

A woman with reddish-brown hair, wearing blue scrubs and a name tag, is looking upwards with a contemplative expression. She is standing in a hallway with teal walls and a grid ceiling. The lighting is soft and focused on her face.

LATE SHIFT

A FILM BY **PETRA VOLPE**



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92 minutes | Drama | Switzerland, Germany | Swedish | 2025

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LOGLINE

Dedicated nurse Floria (Leonie Benesch) navigates the relentless pace of her hospital's understaffed surgical ward with humanity and warmth. As her overnight shift intensifies, she is pushed to the brink in a race against time.

SUMMARY

With a warm smile and positive attitude, Floria (Leonie Benesch, *The Teachers' Lounge*) arrives at the surgical ward of the Swiss hospital where she works as a nurse on the overnight shift. With one colleague out sick and no replacement on deck, just two nurses and a nervous trainee will have to cover more than two dozen patients. The doctors to whom the nurses are supposed to defer are nowhere to be found. Floria juggles endless tasks: administering medication, updating charts, soothing patients, answering phones, and managing complaints. Surrounded by fluorescent lights, the steady beeping of monitors, and echoing footsteps, Floria struggles to fight off exhaustion and maintain her professional demeanor. Every second counts, and every interruption could mean the difference between life and death.

Director Petra Volpe (*The Divine Order*) skillfully uses real-time tension to examine the emotional cost of frontline care work and the quiet, unglamorous triumph of keeping people alive in a pitiless system. *Late Shift* is a portrait of everyday courage, both an homage to nurses and a rousing call to address the global staffing shortage in the industry.





Like a star
in the night sky
you shine so bright



DANKU
Floria



BACKGROUND

According to a study by auditors PwC, there will be a shortage of around 40,000 nurses in Switzerland by 2040. No other profession has so many unfilled positions. As a result, fewer and fewer nurses have to care for more and more patients.

Many people in Switzerland are dependent on the healthcare system as patients: Over 1 million people are treated as inpatients every year, in addition to over 4.7 million outpatients. There are 278 hospitals across Switzerland, and the country is known beyond its borders for its well-functioning healthcare system, which could be jeopardized by the looming threat of a shortage of specialists.

The approximately 465,000 people who work as nursing or hospital staff, or who care for people in need of care in retirement and nursing homes or in extended care, are confronted with the nursing crisis on a daily basis.

Over the next few decades, the population of elderly and very elderly people in Switzerland and many countries in the West will grow considerably. A key factor influencing the development of the need for care among older people is also the increase in life expectancy. If the level of training remains at the current level, despite the aging Swiss population, the demand for care professionals will no longer be met by 2029. To counteract this trend, around a third more nurses would have to be trained.

74% of full-time equivalent employees in Swiss hospitals are women. While the gender ratio is almost balanced among doctors, significantly more women are employed in nursing. In retirement and nursing homes, eight out of ten full-time positions are held by women.

In recent years, the topic of care has repeatedly come to the fore at a political level and is increasingly part of the public debate.

As the majority of people working in the care sector are women, the discussion also has a feminist dimension. The recognition and fair payment of care work is a central demand on the day of action and strike for equality. In addition to the hours worked in care professions – often under stressful conditions and for low wages – there are 8234.9 million unpaid hours of care work, most of which are performed by women at home.

But it is not only Switzerland that suffers from a shortage of nurses – it's increasingly a global crisis. The WHO estimates that there will already be a shortage of around 13 million nurses worldwide by 2030. And international nurse recruitment has furthermore led to a form of “neo-colonialism” by recruiting experienced nurses from poorer nations. Wealthier countries are effectively outsourcing the costs of training, getting their registered nurses on the cheap, without fair reimbursement.

This has led to dire consequences in many countries where serious gaps are being seen in health care systems that are under pressure.





ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

BEGINNINGS OF THE PROJECT

Writer and director Petra Volpe has been exploring the topic of nursing staff for some time now. It is a topic of increasing social relevance that has gained significant awareness, particularly during the height of the pandemic. As a storyteller, it was Volpe's personal desire to bring this subject to the big screen, not only to create emotionally stimulating entertainment, as in her previous works (*The Divine Order*, *Labyrinth of Peace*), but also to contribute to the discussion surrounding the challenges faced by care professionals and their importance.

The project was developed with producer Reto Schaerli from Zodiac Pictures from the start. Petra Volpe has worked with him and producer Lukas Hobi for many years. As part of her research and initial discussions with interest groups, Volpe came across the non-fiction book "Our Profession Is Not the Problem – It's the Circumstances", which was to become the central source of inspiration for the development of *Late Shift*. Book author Madeline Calvelage was brought in to advise on the script.

In order to gain on-the-ground insight into nursing care for the writing process, Volpe accompanied the nursing staff in various Swiss hospitals for several days. The exchange with different professionals was intended to ensure that the script would accurately depict the medical aspects and care processes. For even greater authenticity, nursing specialist Nadja Habicht was hired as a consultant. In her role, she advised the production in the development of the script, during filming through to the completion of the film and was a constant support throughout the entire production process.

CAST AND TEAM

In the pursuit of authenticity, the credibility of the lead role was also a key point. In *Late Shift*, we look over Floria's shoulder as she goes about her everyday care work and the film is consistently told from her perspective, which is why every move in the role had to be right. It was very important to actress Leonie Benesch to be able to prepare herself properly for the role. For this reason, she completed an internship at Liestal Cantonal Hospital in preparation for filming, where she was able to accompany the nurses at work in the abdominal surgery department and rehearse the various physical movements.

Another major challenge was to achieve a convincing cinematic realisation of the script in the setting of a hospital. The long-planned sequences, in which we accompany the main character through the various rooms and corridors, required extremely precise preparatory work. Cinematographer Judith Kaufmann (*Corsage*, *The Teachers' Lounge*) was ideally suited to this task. She is one of the most renowned DOPs in Europe, and *Late Shift* marks her third feature collaboration with Petra Volpe after *Dreamland* and *The Divine Order*. Editor Hansjörg Weissbrich (*She Said*, *3 Days in Quiberon*, *September 5*) complemented the experienced and successful creative team. For the music, there was an exciting new collaboration with composer Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch. Petra Volpe had long been enthusiastic about Levienaise-Farrouch's work (*All of Us Strangers*) and finally the opportunity arose to work on a joint project.

Q&A WITH WRITER-DIRECTOR PETRA VOLPE

You describe *Late Shift* as a declaration of love to nursing staff. What was the trigger for this project, and what was particularly important to you during the research and filming?

The topic of care has occupied me for many years. I lived with a nurse for a long time and witnessed every day what she experienced at work – the good and the bad – which, above all, had to do with the conditions, which became increasingly challenging. In my opinion, this profession should be one of the most highly regarded and respected in our society. Carers look after us when we are sick and old, when we are at our most vulnerable. They carry an enormous responsibility every day. That's why I wanted to make a movie that celebrates this profession.

Why was the German actress Leonie Benesch the right person for the role of Floria?

I was searching for an actress who embodies a natural presence and could learn to effortlessly perform care work as if she had been mastering her skills for over a decade. Because I live in the USA, the casting with Leonie took place via Zoom. The moment she stepped into the frame and delivered her first line as Floria, I knew she was the one. It was a truly magical moment – she embodied the character I had envisioned for so long to life, making it instantly complete and perfect.

The future of nursing staff is bleak: there will be a shortage of 40,000 nurses in Switzerland by 2040. Your film impressively shows what the abstract term “staff shortage” means in concrete terms for nurses and patients. How do you hope audiences will react to *Late Shift*?

I hope that the movie is entertaining on the one hand, because you are taken on an exciting rollercoaster ride. On the other hand, it also shows what it means to work in this profession. For many people, a nurse is there at the beginning of their life, but also at the end. They are often the first and last people who touch us. We usually meet them when our own life, or the life of a loved one, is in a crisis situation. I would like to remind viewers how grateful we can all be that a professional, empathetic person is by our side at this moment. We should be aware that their fight for better working conditions should be our fight as well – we are all potential patients.

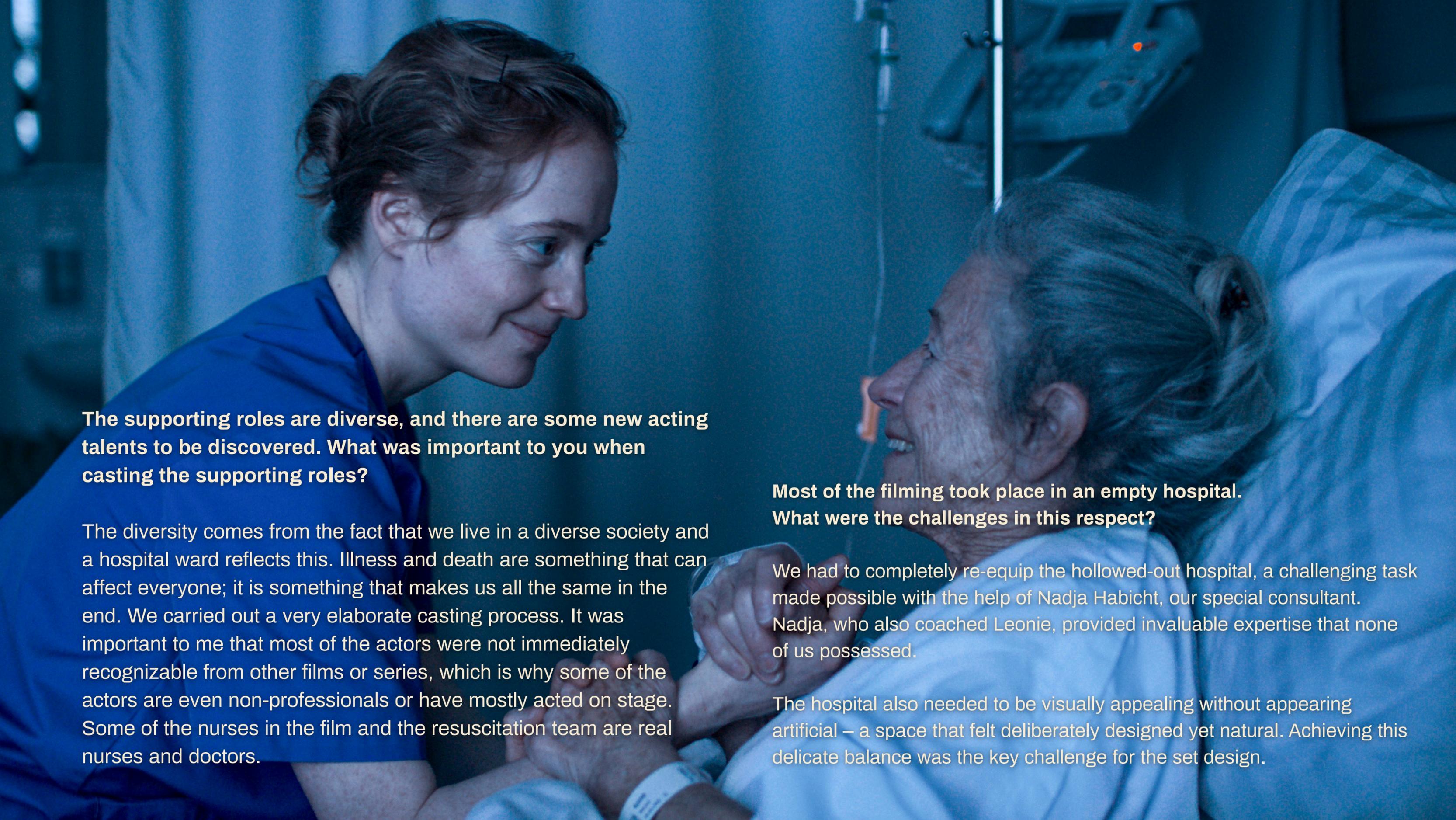
***Late Shift* lets the audience experience Floria's everyday life directly and breathlessly, and Floria's race against time really puts the audience in physical turmoil. How did the idea for this type of production come about?**

I have been searching for an approach to this topic for a long time. During my research, I came across the book "Our Profession Is Not the Problem – It's the Circumstances" by German nurse Madeline Calvelage. In it, she vividly describes an ordinary late shift, and the book captivated me completely. Within just five minutes, my heart was racing. It read as thrilling as a suspense novel, even though it portrays the routine of everyday nursing care.

This inspired me to create a movie that tells the story of a single shift from a nurse's perspective, designed to engage the audience on a visceral, physical level. Developing the characters and crafting a structure that builds toward the most compelling dramatic escalation was a long and thoughtful process.

We deliberately chose to maintain this consistent, immersive perspective throughout the film. A great deal of care went into figuring out how to tell the story in a way that makes the viewer feel as though they are the nurse, experiencing the intensity firsthand.





The supporting roles are diverse, and there are some new acting talents to be discovered. What was important to you when casting the supporting roles?

The diversity comes from the fact that we live in a diverse society and a hospital ward reflects this. Illness and death are something that can affect everyone; it is something that makes us all the same in the end. We carried out a very elaborate casting process. It was important to me that most of the actors were not immediately recognizable from other films or series, which is why some of the actors are even non-professionals or have mostly acted on stage. Some of the nurses in the film and the resuscitation team are real nurses and doctors.

Most of the filming took place in an empty hospital. What were the challenges in this respect?

We had to completely re-equip the hollowed-out hospital, a challenging task made possible with the help of Nadja Habicht, our special consultant. Nadja, who also coached Leonie, provided invaluable expertise that none of us possessed.

The hospital also needed to be visually appealing without appearing artificial – a space that felt deliberately designed yet natural. Achieving this delicate balance was the key challenge for the set design.

CAST

LEONIE BENESCH (FLORIA)

Leonie Benesch, born in Hamburg, is one of the most sought-after actresses in Germany. She studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Her breakthrough came in 2009 in one of the lead roles in Michael Haneke's feature film *The White Ribbon*, which was awarded the Palme d'Or in Cannes and for which she received great international acclaim. Since then, Benesch has proven her versatile talent in productions such as the hit series *Babylon Berlin*, the Netflix series *The Crown* and the ZDF production *Der Schwarm*. Benesch was repeatedly awarded the German Film Prize and nominate for the European Film Prize in 2023 for her leading role in *The Teachers' Lounge*. A year later, the film even received an Oscar nomination for Best International Film. Benesch can currently be seen in theaters with *September 5*.



CREW

PETRA VOLPE

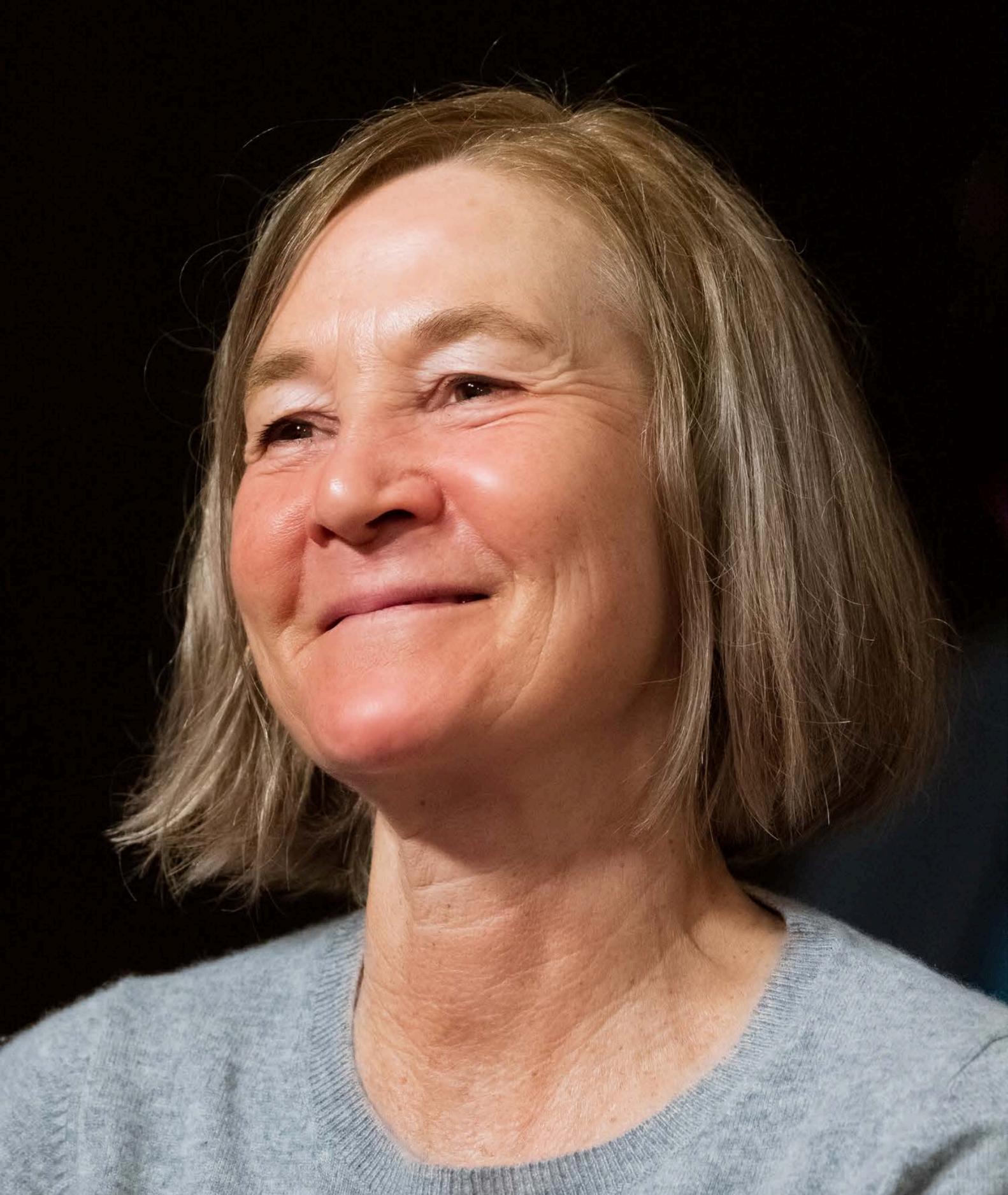
(WRITER/DIRECTOR)

Screenwriter and director Petra Volpe studied at the Konrad Wolf Film University in Potsdam-Babelsberg. Her feature film debut, *Dreamland* (Traumland, 2014), was nominated for four Swiss Film Awards. In 2017, Volpe gained worldwide attention with her film *The Divine Order* (*Die göttliche Ordnung*). The film became a major box office success in Switzerland. It was sold to over 30 countries and represented Switzerland in the Oscar race.

Petra Volpe also wrote the screenplay for the film *Heidi*, the successful SRF series *Labyrinth of Peace* and *Golden Years* (*Die goldenen Jahre*), which became the most successful Swiss feature film of 2022 in German-speaking Switzerland and was sold internationally, including in the USA.

In addition to her Swiss projects, Volpe works as a screenwriter and director in the United States. She is currently working on her fourth feature film, *Frank & Louis*. Petra Volpe lives and works in Berlin and New York. In Germany she is represented by DIE AGENTEN and in the US by Range Media Partners.





JUDITH KAUFMAN (DOP)

Judith Kaufmann began her career as a cinematographer in the early 1990s and has since been responsible for the visual design of numerous award-winning feature films.

She is working with Petra Volpe for *Late Shift* for the third time after *Dreamland* (Traumland, 2014) and *The Divine Order* (Die göttliche Ordnung, 2017). Kaufmann has won the German Camera Award twice: in 2003 for *Shattered Glass* (Scherbentanz, 2002) and in 2010 for *The Stranger* (Die Fremde, 2009). She was awarded the Bavarian Film Prize for her cinematography work in Züli Aladag's boxing drama *Elephant Heart* (Elefantenerz, 2002) and received the Marburg Camera Prize for her work in 2006.

Her more recent films includes *Corsage* (2022) by Marie Kreutzer, which was entered into the Oscar race for Austria, *The Teachers' Lounge* (Das Lehrerzimmer, 2023), which won the 2023 German Film Award and was nominated for the 2024 Academy Award for Best International Feature Film, as well as the historical drama *From Hilde, with Love* (In Liebe, eure Hilde, 2024) directed by Andreas Dresen.

HANSJÖRG WEISSBRICH (EDITOR)

Hansjörg Weissbrich is one of the most renowned German film editors. He has worked closely with Hans-Christian Schmid, Maria Schrader and other established directors such as Petra Volpe, Ina Weisse, Margarethe von Trotta, Kirill Serebrennikov, Bille August, Florian Gallenberger, Marco Kreuzpaintner, Leander Haussmann, and Oskar Roehler. Hansjörg has received numerous awards for his work, including the German Film Award twice, the German Camera Award four times, including for *Dreamland* (Traumland) by Petra Volpe and, most recently, the Outstanding Feature Editing Award at the Newport Beach Film Festival for *September 5*.

EMILIE LEVIENAISE-FARROUCH (COMPOSER)

Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch is a French composer, pianist and artist based in London. She has been nominated for the Ivor Novello Award and the BIFA and won the Hollywood Music in Media Award for Best Score in *Living* (2022). Levienaise-Farrouch has already enriched several feature films with her unmistakable score, including *Only You* (2018), the critically acclaimed film *Rocks* (2019), *The Forgotten Battle* (2020), *Censor* (2021) and, most recently, *All of Us Strangers* (2023). In addition to her work in film, she is known for her music in artistic video and VR installations and as a live performer. She has performed at venues including the Barbican, Tallinn Music Week, Brighton Festival and Union Chapel. Emilie's debut album "Like Water Through the Sand" was released in November 2015, followed by her second album, "Epoques," in summer 2018 and finally her third album, "Ravage," in 2022.

RETO SCHAERLI & LUKAS HOBI (PRODUCERS)

Lukas Hobi and Reto Schaerli run the independent film production company Zodiac Pictures, based in Zurich and Lucerne. Zodiac has already realized over 45 feature films and series, both in Switzerland and as a co-producer with renowned partners throughout Europe.

CREDITS

CAST

Floria	LEONIE BENESCH
Bea	SONJA RIESEN
Jan	ALIREZA BAYRAM
Amelie	SELMA
Mr. Leu	URS BIHLER
Mrs. Kuhn	MARGHERITA
Mrs. Osmani	ALBANA AGAJ
Mr. Osmani	RIDVAN MURATI
Mr. Nana	URBAIN GUIGUEMDÉ
Mrs. Lauber	ELISABETH ROLLI
Daughter Mr. Schneider	DORIS SCHEFER
Mr. Severin	JÜRIG PLÜSS
Mr. Song	JEREMIA CHUNG
Mrs. Bilgin	EVA FREDHOLM
Mr. Hungerbühler	ANDREAS BEUTLER
Mrs. Morina	LALE YAVAS
Mrs. Frei	DOMINIQUE LENDI
Ward doctor Leonie	ANNA-KATHARINA MÜLLER

and many more

CREW

Director & Screenplay	PETRA VOLPE
Producers	RETO SCHAERLI, LUKAS HOBI
Co-Producer	BASTIE GRIESE
DOP	JUDITH KAUFMANN
Production design	BEATRICE SCHULZ
Costume design	LINDA HARPER
Hair & Make-up	MARC HOLLENSTEIN
Editing	HANSJÖRG WEISSBRICH
Casting	CORINNA GLAUS
Music	EMILIE LEVIENAISE-FARROUCH

ABOUT MUSIC BOX FILMS

Music Box Films is the prestigious North American distributor of acclaimed international, independent, and documentary feature films. Recent releases include Cannes Directors' Fortnight baseball comedy *Eephus* by Carson Lund; Sarah Friedland's Venice prize-winning coming-of-old-age drama, *Familiar Touch*, starring Kathleen Chalfant; Angus MacLachlan's poignant family portrait, *A Little Prayer*, starring David Strathairn; and Charlie Shackleton's Sundance award-winning true-crime autocritique, *Zodiac Killer Project*. Upcoming releases include the Dardennes' Belgian Oscar Entry, *Young Mothers*; Amanda Kramer's Sundance body swapping comedy starring Juliette Lewis, *By Design*; and François Ozon's Albert Camus adaptation, *The Stranger*.

Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates the Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premier venue for independent and foreign films. For more information, visit www.musicboxfilms.com.

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