

Sometimes pathetic, sometimes pop

MOMENTS of alienation - The places follow the desires: In his film "Saturn Returns" the Berlin-based Israeli director Lior Shamriz presents his bohemian heroes in an authentic fragmented Kreuzkölln act

By Detlef Kuhlbrodt

In recent years, a lot was spoken of Kreuzberg, Neukölln or "Kreuzkölln" in fiction or documentary films. It had probably begun with Detlev Buck's "Tough Enough". Two years ago, "Princesses" and "May Day" last year "Kreuzkölln" and the ARD drama "courage" with Götz George, where Kreuzberg looked so much like the backdrop of itself; This year came "Neukölln Unlimited".

"Saturn Returns", the second longer, trilingual feature film of Kreuzberg-based Israeli director Lior Shamriz, is quite different. In his approach the film is an implicit criticism of the Kreuzkölln clichés with which others work. While originating from the area, and then look for characters that fit in this area, Shamriz starts from his living in bohemian Kreuzberg, and lets them find an environment that suits them.

Lucy (Chloe Griffin) is an extroverted privileged American, artist of sorts, that lives out her Post-punk hedonism here with her gay best-friend Derek (Joshua Bogle). They both meet Galia (Tal Meiri). The encounter with the young Israeli woman changes the way they see themselves and the environment. Not so classic in a Bildungsroman way, so that they would now seem to see their previous life-facade adhesive and superficial and Lucy now opts for a more responsible life, so to speak, or just a little.

The fragmented, fragmentary Berlin, in the act of the hero, looks very authentic, because the places follow the desires of the hero; because many moments of alienation and irritation with in it are real.

Initially, when the heroes are endlessly talking about this and that, for a demonstration of their clothes or techno dance in the morning, you think of Andy Warhol, later Godard, from whose "Vivre sa vie" is also cited. Sometimes the transitions are fluid, or when the images are suddenly like a kaleidoscope, they are sometimes hard, if you were just in Berlin and then suddenly sitting in living room of the unemployed father of Galia in Ashkelon, Israel, the birthplace of Lior Shamriz.

All smoke all the time. Sometimes there are records about which one thinks: that the plan, the city palace to rebuild, is a hostile act to the migrants, because it refers back to a time when there were hardly any migrants in Berlin.

A supporter of the Sixties

Everything is quite ambitious, without falling into the "arty-case": Lior Shamriz has three films to accompany his feature film- 26 and 63-minute experimental "satellite movies" , which could be seen in this year's Berlinale Forum Expanded program and were partly made from one-minute passages of the parent movie, which have been extended to 63 minutes.

We met at the "Café Kotti". I still had a hangover. Lior Shamriz is 32 and lives in Kreuzberg since of 2006. He has a very pleasant appearance; a reserved young director who would find the term "film-maker" because of its materialist implications certainly good. He is a fan of the Sixties. We are talking about Andy Warhol and Godard, directors, in whose films the camera is visible. In "Saturn Returns" the camera is present but invisible. It is there when alternating between improvised and prescribed scenes that made shortly and becomes clear again: In the wonderful escalator down slip stunt, which was filmed at the Möckernbrücke where Chloe Griffin earned the respect of thereabout hanging migrant youth, in improvised and documentary passages.

We are talking about immigrants and tourists from rich countries, belonging to different classes; about Kreuzberg, the hard facial features of people in winter strucks him; We are talking about the pretty great soundtrack of the film, which starts as a pop to end classically with pathos. He says: "Sometimes I'm pathetic / Sometimes I'm pop / Sometimes I'm just staring at the wall", and it sounds like a poem. He find the question, what belongs to his own life in the film. Once, at a discussion on his first long film, "Japan, Japan" (2007), he tried to answer that - then never again. "I'm making the film - that's my mask."

On my way home, I'm thinking about what I forgot. Especially that I have not asked any question about Israel. And I myself wanted to have the title explained - as I biked on the Kottbusser Damm, seeing Lior Shamriz walking. I wave hello, he waves back.

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