

Mongrel Media

Presents

CLOUD 9

A Film by Andreas Dresen



(98 min., Germany, 2008)

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High res stills may be downloaded from <http://www.mongrelmedia.com/press.html>

Synopsis

She didn't ask for it. It just happened. There were stealing glances, attraction. But this was never supposed to happen.

Inge is in her mid-60s. She has been married for 30 years and loves her husband. But Inge is drawn to this older man Karl, already 76. It's passion. It's sex. And she suddenly feels like a young girl again...

Andreas Dresen

Andreas Dresen is one of Germany's most admired young directors with diverse and award-winning features such as *Summer in Berlin*, *Grill Point* and *Night Shapes*. Andreas' last feature, *Summer in Berlin*, was awarded Best Screenplay at the San Sebastian Film Festival and Best Actress at the Chicago Festival. *Grill Point* won the Silver Bear – Grand Jury Prize at the Berlin Film Festival, as well as Best Director and Best Ensemble at the Chicago Festival and Best Director at the Ghent Festival. *Night Shapes* won Best Actor at the Berlin Film Festival and the Best New Director award at Valladolid. Andreas was born in **1963** in Gera, Germany.

In the early **80s**, he began working in theater and making short films. He studied directing at the HFF "Konrad Wolf" Potsdam-Babelsberg. Since **1992**, he has been working as a writer and director for film and TV. Andreas recently finished principal photography on his next feature *Whiskey with Vodka*.

A Selected Filmography

2008	.....	<i>Cloud 9</i> (Wolke 9)
2005	.....	<i>Summer in Berlin</i> (Sommer vorm Balkon)
2004	.....	<i>Willenbrock</i>
2002	.....	<i>Herr Wichmann von der CDU</i> (documentary)
2001	.....	<i>Grill Point</i> (Halbe Treppe)
2000	.....	<i>The Police Woman</i> (Die Polizistin) – TV
1998	.....	<i>Night Shapes</i> (Nachtgestalten)
1997	.....	<i>Changing Skins</i> (Raus aus der Haut) – TV
1994	.....	<i>Mein unbekannter Ehemann</i> – TV
1994	.....	<i>Kuckuckskinder</i> (documentary)
1992	.....	<i>Silent Country</i> (Stilles Land)



Comments from Andreas Dresen

As If They Were Young I wanted to tell this love story as if they were young people, because I was under the impression that this simply didn't exist in film. I had always wondered why the aged in film and TV are allowed at most a sentimental look on life or halfway romantic and mild-mannered stories of yet another half-hearted awakening to a specific feeling. This kind of sleazy and slimy kitsch where no one is actually really looking, but rather where everything is constantly blocked out or blurred, totally bored me. Normal old people, those who have wrinkled and aged with dignity but no longer conform to the image of beautiful and joyful youth simply are not seen or represented. They are not granted any great emotions, and no sexuality whatsoever.

This Kind of Awakening Women of this age are allowed this kind of awakening much less than men are and we wanted this woman to make a strong non-compromising decision. In addition, the woman leaves her husband for an even older man and decides for this love under a great amount of pain. The common clichés are turned upside down in this story. In the end, *Cloud 9* is a film not only about love and sexuality between old-aged people, but it is also a very normal story about love and pain and how difficult it is to withstand the terror of love. On the other hand, old age represents a very decisive difference. It is one thing to abandon someone or be abandoned by someone at the age of **40**. It is quite another if it's happening after **30** years of marriage at the age of **70**. This bears consequences that are far more drastic for all those involved, because they carry more experience and more life lived together. You don't have the self-confidence to start something new or even to find someone. You don't have so much time anymore.

Life Doesn't Stop Even before we gave the go to get started with the project, I told producer Peter Rommel let's see whether we can get any actors that would be willing to do this. I spoke to four actors and three finally did it. It was quite crazy: I met first with Horst Westphal who is **78**, which is quite older than in the film, and who has a **16**-year-old son. He told me many stories and it was just as I had thought – that it doesn't stop, that life doesn't stop, and when you experience all our actors in the film, you feel how extremely alive they are. We also did a lot of research: there is an incredibly tremendous amount of literature about this subject, and several first-hand reports by old people. Unlike in film, many images exist in literature – stories of people in their mid-seventies or even **80**-year-olds who have suddenly fallen in love again. When we discussed the subject with friends, suddenly many such stories came up.

Nudity and Sex I told them right from the start: there will be nudity; I don't want any bashful sex scenes. We then watched different films, such as "Intimacy" by Patrice Chéreau. This of course demands from everyone and especially from the actors a great amount of openness. I quickly discovered it to be very relaxed and normal. I had no doubt that we could tell the story in this way, even though at the time I had still no idea what the sex scenes would look like in detail. We were clear right from the start; let's deal with this in the first five minutes and have it behind so we can focus on the essential.

My Inhibitions I, of course, had my inhibitions about the sex scenes. I mean we were dealing here with another generation. That's why I told the actors to rehearse the scenes fully-clothed. However, already in the very first run, the actors took their clothes off, because they also just wanted to have it behind them. I also had to learn to strike a very objective, realistic and concrete tone. I hate sex scenes that are so general, somehow all puffed up. I always wanted to see exactly what is happening in the moment and, as a director, you have to say this very clearly. I myself as a viewer want to have the feeling that I know what is happening here and that I'm not looking at some generic form of sex. Then I just don't need to show it.

Non-Verbal Expression Interestingly enough, at different stages of a relationship words are not needed. If you've been married for 30 years, you can express almost everything non-verbally and when the love is very young, it also doesn't need many words. In the first half hour of the film, there's only one page of dialogue. Later, when the conflict breaks out, the words begin to appear but they unfortunately don't help to support or clarify the situation in any way; on the contrary they only create more havoc.

Hardly Any Frills The story is so simple; everyone knows it, a story that can be effortlessly summarized in two sentences. In this respect, you can give the viewers' imagination a tremendous amount of space to be involved using his/her own associations and experiences. I believe I've never told a story in such a minimalist way before. There are hardly any frills or anything superfluous, both dramaturgically and with regards to the aesthetics and the content.

The Choir Ursula Werner brought this in. A friend of hers sang in the choir and Ursula suggested that the main character be a part of it. I liked this idea because when you tell a story about old people, there is no work life. I usually include work life in all my stories. In this situation suddenly the question arose, "what do you do all day long?" We began to observe the choir rehearsals like in a documentary film and gradually I thought the choir can be a kind of measure in the film: the life of this woman changes but this one constant remains and all these women around her create a sort of generalization of the story. On the other hand, one can't conceal that the choir had a somewhat

commenting role, much like in a Greek or antic choir. Later in the postproduction, we assigned the choir songs according to Inge's story, so that they create a direct or ironic link to her various moods. We shot other scenes with the choir, for example a discussion round: I had asked Ursula Werner to confront the women with her situation in the film and to ask them for advice. What these enchanting women then said carried such pragmatism and such an unsentimental humorous sharpness, following the motto: if you're going to do it then go for a younger guy, with that old man, you'll just be a nurse.



Ursula Werner AS INGE

Cloud 9 is Ursula Werner's third collaboration with director Andreas Dresen. She also played in *Willenbrock* and *The Police Woman*. For the past 40 years, Ursula has frequently appeared in German television and cinema. Born in 1943, Ursula studied acting at the Schauspielschule Berlin-Schöneweide in the mid 1960s. Since 1979, she has been a permanent ensemble member at the Maxim-Gorki Theater in Berlin where she has played several leading roles. Recent acclaimed performances include productions of "Hamlet" (dir. Tilman Köhler), "The Beaver Coat" (dir. Hermann Schein), "The Threepenny Opera" (dir. Johanna Schall) and "The Seagull" (dir. Katharina Thalbach).

Horst Rehberg AS WERNER (THE HUSBAND)

Horst Rehberg has had an illustrious theater career, playing everything from Schiller to Shakespeare and Beckett to Brecht. He has had long-standing engagements with numerous prestigious theaters, such as Staatstheater Cottbus, Mecklenburg Staatstheater Schwerin and the Friedrich-Wolf Theater Neustrelitz. Born in 1937, Horst began his acting career as a youngster in the 1950s at theaters in Schwerin (Mecklenburg Staatstheater, Fritz-Reuter-Bühne). He then studied acting at Berlin's Staatliche Schauspielschule before starting his adult career.

Horst Westphal AS KARL (THE LOVER)

In addition to *Cloud 9*, Horst Westphal played in Andreas Dresen's feature *Silent Country* and his short *Zug in die Ferne*. An accomplished theater actor, Horst has had engagements in Berlin (Maxim-Gorki Theater, Volksbühne), Dresden, Weimar and Schwerin, among others. Recent key performances include "Uncle Vanja" (dir. Christophe Schroth), "The Merchant of Venice" (dir. D. Lewin), "Three Penny Opera" (dir. P. Dehler), "Waiting For Godot" (dir. Siegfried Höchst) and "Le Misanthrope" (dir. Henry Hübchen). Horst, born 1929, initially became a car mechanic before he attended a private drama school in his spare time to become an actor.

Cast & Crew

Inge..... Ursula Werner
Werner..... Horst Rehberg
Karl..... Horst Westphal
Petra..... Steffi Kühnert
Director..... Andreas Dresen
Producer..... Peter Rommel
Production Manager..... Peter Hartwig
Cinematography..... Michael Hammon bvk
Editor..... Jörg Hauschild
Production Designer..... Susanne Hopf
Costume Designer..... Sabine Greunig
Sound..... Peter Schmidt
Sound Mix..... Ralf Krause
Story Development..... Andreas Dresen
..... Cooky Ziesche
..... Laila Stieler
..... Jörg Hauschild
Commissioning Editors..... Rosemarie Wintgen
..... Dagmar Mielke
..... Andreas Schreitmüller
A production of..... Rommel Film
In co-production with..... Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg
In collaboration with arte
With support from..... Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg
..... Bundesbeauftragter für Kultur und Medien BKM
..... Deutscher Filmförderfonds
..... Filmkunstpreis des Festival des Deutschen Films