



THE

MAXIMILIAN BRÜCKNER

MOST

LUISE HEYER

BEAUTIFUL

A FILM BY  
SVEN TADDICKEN

COUPLE

Official Selection

**tiff**

Toronto International  
Film Festival 2018

## CAST

<b>Malte</b>	Maximilian Brückner
<b>Liv</b>	Luise Heyer
<b>Sascha</b>	Leonard Kunz
<b>Jenny</b>	Jasna Fritzi Bauer
<b>Ben</b>	Aurel Manthei
<b>Maren</b>	Inga Birkenfeld
<b>Henning</b>	Florian Bartholomäi

## CREW

<b>Director</b>	Sven Taddicken
<b>Writer</b>	Sven Taddicken
<b>Producers</b>	Sol Bondy, Jamila Wenske
<b>Co- producer</b>	Ilann Girard
<b>Assistant producer</b>	Fred Burle
<b>Director of photography</b>	Daniela Knapp
<b>Casting</b>	Simone Bär
<b>Line producer</b>	Christian Fürst
<b>Set designer</b>	Juliane Friedrich, VSK
<b>Costume designer</b>	Genova Kylburg, VSK
<b>Make-up artists</b>	Lena Lazzarotto & Henny Zimmer
<b>Editor</b>	Andreas Wodraschke, BFS
<b>Music composer</b>	Eric Neveux
<b>Co-production</b>	Arsam International
<b>Production</b>	One Two Films

## LOGLINE

Liv and Malte are forced to revisit their past when Malte spots the man, who sexually assaulted Liv two years ago. While Liv yearns for acceptance and healing, Malte is trying to fight the urge for revenge. But will their love survive?

## SYNOPSIS

Two young teachers, Malte and Liv, are spending their summer holiday on the Mediterranean coast when they are attacked by three young men. The incident escalates and Liv is sexually assaulted. Two years later, Malte and Liv are not only still together, they demonstrate an amazing strength in dealing with the traumatic experience, determined that it will not drive a wedge between them. But when Malte encounters Liv's attacker purely by chance he finds himself driven to seek revenge and justice, and sets out in pursuit. However, the longed for confrontation occurs too soon, before Malte has told Liv, let alone the police, and the young couple's fragile relationship, which they have fought so hard to preserve, is put to the test once more.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

<b>Shooting Locations</b>	Germany, Spain
<b>Shooting date</b>	April–June 2017
<b>Running time</b>	95 min
<b>Screen Ratio</b>	1:2,39
<b>Format</b>	DCP (Dolby 5.1, 24fps, encrypted)



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Why did I make this movie? I was impressed by the story of Liv and Malte, who courageously faced the consequences of sexual assault, although they soon reached their own limits – limits which they as thoughtful and open-minded people could not bring themselves to admit for a long time.

While writing the script, I was always faced with the question: “How would I have behaved in this situation?” That kept me going. And I felt,

that I had stumbled onto some important questions, that you often don't dare to ask yourself: Do I still deserve love, when I failed to protect my partner? Do I long for protection, even though I claim to be an independent person/man/woman? And: Is it always right to tell the truth?

A relationship is like a living organism. It's not the question how much it can stand, more how we need to behave in order to keep it alive.

I did a lot of research and talked to several institutions working with women who have been sexually harassed and abused. I wanted to portray victims and perpetrators honestly and responsibly. But above all I wanted the film to be about a relationship that is put to the test. Not about the crime.

I think I know now that after an attack like this most people have little opportunity to deal with their feelings of depression or anger. They are forced to act and continue with life, for fear of losing their life, work and their relationship.

Watching Malte and Liv continuing with their lives touched and worried me at the same time. It touched me because of their will to live and to love. And it worried me, because they couldn't help but make mistakes ... When Malte became a stalker, when Liv wanted to get back her lost innocence by seeing another man, or when they almost became murderers in the end.

I wanted to show a woman that is very much alive. Liv wants to live, she wants a relationship and she struggles with her own feelings of shame and guilt.

And I wanted her to confront the man. Is becoming a superhero avenger the best thing to re-fuel love? Or: can you really pull this off?

I tried to make a film that encourages, warns, and challenges the viewer with a disarming honesty.



# INTERVIEW WITH SVEN TADDICKEN

**This is the first time you directed a film that you wrote yourself. What made you choose this story?**

The premise of 'The Most Beautiful Couple' felt like a worst-case scenario for any loving couple. It was like a nightmare that kept haunting my thoughts. So I finally sat down and started to think it through, while wondering, if there is a cure for that couple. I guess it's that same energy that kept me writing that also keeps the audience tied to the film.

In terms of writing and directing ... I worked as a director for the last 10 years, but the truth is, I did miss a certain feeling of urgency when making those stories. And now that I have directed my own screenplay, I feel it might be hard to go back to just directing – because I really enjoyed it and I truly believe that you should have a good reason to tell a story.

**What were the biggest challenges in the entire making of the film?**

The very first scene, the assault, was a big challenge to me, the actors and the crew. It was also the very first scene that we shot, because I wanted the actors to know what they were talking about, when they refer to the assault later in the film. They agreed to this idea.

Shooting the scene then turned out to be astonishingly smooth, because everybody had a lot of respect for each other. We rehearsed the scene several times. And the DOP and I were aware of every camera and character movement before we started shooting. So nothing was left to chance, which gave the actors the security to be insecure in the scene.

I've experienced this before: when everybody, including me, is scared of a certain scene, everybody prepares well, and is often full of empathy. It's the less important scenes, that are often harder to shoot. Or those when you don't manage to find the time to rehearse and prepare yourself.

**Does 'The Most Beautiful Couple' refer to something you've experienced personally?**

I've never been involved in a sexual assault – no. Fortunately not. Though it is my duty as a storyteller to put myself in the position of every character involved. The scene that actually refers to my personal life is the fight in the kitchen between Malte und Liv, when Liv says that Malte would be a real man if he'd never told her about meeting the rapist again. This scene is basically a re-write of a terrible fight I once had right before a breakup.

The subject of that fight was not a rapist, of course. It was about something completely different. But to this day I feel the pain of hurting someone by telling the truth. And that's something that is emotionally very confusing. It took me a long time to realize, that for a strong relationship, what's necessary is two people who are willing and able to stand the truth.

**Maximilian Brückner, Luise Heyer and also Leonard Kunz are exceptional. How did you find the actors and how did you work with them?**

Yes, they are amazing. Simone Bär, the casting director, introduced me to every one of them. They all fell in love with the script and their characters and they trusted me, which was a great gift. They got involved in the making of the film to the extent that Luise actually wrote her dialogue for the therapy scenes herself, and Maximilian even came up with the idea for the very last scene, when the couple destroys their living room. I don't think I have a special directing technique. But I love actors who are willing to relate to their characters so much, that they can even surprise me with ,the truth about my script'.

**Is it true that the film was only shot on one lens? Why is that and what was the idea behind this unusual camera concept?**

Yes. Daniela Knapp, the DOP, had once approached me with the idea of shooting a whole film with just one lens. I immediately thought that this would be a great visual concept for TMBC. We used a normal lens (50mm anamorphic), that approximately matches the radius of the human eye.

TMBC has a very story-driven plot. Making the film felt a lot like 'just' following the characters through their story. There was no need to enhance certain moments visually or to make them more accessible in any way.

You are also tied to the locations somehow, because there is no real chance to change the mood visually. We wanted the viewer to be in the 'here and now' And when our images seemed not interesting enough, there was generally something wrong with the story or the location. So we had to fix it.

**Relationships and intimacy seem to be elements in a number of your works — are you attracted to stories of human connection?**

For sure. I guess a question that drives me is: Do I deserve love? Or do 'we' deserve love?





It's the same question that drives Max, the shy car salesman from 'Emma's Bliss' or the mentally handicapped Josch in 'My Brother the Vampire' (aka 'Getting My Brother Laid'). The characters I'm interested in are often in need of love and are unsure if they are permitted to receive it. In TMBC it would be: Do I deserve love, even though I wasn't able to protect my partner?

**Do you believe in revenge?**

Spoiler alert – I believe in the old saying: When you go for revenge, you have to dig two graves. So no, I don't believe in revenge as a solution. I also don't believe in justice as a solution for everybody. Justice, as introduced into society with great effort over the last centuries, is a good thing, but it often can't heal or satisfy you emotionally.

When Malte and Liv go after the rapist in the end of the film, and Liv actually stabs him with a knife, I see this as a moment of tragedy, because they both come to betray their beliefs while trying to find a better solution. When they hug each other and cry, after they have taken him to the hospital, it is a moment of hope, because they are finally aware of their entangled and overwhelming emotions and dare to share them with each other.

**In how far do you feel this is a film that reflects the #MeToo movement?**

#metoo is a complex movement, which – as I understand it – demands awareness of the misuse of power between the sexes. I wrote the first draft of the script between 2011 and 2013, before I was aware of #metoo. So, technically speaking, my project is not a reflection of the movement. But I had noticed a term that was used often, and that I can relate to very much, and that's 'toxic masculinity' ...

During writing I 'had' to watch a lot of films dealing with sexual assault. And I realized that often a sexual assault is followed by the death of the victim. It's the widower then, who transcends the experience by becoming an avenger or even actually a superhero. I wanted to show something very different. I wanted to show a woman who is very much alive. Liv wants to live, she wants a relationship and she struggles with her own feelings of shame and guilt. And she confronts her man, who is just about to step into the lonesome-avenger-cliché, which I would say is an example of toxic masculinity.



## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Sven Taddicken was born in 1974 in Hamburg and studied directing in Ludwigsburg from 1996-2002. His shorts were shown and awarded at numerous festivals worldwide, including a nomination for the Student OSCAR in 2000 and the German Short Film Award in 2003.

In 2000 he received the Caligari-scholarship. 2004 followed the grant of the Akademie der Künste Berlin „Junge Akademie“, and 2007 the grant of

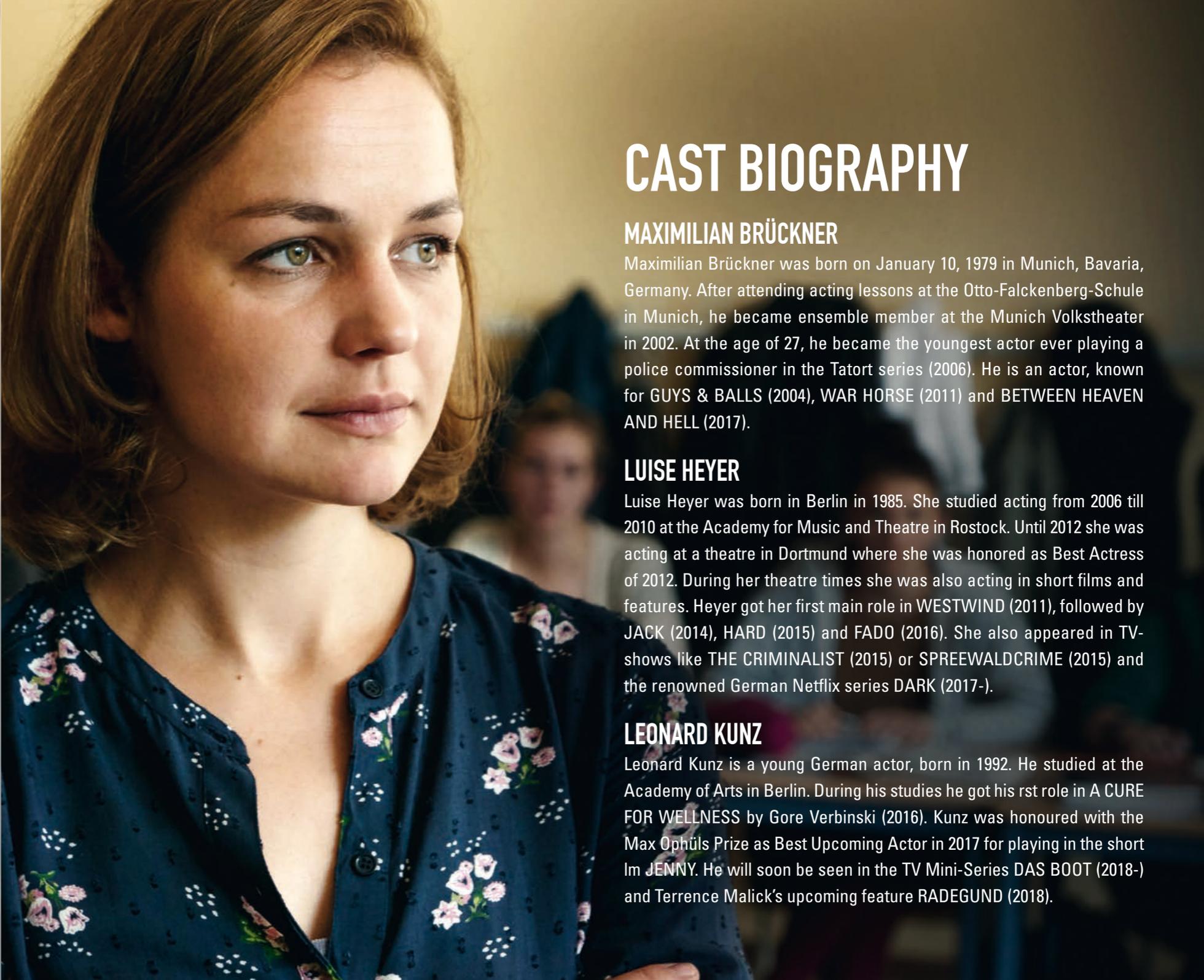
the Villa Aurora/Los Angeles. His first feature MY BROTHER THE VAMPIRE received several awards at national and international film festivals (Brooklyn, Rotterdam, London). His 2nd feature EMMA'S BLISS was released all over Europe, won many festivals and gained 4 nominations for the German Film Awards. His 3rd feature, the elaborate historical drama 12 PACES WITHOUT A HEAD told the story about the adventures of the legendary pirate Klaus Störtebeker. In 2016, his feature film ORIGINAL BLISS starring Martina Gedeck and Ulrich Tukur won two awards in Karlovy Vary and was released widely all over Germany.



## PRODUCTION COMPANY

One Two Films was founded in 2010 by the producers Sol Bondy, Jamila Wenske and the investor Christoph Lange in Berlin. The focus is feature films for the international market. In the last 8 years, One Two Films produced / co-produced 12 feature films: the 2012 Max Ophüls Prize winner DOLL, THE FATSO AND ME by Felix Stienz; the Israeli co-production YOUTH by Tom Shoval, which premiered in Berlins Panorama 2013; Grzegorz Muskala's debut WHISPERS BEHIND THE WALL, which premiered in Rotterdam Bright Future; the Danish co-production I AM HERE, by Anders Morgenthaler starring Kim Basinger; the Indian co-production ANGRY INDIAN GODDESSES by Pan Nalin, which won Audience Awards in Toronto and Rome, and was sold in over 50 countries; the Finnish Oscar entry THE HAPPIEST DAY IN THE LIFE OF OLLI MÄKI by Juho Kuosmanen, a Finnish co-production that won the Prix Un

Certain Regard in 2016, the EFA „European Discovery“ and was sold all over Europe; Jan Speckenbach's FREEDOM, which premiered in Locarno 2017; the Icelandic co-production UNDER THE TREE by Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurdsson, which screened in Venice and Toronto 2017 and was also Iceland's Oscar entry; THE TALE by Jennifer Fox, starring Laura Dern and Ellen Burstyn, which sold worldwide rights to HBO after premiering in Sundance and received two Primetime Emmy nominations for Best TV film and Best Main Actress; and Isabel Coixet's THE BOOKSHOP with Bill Nighy and Emily Mortimer, which sold almost 400k tickets in Spain, won 3 Goyas and premiered at the Berlinale 2018. In 2018, the six-country-co-production HIER by Balint Kenyeres celebrated its world premiere in Locarno and Sven Taddicken's THE MOST BEAUTIFUL COUPLE which premieres at Toronto IFF.



## CAST BIOGRAPHY

### MAXIMILIAN BRÜCKNER

Maximilian Brückner was born on January 10, 1979 in Munich, Bavaria, Germany. After attending acting lessons at the Otto-Falckenberg-Schule in Munich, he became ensemble member at the Munich Volkstheater in 2002. At the age of 27, he became the youngest actor ever playing a police commissioner in the Tatort series (2006). He is an actor, known for GUYS & BALLS (2004), WAR HORSE (2011) and BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL (2017).

### LUISE HEYER

Luise Heyer was born in Berlin in 1985. She studied acting from 2006 till 2010 at the Academy for Music and Theatre in Rostock. Until 2012 she was acting at a theatre in Dortmund where she was honored as Best Actress of 2012. During her theatre times she was also acting in short films and features. Heyer got her first main role in WESTWIND (2011), followed by JACK (2014), HARD (2015) and FADO (2016). She also appeared in TV-shows like THE CRIMINALIST (2015) or SPREEWALDCRIME (2015) and the renowned German Netflix series DARK (2017-).

### LEONARD KUNZ

Leonard Kunz is a young German actor, born in 1992. He studied at the Academy of Arts in Berlin. During his studies he got his first role in A CURE FOR WELLNESS by Gore Verbinski (2016). Kunz was honoured with the Max Ophüls Prize as Best Upcoming Actor in 2017 for playing in the short film JENNY. He will soon be seen in the TV Mini-Series DAS BOOT (2018-) and Terrence Malick's upcoming feature RADEGUND (2018).



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