



Fatherland

A film by: Paweł Pawlikowski

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Production Companies: Our Films, Extreme Emotions, Nine Hours, Chapter 2

In collaboration with: Circle One, Apocalypse Pictures, IPR.VC, Entourage Pictures

A Polish Film Institute co-financed production:

Polski Instytut Sztuki Filmowej

Presented by: MUBI, Our Films

Service Production Company (Greek Unit): Nedafilm

Executive Producers: Efe Çakarel, Michael Weber, Viola Fügen, Andrea Scarso, Timo Argillander, Ognjen Dizdarevic, Ilaria Zazzaro, Luke Rivett, Matthieu Prada, Julien Delajoux, Matthias Nicodeme

Supervising Producer (German Unit): Andro Steinborn

Produced by: Mario Gianani, Lorenzo Mieli, Ewa Puszczynska, Jeanne Tremsal, Edward Berger, Dimitri Rassam, Lorenzo Gangarossa

Producer (Greek Unit): Amanda Livanou

Line Production: Haka Films

Line Producer: Tomasz Morawski

Line Producer (German Unit): Guenter Fenner

Line Producer (Italian Unit): Veronica Coppola

Unit Production Manager (German Unit):

Henrik Geisner

Production Manager: Marcin Kupiecki

Production Manager (Greek Unit):

Giorgos Papadimitriou

Production Accountants: Jolanta Matych,

Patrycja Ostrowska

Location Manager: Michal Korynek

Location Manager (German Unit): Anja Knobloch

Location 2nd Unit (German Unit): Niklas Zöllner

Location Managers (Italian Unit):

Elisabetta Tomasso, Annalisa Prandi

Location Manager (Greek Unit):

Dimitris Chalkiadakis

Location Scout: Dawid Kolosowski

Post-production Supervisor: Mateusz Kozak

1st Assistant Director: Wiktor Mentlewicz

2nd Assistant Director: Agnieszka Krawczynska

3rd Assistant Director: Justyna Pelc

Continuity: Sandra Richter, Anna Baranowska

Casting: Nina Haun, Magdalena Szwarcbart,

Karen Lindsay Stewart

Screenplay: Paweł Pawlikowski, Henk Handloegten

Textual Basis: 'Essays VI' [by]: Thomas Mann

Cinematography: Łukasz Żal

Director of Photography (Greek Unit):

Ioannis Karampatzos

Camera Operator: Stanisław Cuske

Drone Pilot (German Unit): Tobias Siebert

Digital Imaging Technician: Krzysztof Zawieja

Gaffer: Przemysław Sosnowski

Best Boy: Dariusz Wojas

Key Grip: Tomasz Sternicki

Stills Photographer: Agata Grzybowska

Visual Effects Supervisors – Set:

Massimo Cipollina, Valentina Casale

Special Effects Co-ordinator: Tomasz Bykowski

Editing: Paweł Pawlikowski, Piotr Wójcik

Assistant Editor: Sebastian Korwin-Kulesza

Production Design: Katarzyna Sobanska,

Marcel Stawinski

Art Directors: Stefania Strzałkowska-Rajca,

Maciej Strzałkowski-Rajca, Zuzanna Poznanska,

Ślawomir Szondelmajer

Seniors' Paid Matinee

Fatherland

After denouncing the Nazi regime, Nobel Prize-winning author Thomas Mann spends years living in Switzerland and the United States. In 1949, he embarks on a road trip from Allied West Germany to Soviet-occupied East Germany, accompanied by Erika, his devoted daughter, who feels anxious about her troubled brother. After his Oscar winning *Ida* and Cannes Best Director winner *Cold War*, Pawlikowski completes his visually sumptuous and thematically rich trilogy exploring identity and displacement across the fractured landscapes of postwar Europe. Hanns Zischler is riveting as the writer, while Sandra Hüller cements her status as one of contemporary cinema's most captivating screen presences, conveying depths of feeling in the slightest glance or gesture.

Kimberley Sheehan, Lead Programmer

Paweł Pawlikowski's latest black-and-white revisitation of the post-war landscape is a model of economy, almost casually demonstrating intelligence and cinematic beauty in half the runtime of other pedigreed auteur efforts. Set in 1949, its sharply acted story of Thomas Mann and his travel companion, daughter Erika Mann, moves as confidently and swiftly through West and East Germany as their medallioned Mercedes, portraying the compromises and hypocrisies baked into the new political and social frameworks that are ostensibly burying the fascist past.

This is not just a bleary-eyed journalist speaking: the concision expresses a moral seriousness and avoids obscuring certain truths through elaboration. The Manns' speeches-and-awards trip to democratic West Germany and Soviet-occupied East Germany neatly expresses the challenges that even the most edifying understandings of humanity underwent after the hellish massacre of World War II.

Pawlikowski, co-writing with Henk Handloegten, makes a tragedy of exile that's ultimately not about one ageing author or his family, but about all of us, living in a world we no longer recognise (then or, given our times, now).

Thomas Mann's first trip is to Frankfurt, Goethe's birthplace, to accept an award in a flurry of diplomatic ceremony, but Pawlikowski opens with an overture in dissolute gloom: Klaus Mann – *Mephisto* author, son to Thomas, and Erika's close confidant – in a hotel suite, kidding-not-kidding murmuring on a transatlantic phone line to Erika that they should all off themselves. His absence will loom over the trip to come, as Thomas's monumental rhetoric envisions a possible post-war order that, while captivating the literary senses, sounds a bit mustily rooted in 19th-century ideals. Erika's wrangling of logistics comes to represent an attention to the here and now, which sees her dealing with optimistic, forward-looking German hosts but also operators at parties and receptions like her ex-husband Gustaf Gründgens (Joachim Meyerhoff), an actor under the Nazi regime who maintains 'They came to me.'

As enervating as the proceedings can be, Erika's role as a translator and, essentially, tour manager originates in her evident love for her father. Though *Fatherland* does not push Erika's own accomplishments, she boasts an illustrious career in journalism and theatre – alluded to through a chummy Associated Press correspondent; and in fact Pawlikowski and Handloegten's account (though drawing on Mann's speeches) rests on an imaginative revision

On-set Art Director: Katarzyna Polak
Art Director (Italian Unit): Andrea Parodi
Set Decorators: Katarzyna Sobanska, Marcel Slawinski
Graphic Designers: Anita Korynek, Zosia Jaros
Calligraphy: Aleksandra Cwikowska
Storyboard: Kacper 'Kiali' Lipinski
Prop Masters: Tomasz Figura, Maciej Sikorski
Costumes: Aleksandra Staszko
2nd Costume Designer: Magdalena 'Ciotka' Adamczyk
Wardrobe (German Unit): Sonja Hesse
Hair and Make-up [Designer]: Waldemar Pokromski
Hair and Make-up Department Head: Monika Kaleta
Wig Artist: Julia Schelauke
Opening and End Credits: Piotr Król, Wojciech Kuszewski, Maria Fill
Music Selected by: Paweł Pawlikowski
Choreographer: Roman Osadchiy
Sound Design: Oliver Achatz
Sound Mixer: Tarn Willers
Sound: Lars Ginzl, Tarn Willers
Re-recording Mixer: Lars Ginzl
Supervising Sound Editor: Lars Ginzl
Stunt Co-ordinators: Tomasz Lewandowski, Jan Mazurkiewicz
'Special thanks to': Colm Tóibín
'The Greek unit would like to thank': Christos V. Konstantakopoulos
Cast:
 Sandra Hüller (*Erika Mann*)
 Hanns Zischler (*Thomas Mann*)
 August Diehl (*Klaus Mann*)
 Devid Striesow (*Johannes R. Becher*)
 Anna Madeley (*Betty Knox*)
 David Menkin (*Arthur Quint*)
 Joachim Meyerhoff (*Gustaf Gründgens*)
 Enno Trebs (*Wieland Wagner*)
 Theo Trebs (*Wolfgang Wagner*)
 Waldemar Kobus (*Frankfurt mayor*)
 Daniel Wagner (*Sergei Ivanovich Tiulpanov*)
 Fritzi Haberlandt (*waitress*)
 Milan Peschel (*Armin Schaufelberger*)
 Joanna Kulig (*jazz band singer*)
 Christophe Falconnet (*Jacques Ciment*)
 David Price (*Walter J. Smith*)
 Jana Lissovskaja (*Irina Konvalenko*)
 Bernd Moss (*Brinkbäumer*)
 Lisa Natalie Arnold (*receptionist in Frankfurt*)
 Andrzej Klak (*barkeeper*)
 Claudia Geisler-Bading (*Gustaf's female admirer*)
 Matthias Schlette (*Thomas's admirer*)
 Joerg Sierenberg (*singing man 1*)
 Joerg Giessler (*singing man 2*)
 Vitalii Sali (*Red Army sergeant*)
 Dindar Ablemet (*Kirghiz soldier*)
 Kriemhild Hamann (*receptionist in Weimar*)
 Denis Ivanov (*NKVD man 1*)
 Denis Saroka (*NKVD man 2*)
 Marcin Piejas (*curious hotel guest*)
 Patryk Kabala (*young man*)
 Tomasz Pala (*organist 1*)
 Jan Mazurkiewicz (*organist 2*)
 Eva Dauriac (*French receptionist, O.S.*)
 Agata Skjold (*operator, O.S.*)
 Charlotte Schwab (*Katia, O.S.*)
 Philip Lenkowsky (*man at hotel and church*)
 Giorgio Rayzacher (*Italian journalist*)
 Italy-Poland-Germany-France-UK-Finland 2026
 82 mins
 Digital

A MUBI release

that's audacious but so roundly imagined it goes unnoticed: Thomas Mann in fact took this equivalent trip with his wife, Katia, not Erika. (Likewise the film shoots Poland for the halls and hotels of post-war Germany.)

The effectiveness of the father-and-daughter generational double-act of course rests on the casting: Sandra Hüller (herself born in East Germany) brings her clipped brilliance to the role, always able to slide in lines and glances that allow us to breathe the air of these places right alongside her. Thanks to the cast she leads, this isn't one of those 21st-century prestige 'famous encounter' films that springboard from some on-paper tantalising meeting. As the (Thomas) Mann himself, Hanns Zischler keeps cards close with this self-contained, efficiently ceremonious author, but can also shove in the dagger should the situation call for it. And kudos, too, to August Diehl as the gaunt and haunting Klaus, and to smaller roles like Anna Madeley as a savvy AP journalist, and a singing cameo by Joanna Kulig, star of Pawlikowski's *Cold War* (2018).

The second half of the trip, through communist East Germany, achieves much of its critique simply by adjacency to the first: here is another post-war regime making its case, deploying soldiers singing in chorus (part of Pawlikowski's carefully chosen music) or an unctuous host claiming Goethe as a fellow traveller with Marxist materialism. The stolid elegance of the Metropol hotel in Frankfurt is replaced by intimidating checkpoints, deserted squares and cafés, and, like some hazy ruin in a Renaissance landscape painting, a cavernous structure harbouring a church organ. The Manns are, again, not fooled, but increasingly neither is Erika at all mollified by what her father has to offer.

Pawlikowski's regular cinematographer Lukasz Zal shoots the dawning of the next West and East with subtly textured monochrome that avoids the eye-searing clarity which afflicts some digital period filmmaking of late and embraces dim 1940s interiors, which also suggest the exile bubble of the Manns. (There's less, too, of the signature Pawlikowski-Zal negative space above people's heads, a trick that risked affectation.) That such a film, with so much weighing on its brisk mind, can end with both hope and integrity is one final testament to its accomplishment.

Nicolas Rapold, *Sight and Sound*, November 2026