but by personal intent.

In the age of what we are referring to as 'post-truth' and some prefer to call lies, we should be able to see the connection our age has with the paranoid situation in the Federal Republic of Germany, recently addressed on our television screens by 'Deutschland 83' which also revealed



and reflected upon the caustic effects of mistrust and shifted blame on the lives of ordinary people caught up in events not of their making.

Katharina is a 'pawn in their game' as Dylan puts it, whose brief overnight romance with a petty thief becomes a political version of Bonnie and Clyde, in which she is portrayed as the hard-bitten moll, to the ruthless male who is not merely a criminal but that scourge of modern society, 'the terrorist'.



The film asks 'Where does this terroristic violence originate'? It suggests that it comes not from the terrorists themselves, but rather from society's failure to trust to those liberal dictates that it endorses, but tends to smother whenever it feels itself to be challenged? Are there resonances here for our own age of terrorism?

The media is held accountable here for how Katharina's situation is traduced.; whilst the press as outlined here portrays itself as the ultimate bastion of truth, we the audience see that it in fact it is Katharina who unflinchingly is the teller of truth.

Her liberal lawyer employer defends her as 'intelligent, cool, and level-headed'. This statement becomes 'ice-cold and calculating' in the press article the following day. By contrast her neighbour's husband is in his own words 'spared, maybe because I am an old Nazi'.



Those who recall the endorsed practices at the now defunct 'News of the World' and the links that this revealed between Rupert Murdoch and the government must see the connections that are depicted in this film. Who is the real victim? The film asks if it is actually the purported 'guilty party', and those liberal values that we claim to hold so dear.



Is Katharina placed in a position that could befall any of us, to be suddenly and without intent depicted as the 'scourge' such as one of the Birmingham 6 or some such others whom the press and affiliated powers-that-be hold to be threats to the established order because someone has to be; it is unimportant who that should be, just so long as they themselves are in actuality powerless.

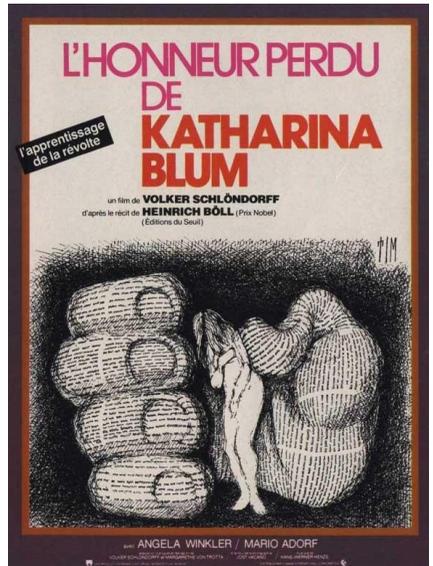


In terms of the actual story a point to perhaps be considered by the audience is whether the course of action that Katharina sets out upon is a credible consequence of the plot or a somewhat melodramatic rounding out of the plot.

What of the implications of sex, both in terms of gender and as an act? What does the film tell us about these? Is it vital that the protagonist is female to the development of the plot?



What of the central performance by Winkler? Have we rather lost the art of the 'unshowy' performance, when today arguably movies choose to arrive with the implication of significance writ large by the manner of depiction of the central character as somehow larger than the life portrayed.



A central theme certainly seems to be to reflect on whether the true terror of terrorism is how we ourselves react, and that seems to be a question that we should all keep to the forefront of our minds in these 'post-truth' times.

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Our next screening..... **Knife in the Water**  
The first film in our.....**First Time Director Season**



Eden Court Cinema

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February  
2017 at 7.15 pm

Roman Polanski's acclaimed debut feature film. On their way to a sailing trip, an aging husband and his beautiful wife invite along a young hitchhiker after nearly running him over. A intoxicating story of rivalry and sexual tension.



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[www.invernessfilmfans.org](http://www.invernessfilmfans.org)