

# Henningstadt

*This town is too small  
for this movie.*

## HENNINGSTADT

a true tale about growing up in a small town, about friendship, baroque music and the avoidable hardships of first love.

by Jan Krüger, based on the novel by Marcus Brühl.

### the STORY

**HENNING** is seventeen, a charming yet lazy teenager, growing up in Henningstadt, a very ordinary German small town. Together with his best friend **ISABELLE** they can keep the world at bay. Only when Isa decides to put things 'straight' and start a real relationship with him, is Henning forced to deal with his homoerotic daydreams...

#### HENNING

I've... been thinking about this... for some time...

#### ISA

How long?

#### HENNING

Don't know. A few weeks maybe. (a pause.)

Few months?...

So, Henning is gay. A fact that so far doesn't seem to change much regarding his complacent laziness. Until he meets **STEFFEN** in the one gay bar of town.

Suddenly Henning comes to life: he sets up several dates with the young doctor, thoroughly surprising him in the process.





**STEFFEN**

I work in the hospital. I have alternating shifts. And then I work at home. Paperwork...

**HENNING**

So you have a place of your own?

On his journey of discovery Henning leaves a trail of irritation: whether in the SIH (the 'Gay Initiative of Henningstadt'), at home with his loving but innocent parents, or at the surprise party for Isa's birthday.

**HENNING**

We just wanted to give you this present.

**ISA**

Who's 'we'?

The party disintegrates appropriately into french kissing, locked-up doors and a nasty fight in the pool - with not exactly showing one of Henning's best performances ever.

**HENNING**

I didn't start the fight.

**ISA**

No. You never start anything. And it's never your fault. Things just happen to you.



From here on most things seem to go downhill for Henning. Until eventually Steffen decides to not pay anymore attention to his seventeen-year-old stalker - and leaves town.

Now that's quite a setback for Henning, after a generally promising take off. And maybe for the first time in his life he decides not to back down. Instead he convinces Isa to take him to Berlin - not an easy thing regarding some of the above mentioned incidents. It takes more than a fight and a tear, until finally in the darkroom of a Berlin gay club the relationships between our young heroes are redefined.

**ISA**

Steffen!

**HENNING**

Isa!

**STEFFEN**

Henning!

**NAKED GUY**

Excuse me. Would you mind discussing this outside?..

Returning from the capital, Henning and Isa are being welcomed by an apparently clueless Henningstadt. But looking closer, it turns out that they are not the only ones who have grown up during this one summer...





## **other HENNINGSTÄDTERS**

### **MARCO (15)**

Marco is Isa's younger brother. Everything is flowers and bees to him. He sees things going on, but for some reason it doesn't seem to make any real sense...

### **LARS (18)**

Lars is just a friend. Well, a surprisingly handsome one. And even better - his first goal is to make others happy...

### **TETE (34)**

Tete secretly rules over Berlin. She does that with grace and a fabulous range of evening dresses...

### **ARNOLD (47) and ROSI (43)**

Arnold and Rosi love their only son. And Henning loves them, too. So what on earth is there to hide?

### **ROBERT (42) and HANNELORE (40)**

Isa and Marco's parents have style. Only they're so busy having it, their children have long ago decided to take life in their own hands.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I first read the novel **Henningstadt** by Marcus Brühl, the setting was only too familiar to me: I grew up in Hildesheim, a town of 100.000 in north Germany. And just like Hildesheim, **Henningstadt** reveals the essence of many a (German) small town. It is petty bourgeois and provincial - yet for whoever grows up here it's 'the' world. And in this world just about anything can happen...

**Henningstadt** is not a victim's story - all the main characters, whether straight or gay, adolescent or 'grown-up' are challenged, and have to reposition themselves anew. To me, this is a contemporary look at things - and a story I just love to tell...

Working on the script, it was important to me to preserve the lightness and the humor of the novel. Yet in directing it, I will follow my very personal approach. I will maintain the 'precise observation' that made my last films **Freunde/The Whiz Kids** and **Unterwegs/En Route** so distinct and internationally successful.

Henningstadt will be a playful, yet very honest film - a true story, set in the magic reality of cinema. It's the story of a young man who isn't a hero when we first meet him, and won't be at the end. But who, through his curiosity and charm, affects others around him and reveals new perspectives on very familiar terrain.

**Jan Krüger**





## WRITER / DIRECTOR

JAN KRÜGER



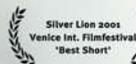
Born 1973, Jan Krüger studied electrical engineering and social science before he enrolled in film at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne in 1997. His honest and personal approach to storytelling and filmmaking was awarded with various prizes around the world, including the 'Silver Lion' at the Venice International Film Festival 2001 for Best Short, the Prix UIP Venice 2001, the Prix Canal+ Angers 2002, the Tiger Award 2004 of the International Film Festival Rotterdam and the 'Best First Feature Award' of San Francisco's 'Berlin&Beyond' 2005.

### Filmography (selection)

**On the Seduction of Angels**, music clip 16mm, 6 min, 1999

**Freunde / The Whiz Kids**, short film DV/35mm, 21 min, 2001

**Unterwegs / En Route**, feature film, DV/35mm, 81 min, 2004



Silver Lion 2001  
Venice Int. Film Festival  
'Best Short'



Prix UIP Venice 2001  
'Best Short'



Prix Canal+  
Angers 2002



TIGER AWARD 2004  
INT. FILMFESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM



SAN FRANCISCO 2005  
10TH BERLIN&BEYOND  
'BEST FIRST FEATURE'

## PRODUCER

MARTIN CICHY / KARSTEN AURICH

sabotage films

Since 2002, sabotage films GmbH has been producing German and European films for theatrical distribution and television in Berlin. The emphasis of their story development lies in art house films as well as in the build-up of German talents and their establishment on the market. Their last production 'Three Degrees Colder' (directed by Florian Hoffmeister) won the 'Silver Leopard' at the Locarno International Filmfestival 2005.

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