



75th Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Forum



Views of female employees
of large factories in a country
that no longer exists.

30 years later,
the women look back.

What was gained?
What has been lost?

PRIDE & ATTITUDE

A FILM BY GERD KROSKE

CHRISTEL BRADLER · SILKE BUTZLAFF · STEFFI GÄNKLER · BÄRBEL GRÄTZ · BRIGITTE JAHN · INGRID KRESSNER · ULLA NITZSCHE · CORNELIA PATZVALD · ISABELL RADECKE-AURIN · MONIKA SCHURMANN · AND NORBERT MEISSNER
 DIRECTOR/SCRIPT GERD KROSKE · DOP ANNE MISSELLWITZ · JAKOBINE MOTZ · EDITOR ANDREAS ZITZMANN · SOUND OLIVER PRASNIKAR · MUSIC KLAUS JANEK · COMPOSITION/CONTRABASS · MICHAEL THIEKE · CLABINET · SOUND DESIGNER/DIALOGUE EDITOR PIERRE KIRCHHOFF · SOUND POSTPRODUCTION K13 STUDIOS BERLIN
 RE-RECORDING MIXER MICHAEL KACZMAREK · COLORIST PHILIPP ORCASSA · RESEARCH ACHIM BEIER · POSTPRODUCTION BASIS BERLIN POSTPRODUCTION · HEAD OF PRODUCTION FRIEDA OBERLIN · POST PRODUCTION PRODUCER ANDREA KURSCHNER · ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER LISA M. BÖTTCHER · PAULINA M. OCHMANN
 FILM MANAGEMENT KARIN FIEDLER · PRODUCTION JENS SCHERER · ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LISA M. BÖTTCHER · PRODUCER GERD KROSKE · A REALISTFILM PRODUCTION · SUPPORTED BY DIE BEAUFTRAGTE DER BUNDESREGIERUNG FÜR KULTUR UND MEDIEN · MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-BRANDENBURG
 DISTRIBUTOR SALZGEBER · SALZGEBER.DE/STOLZUNDEIGENSINN





PRIDE & ATTITUDE

SYNOPSIS

Germany immediately after reunification. The second great wave of redundancies has reached the East. Women from the former large industrial companies of the GDR talk about themselves and the personal independence they have gained through their work with surprising naturalness. Self-confident and emancipated, they share their astonishment that suddenly only men are supposed to do their jobs. They also talk about the utopias of the past that no longer exist today. We also see footage of their everyday working lives in industrial buildings and brown coal mines that have long since disappeared. The interviews have been preserved on old Umatic tapes from the stocks of the former Leipzig pirate radio station KANAL X.

Over 30 years later, Gerd Kroske ("SPK Komplex", "Striche ziehen") has recovered this cinematic treasure from the archive and rediscovered the workers from back then. Like an experimental set-up, the old material is commented on and scrutinized anew by the women in the split screen. "Stolz und Eigensinn" is a media encirclement that closes a gap and portrays women who have retained their pride and stubbornness to this day. What was once gained? What has been lost? What has happened?

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PRIDE & ATTITUDE

a film by Gerd Kroske
 Germany 2025, 113 minutes, Scope 2,39:1, German OV,
 English subtitles

Crew

Writer & Director	Gerd Kroske
DoP	Anne Misselwitz, Jakobine Motz
Cutter	Andreas Zitzmann
Sound	Oliver Prasnikar
Assistant Director	Lisa M. Böttcher
Music	Klaus Janek (Komposition/Kontrabass) Michael Thieke (Klarinette)
Senior Editor	Karin Schöning
Archive	Achim Beier
Assistant production manager	Lisa M. Böttcher Paulina M. Ochmann
Film management	Karin Fiedler
Production	Jens Scherer
Edit Suite Support	Bernhard Kübel
Visual Effects	Olaf Voigtländer
Sound Postproduction	K 13 Studios Berlin GmbH
Re-recording Mixer	Michael Kaczmarek
Sound Designer & Dialogue Editor	Pierre Kirchhoff
In-house Producer	Wie Chung Chen
Postproduction	Berlin Postproduktion
Head of Production	Frieda Oberlin
Post Production Producer	Andrea Kürschner
DI Engineer	Mario Berger
Colorist	Philipp Orgassa
Producer	Gerd Kroske, realistfilm

with

Silke Butzlaff	Equipment operator, Welzow-Süd
Steffi Gänkler	Shoe technician, Weißenfels
Ingrid Kreßner	Equipment and plant operator, Borna
Bärbel Grätz	Mining machine operator, Welzow-Süd
Ulla Nitzsche	Chemist, Leuna
Brigitte Jahn	Industrial master craftswoman, Großzössen
Christel Bradler	Chemist, Leuna
Cornelia Patzwald	Polymir-equipment operator, Leuna
Monika Schurmann	Mining train operator, Spreetal
Isabell Radecke-Aurin	Head of museum collection, Schuhmuseum Weißenfels
Markus Liers	Mining train operator, Schwarze Pumpe
Norbert Meissner	Video artist, Leipzig

a realistfilm production, supported by Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and German Films



INTERVIEW WITH GERD KROSKE

For your film, you are using old U-matic tapes from the stocks of the former Leipzig pirate radio station KANAL X, which interviewed female industrial workers in the former large companies of the GDR immediately after reunification. How did you become aware of the material?

It was a real chance find. In autumn 2023, I was doing research for another project in the archive of Bürgerbewegung e.V. Leipzig when an archivist approached me and told me that he was currently digitizing a huge collection of broadcast tapes from the pirate radio station KANAL X, which was active during the reunification. It turned out that my film "Kehraus" from the spring of 1990 was also broadcast there. The archivist didn't know how to deal with the legal situation and wanted to delete my film from the unique copies. But I was so enthusiastic about this pirate action that I explained the rights situation to him and suggested that he should simply make a note of it. He was probably very relieved at my reaction. Shortly afterwards, he presented me with material from 1994: Raw footage of interviews with female industrial workers. These had been conducted for a film entitled "We used to be good enough" by Norbert Meissner in 1994. The aplomb with which the women from industry articulated themselves in anticipation of the second major wave of redundancies that swept through the country in the East at the

time was impressive.

I was very impressed by the aplomb with which the women from industry expressed themselves in anticipation of the second major wave of redundancies that swept through the East at the time, impressed me greatly. This gave rise to the idea of finding these women again in order to talk to them about the untold gap.

What did you think when you saw the material for the first time? What questions particularly appealed to you?

On the one hand, I was attracted by the ephemeral, rough analog material that was already beginning to disintegrate. You can see line jumps, image noise etc. in it, quite different from today's highly pixelated formats. Age is inscribed in the material, so to speak. What appealed to me about the questions was the gap to be told, because 30 years have passed between the shots from 1994 and today. A lot has happened, several hundred thousand industrial jobs for women have disappeared. I was interested: What had these women once gained for themselves while they were still working? And what had been lost for them?

What condition was the material in? Did you have to do any complex technical reworking?



We first had to process the material so that we could show it to the women during filming. That meant to have shorter takes of it. Most of the material was asynchronous due to different takes, but that's easy to fix. And right from the start, we had the idea of showing the old and the new footage in split screen. That's why we didn't do any technical post-processing. We wanted the differences in the material to remain visible. Incidentally, the initial idea was to make an installation out of it. But this is still in the making.

You then went in search of the women you interviewed. Did you find everyone you wanted to find? And were they all willing to be interviewed again?

It wasn't that easy, as there were only rudimentary notes on the old recordings. But if you know a former home address, you can ask at the residents' registration offices. Sometimes we were lucky there too. But the old rule (with exceptions) was that people over a certain age could be found within a radius of 50 km. There were three very harsh rejections, which had less to do with our inquiries than with the disappointments we had experienced in our lives. We did think that this could happen – and of course we respected that completely. Some women remained untraceable, mostly because their former workplaces no longer existed. The

willingness of the women we found to expose themselves to filming again had to be worked for, of course, i.e. trust had to be established.

Were you particularly surprised by any of the women's reactions to the old material?

I was surprised by how precise the memories were. It often only took a nudge and everything was back. Of course, the use of the old material helped. Sometimes the women commented on themselves while watching the footage from the past. I was very happy about these moments. I couldn't be sure that my film idea would actually work. But fortunately it did.

In your eyes, beyond the individual biographies, are there basic experiences that each of these women had?

The first common basic experience was that of a self-determined, financially independent life, which was characterized by very intensive shift work. The fact that the women then had serious experiences of devaluation as a result of this position has left its mark on everyone. I'm very impressed that they are still able to deal with it with confidence today. At the time of reunification, there was a sociological survey on the status of women in the



GDR entitled "Frauen report 1990"; the publication was scrapped after reunification. There is still a copy in the library of the Stiftung Aufarbeitung (Sign. 2002/2766). If you read through it, you can get an idea of how great the losses actually were and are.

"Pride and Attitude" – the title is half inspired by Jane Austen's romance novel 'Pride and Prejudice', half by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's three-volume cultural history of labor, 'History and Stubbornness'. Why this unusual title marriage?

"History and Stubbornness" is an unjustly forgotten book. It reads very differently today than it did 35 years ago, when I bought it with my first West German money. The title for the movie actually came directly from the material we shot and found. The fact that the right references fit in is all the better.

As with many of your other films, in "Stolz & Eigensinn" you also close a gap in the media: here the depiction of the devaluation experiences of women who began their working biographies in the GDR. Why are there still so many blind spots in German film when it comes to questioning the past and the state of affairs in the environment and afterlife of the GDR?

In my opinion, these blind spots arise in particular from the fact

that those who decide on the weal and woe of such material are usually not people who have been socialized in the East. I then didn't even feel like asking television editors for their involvement. A movie like this simply doesn't fit into their simple format. And of course it becomes difficult when you leave the realm of common clichés about the East. I deliberately avoid the usual mimicry of the tough East German girls, and I wouldn't dream of adding an East German hit parade to the soundtrack. So of course I disappoint expectations – quite deliberately. I'm interested in the processes, procedures, moods and faces of people. The places where they live and which are characterized by upheaval. And how people break free from historical upheavals. Yes, in this respect I am closing a gap in the media.

BIOGRAPHIES

Gerd Kroske (Writer & Director) was born in Dessau/GDR. Apprenticeship as a concrete worker. Telegram messenger. Youth culture work. Studied cultural studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin and directing at the HFF "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam-Babelsberg. Worked as an author and dramaturge at the DEFA documentary film studio (1987–1991). Collaboration with the directors Jürgen Böttcher, Helke Misselwitz and Volker Koepp, Petra Tschörtner (†) und Thomas Heise (†). Freelance author and director since 1991. Various jury and teaching activities for film. Producer at realistfilm since 1996. The Austrian Film Museum (2020) and the DHM (2024) have dedicated retrospectives to him.

FILMOGRAPHY

1989 „Cassiber“
 1989 „Leipzig im Herbst“ / "Leipzig In The Fall"
 1990 „La Villette“
 1990 „Kehraus“ / "Sweeping"
 1991 „Kluge Frauen, helle Mädchen“
 1991 „Kurt oder Du sollst nicht lachen“ / "Kurt–You Shall Laugh"
 1993 „Kurzschluss“ / "Short Circuit"
 1993/94 „Vokzal – Bahnhof Brest“ / "Terminus Brest"
 1996/97 „Galera“
 1996/97 „Kehrein, Kehraus“ / "Sweep It Up, Swig It Down"
 1999/2000 „Der Boxprinz“ / "The Boxing Prince"
 2003/04 „Autobahn Ost“ / "Highway East"
 2006 „Die Stundeneiche“ / "The Hour Oak"
 2006 „Kehraus, wieder“ / "Sweep It Up Again"
 2005/07 „Wollis Paradies“ / "Wollin Paradise"
 2009 „Schranken“ / "Bounds"
 2010/12 „Heino Jaeger – look before you kuck“
 2014 „Striche ziehen“ / "Drawing A Line"
 2015 „Grenzpunkt Beton“ / "Concrete End Point"
 2018 „SPK Komplex“ / "SPK Complex"
 2025 „Stolz & Eigensinn“ / "Pride & Attitude"



Foto: Pascal Schmitt



Steffi Gänkler (Shoe technician, Weißenfels) trained as a chemical technician in Leuna and then moved to the "Banner of Peace" shoe factory in Weißenfels. She worked there until 1994. She later switched to a to a service job as a caterer in the Ikea restaurant. Lives in Weißenfels today.



Silke Butzlaff (equipment operator, Welzow-Süd) completed an apprenticeship in opencast mining and later trained as an equipment operator. She has worked in mining for 40 years and operates the oldest bucket excavator in Lusafia. She is committed to

the region, reports on work in opencast mining in the media, takes photographs and seeks dialog in the coal phase-out discourse and politics. Lives in Schwarze Pumpe, Spremberg, her birthplace.



Bärbel Grätz (bridge operator, Welzow-Süd) began her training as a machine operator for large opencast mining equipment at the age of 15, at the end of the 1950s. She worked in track construction and at the signal box and was the only bridge operator in the open-

cast mine for over 28 years Welzow-Süd – a job that no one else did longer than she did. Early retirement at the age of 55. She now lives in the Black Forest near the French border.



Cornelia Patzwald (Polymir plant operator, Leuna)

worked as a chemical plant operator in Leuna. She was involved in the initial construction of a German-Soviet Polymir plant in Leuna and worked there until she fell ill in 1996. She now lives in Halle-Neustadt.



Brigitte Jahn (Industrial master crafts-woman, Großzössen) was the only female industrial craftswoman in the metal sector in 1994. She worked at the Großzössen briquette factory (MIBRAG). She later worked for the container company MBS in open-cast mining

at Zwenkau, Großzössen and Kandsdorf and set up the pump control system until 1996, the year she retired in her late 50s. She still lives in the district of Leipzig today.

Ingrid Kreßner (equipment and plant operator, Borna)

completed vocational training with the Deutsche Reichsbahn, then moved to the Großzössen briquette factory and trained as a plant operator, before retiring in 1994.



Monika Schurmann (Mining train operator, Spreetal)

did a vocational training as an electrician and worked as a mining train operator in Welzow-Süd, Zwenkau and the surrounding the opencast mines. In the signal box she worked many years on shift and alongside her husband, with whom she has five children. After her dismissal, she was re-employed by Laubag as an overhead line fitter. She retired early at the end of the 1990s. She still lives in Spreetal today.



Ulla Nitzsche (Chemist, Leuna)

completed a training as a graduate chemist and specs-analyst. Until her dismissal in 1994 she worked at Leuna and then another four years at the chemical disposal. Later she worked as an ABM employee at the Merseburg University Library until her early retirement. Now lives in Leuna.



Norbert Meissner (Video artist, Leipzig)

came from Cologne to Leipzig in the course of the joint FRG-GDR exhibition "Zwischenspiel" at the time of reunification. There, together with like-minded people, he set up the pirate TV station KANAL X, which pursued the concept of free citizens' television. In February 1991, the pirate station was forced to shut down by the Federal Post Office. In 1994, he filmed with East German industrial workers and spoke to them about their working situation. This material was the impetus and source of material for the film "Stolz & Eigensinn" (Pride & Attitude).



Christel Bradler (Chemist, Leuna)

trained as a graduate chemist in Merseburg. In Leuna she was involved in construction of the methanol plant in Leuna. In the 1990s, she was a works council at the Leuna plant, then moved to the Treuhand and rented out Leuna real estate. She then worked as a city councillor and in a municipal housing cooperative. She has lived in Lower Saxony near Bremen for a few years now.

