



Fraulein

(Das Fraulein)

Directed by Andrea Staka



Germany and Switzerland/ 2006/ in Swiss-German,
German, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian with English
subtitles/ 81 min./ 35 mm/ 1:1.66/ Color/ Dolby Stereo

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SYNOPSIS

Ruža left Belgrade more than 25 years ago to seek a new life in Zurich. Now in her fifties, she has completely detached herself from the past. She owns a cafeteria and maintains an orderly, joyless existence. Mila, a waitress there, is a good-humored Croatian woman who also emigrated decades ago, but, unlike Ruža, she dreams of returning to a house on the Croatian coast. Both of them receive a jolt when Ana, a young, itinerant woman who has fled Sarajevo, breezes into the cafeteria looking for work. Ruža hires her but is annoyed by Ana's impulsive and spirited efforts to inject life into the cafeteria. Gradually the acrimony will dissipate, as Ana, who hides a tragic secret under her passionate spirit, begins to thaw Ruža's chill, and their relationship will change both women in ways they never anticipated.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

FRÄULEIN is a personal film that relates to my own two worlds. I grew up in Switzerland while my family is from Bosnia and Croatia. Switzerland is the place, in which I spent a beautiful, quiet, sometimes lonely childhood. The former Yugoslavia is the home country of my family. When the war broke out in the 90s, the lives of my relatives as well as mine changed. I was watching helplessly as they were directly affected by the war.

The film gazes intimately into the lives of three modern women, now living in Switzerland, from different regions of a country that no longer exists. While Ruža and Mila belong to the generation that left Yugoslavia in the 70s to improve their economic prospects in Western Europe, Ana is a globetrotter who at the same time flees the consequences of war. All three women carry an unspoken pain. Ruža represses her Serbian roots, Mila desperately holds onto her dream to return to Croatia, while Ana, the Bosnian, masks her illness with an excessive thirst for life

With **FRÄULEIN**, I wanted to explore displacement in our present time, as more and more people move between cultures, religions and countries, whether as refugees, travelers or simply rootless people. Yugoslavia and the war are not at the forefront of this film, however, its history and effects are central in the lives and sensitivity of these women. At the same time, I wanted to make a film about Switzerland, a country that fascinates me with its mixture of multiculturalism and alienation. Therefore the importance of Zurich: a European city, aggressive and cold, but also lost and beautiful.

I am interested in the personal and intimate, in the relationship between

these women. The protagonists meet, become closer for a short while, then separate again; their emotional scars and fears, but also dreams and desires, become visible. The political aspect in this film interests me like in my previous films, **Hotel Belgrade** and **Yugodivas**, as it appears refracted through the prism of the personal.

BIOGRAPHIES

Director:

Andrea Staka

Andrea Staka was born in Switzerland in 1973. Having engaged with photography when she was still at school, Andrea Staka got accepted at the prestigious London College of Printing in 1992. In London, her interest shifted from photography to film, and in 1993 she embarked on a M.A. in film at the School Of Visual Arts in Zurich, from where she graduated in 1998 with her successful short film **Hotel Belgrad**. **Hotel Belgrad** won Andrea Staka great recognition at international film festivals, and was awarded several prizes. It found its way into Swiss cinemas as an opening short.

Andrea Staka moved to New York in 1999, where she shot the short film **Daleko**. In 2000, in co-operation with Dschoint Ventschr Filmproduktion, she realized her first feature documentary, **Yugodivas**, which screened in numerous international film festivals, including Locarno, Munich, Leipzig and Belgrade. After its theatrical release in Switzerland, **Yugodivas** was nominated for the Swiss Film Awards as Best Documentary.

Since 2002, Andrea Staka has been working on the project **FRÄULEIN**, and teaching. In 2005, she received a NYSCA grant (New York State Council of the Arts) for a short film idea to be shot in fall 2006. **FRÄULEIN** is her first narrative feature film. Andrea Staka lives in New York and Zurich.

Cast:

Mirjana Karanovic (Ruža)

Mirjana Karanovic, in the starring role as Ruža, is a famous Serbian actress who has been in over 40 films and has worked with great Yugoslavian film directors such as Emir Kusturica, Goran Paskaljevic, and Lordan Zafranovic. She played tragic roles in the films, **Underground** and **When Father Was Away on Business** by Kusturica, who won the Cannes Palme d'Or for both films. She is a

star in her country with over 100 theater roles in the ensemble of the renowned theater, Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozoriste – Belgrad

At the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival, Mirjna Karanovic played the main role in Jasmila Zbanic's **Grbavica**, which won the Golden Bear for best picture.

Marija Škaričić (Ana)

Marija Škaričić plays Ana. She is among the talented rising actors in Croatia. Marija was born in 1977 in Split, graduated from the Acting Academy in Zagreb, and since then has been involved in numerous films and theatrical plays. On the one hand, Marija is engaged in great Croatian stage productions in Zagreb, Split and Rijeka, and on the other she can be seen in young, experimental films such as **It's Not a Shame**.

Her most recent achievement is the distinction of the Mike Leigh Prize for Best Actress at the Sarajevo Film Festival, for the role of the drug addict **Maja** in **A Wonderful Night in Split**, directed by Arsen Ortojić.

FESTIVALS/ AWARDS

WINNER – Golden Leopard for Best Film/ First Prize of the Junior Jury/
C.I.A.A.E. Award – Special Mention/ Don Quixote Prize and Youth Jury Prize –
Locarno Film Festival

WINNER – Jury Prize for Best Film/ Heart of Sarajevo – Best Actress – **Sarajevo
Film Festival**

WINNER – Fipresci Award – **Valladolid Int’l FF**

WINNER – Best Screenplay/ Best Film – **Swiss Film Prize** (Swiss Oscars)

Official Selection

Sundance Film Festival

Tribeca Film Festival

Rotterdam Int’l Film Festival

Pusan Int’l Film Festival

Guadalajara Int’l Film Festival

Buenos Aires Int’l Film Festival

Rome Int’l Film Festival

Moscow Int’l Film Festival

Istanbul Int’l Film Festival

Cleveland Int’l Film Festival

Miami Int’l Film Festival

Hong Kong Int’l Film Festival

CREDITS

CREW

Directed by:	Andrea Štaka
Script:	Andrea Štaka
Screenplay Collaboration:	Barbara Albert, Marie Kreutzer
Produced by:	Susann Rüdlinger / Samir Mirjam Quinte/ Davor Pušić
Camera:	Igor Martinović
Production Design:	Sue Erdt
Editor:	Gion-Reto Killias
Music:	Peter von Siebenthal/ Till Wyler/ Daniel Jakob
Casting:	Corinna Glaus
Costumes:	Bettina Marx
Make-up:	Simone Pfluger
Assistant Director:	Florian Engelhardt
Production Manager:	Sascha Schwill
Production Assistant:	Thao Duong
Assistant Camera:	Stefan Stefanini
Sound:	Max Vornehm
Sound Assistent:	Serge Timmons
Sound Design:	Jörg Elsner

CAST

Ruža:	Mirjana Karanović
Ana:	Marija Škaričić
Mila:	Ljubica Jović
Franz:	Andrea Zogg
Ante:	Zdenko Jelčić
Fredi:	Pablo Aguilar
Stefan:	David Imhoof
Young man:	Sebastian Krähenbühl
Violinist:	Oliver Zgorelec
Doctor:	Annette Wunsch
Doctor:	Kenneth Huber
Pharmacist:	Anikó Donáth
Old man:	Hans Suter
Car driver:	Stefan Suske
Sheila:	Vera Bommer
Momo:	Robin Rehmann
Artist:	Tiziana Jelmini
Vera:	Sanja Ristić