





The Match Factory presents
a Corazón International Production in Co-Production with Anka Film, in Association with NDR and Dorje Film



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION

THE EDGE OF HEAVEN

AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE

A FILM BY
FATİH AKIN
with
NURGÜL YEŞİLÇAY
BAKI DAVRAK
PATRYCIA ZIOLKOWSKA
NURSEL KÖSE
TUNCEL KURTİZ
and HANNA SCHYGULLA

THE MATCH FACTORY

CORAZÓN

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dorjefilm

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für Kultur und Medien

filmförderung
hamburg

FFLW
Forschung
Förderung
Wissenschaft

nordmedia

Kulturelle
Filmförderung
Schönung-Actionis 2x

DOLBY
DIGITAL
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german
turkey
films

SYNOPSIS

Retired widower Ali sees a solution to loneliness when he meets prostitute Yeter. Ali proposes to the fellow Turkish native to live with him in exchange for a monthly stipend. Ali's bookish son Nejat seems disapproving about his bully father's choice. But the young German professor quickly grows fond of kind Yeter, especially upon discovering most of her hard-earned money is sent home to Turkey for her daughter's university studies.

The accidental death of Yeter distances father and son even more, emotionally and physically. Nejat travels to Istanbul to begin an organized search for Yeter's daughter Ayten. He decides to stay in Turkey and trades places with the owner of a German bookstore who goes home to Germany. What Nejat doesn't know is that 20-something political activist Ayten is already in Germany, having fled the Turkish police.

Alone and penniless, Ayten is befriended by German student Lotte, who is immediately seduced by the young Turkish woman's charms and political situation. Lotte invites rebellious Ayten to stay in her home, a gesture not particularly pleasing to her conservative mother Susanne. Ayten ends up arrested and confined for months while awaiting political asylum. When her plea is denied, Ayten is deported and imprisoned in Turkey. Passionate Lotte decides to abandon everything to help Ayten.

In Turkey, Lotte gets caught up in the frustrating bureaucracy of the seemingly hopeless situation of freeing Ayten. A chance bookstore meeting will lead her to becoming Nejat's roommate. A tragic event will bring Susanne to Istanbul to help fulfill her daughter's mission. Emotional moments spent with Susanne will inspire Nejat to seek out his estranged father, now residing on Turkey's Black Sea coast.





Nejat speaks with his father's girlfriend, Yeter, a prostitute.

Yeter: I have a daughter.

Nejat: How old is she?

Yeter: 27.

Nejat: Does she know what you do?

Yeter: She thinks I work in a shoe shop. Now and then I send her some shoes. I'd do anything for her. I didn't want her to be uneducated. I wanted her to study and become like you.





COMMENTS FROM FATIH AKIN

NOT GOING OUT IN THE FIRST ROUND

I put so much into the making of **HEAD-ON** (**GEGEN DIE WAND**), that when I finished, I had no idea what to do next. On my previous films, I had always known what I was doing next before finishing the current one. So there I was in this bad situation not knowing what to do. Ironically, to make matters worse, **HEAD-ON** became a big success for me. I wasn't expecting it. As great as it was, success doesn't make everything easier. I got even more blocked. I felt pressured to come up with something better than **HEAD-ON**. I wanted to do better artistically. I had to prove to myself that **HEAD-ON** wasn't the best I could do. I relate a lot of things to sports, so I kept thinking that I didn't want to go out in the first round. I was faced with the challenge of following up **HEAD-ON**. Being faster than Carl Lewis. Being Ben Johnson.

BECOMING A PARENT

Becoming a parent had a huge impact on me. My son was born in 2005. Suddenly I had to be more responsible and think about tomorrow. Before I was just a rock 'n' roll kind of guy. The birth of my son eased a lot of the creative pressure I was under. It definitely affected my writing. Teaching at a university in Hamburg, sharing my experiences with students, that also helped. Making the documentary **CROSSING THE BRIDGE** also helped ease the pressure. Going to Turkey, meeting all those singers and musicians, that was like therapy.

MY HOMEWORK

Filmmaking is a big part of my life, but it pales next to issues like birth, love and death. To really grow up, I felt I had to make three films. Call it a trilogy if you want to, but it's basically three films that belong together because of their themes of love, death and evil. **HEAD-ON** was about love. **THE EDGE OF HEAVEN** is about death. Death in the sense of every death is a birth. Like both death and birth open doors to other dimensions. With **THE EDGE OF HEAVEN**, I feel like I'm reaching some other level, but something is still missing that will be in the third film about evil. I just feel like I have to tell something to the end. These three films are kind of my homework, then I can move on. Maybe move on to genre films, film noir, western, even horror.

THE ART OF LOVING

Erich Fromm's "The Art of Loving" influenced me a lot. I'm fascinated by human relationships. Not just boy meets girl or in a sexual sense, but also between parents and children. All human relationships. I believe that all the wars in the world are the result of not using love in the way that humanity should. I think evil is the product of laziness. It's easier to hate someone than to love them.

SHOOTING IN TURKEY

I finally started shooting on May 1, 2006. *THE EDGE OF HEAVEN* was shot in Germany – Bremen and Hamburg, and in Turkey – Istanbul, the Black Sea Coast and Trabzon. The shoot lasted about 10 weeks. For a filmmaker, Turkey is a great place to shoot. Shooting in Germany is much less interesting. It can be attractive, but you have to look hard or create it. The light is extraordinary in Turkey because of its geographic position. For me, shooting in Istanbul is like shooting in New York. They're both attractive and cosmopolitan. Each city is a megalopolis. I love to shoot in cities. I'm a big city child. It's what I know. In *THE EDGE OF HEAVEN*, the city of Istanbul is actually a character. Since she doesn't speak the language, foreigner Lotte becomes lost as she confronts Istanbul. But I also wanted to break the urban image with scenes in the countryside and the coast.

IN BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

I have this Turkish background and I have this German background. I was born in Germany, but I'm in between the two cultures. Educated in Europe, but also raised in Turkish by my parents. Turkish culture has always been a part of my life. I traveled to Turkey with my family every summer since I was a kid. Since I'm in between these two cultures, it's natural that my films are in between, too.

LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY

I have this love-hate relationship with Turkey, a very complicated relationship. I became much more interested in Turkey after I finished school in 1995. I decided to make my first short film there, *WEED* in 1996. I saw another face of Turkey and I became more and more fascinated. I became more Turkish. With every meter of film I shoot in Turkey, I try to understand the country more and more. But the more I understand it, the more it makes me sad. I hate the politics, the nationalism. Look at what is happening in that country. History repeating itself. The same mistakes again and again. I love that country, but shooting in Turkey takes a lot of energy, tears and blood.



TRKISH BUREAUCRACY

The image of Turkish bureaucracy in *THE EDGE OF HEAVEN* isn't harsh, it's Kafkaesque. This is not criticism, it's truth without comment. In the film, when the political activist is arrested in front of Ayten, the happy crowd applauds. The sad thing is that this happened naturally in rehearsal, the extras just automatically clapped. This really only happens when those arrested are considered to be "enemies of the state". Fascism is alive and well in the streets of Istanbul.

COUNT THE TRKISH FLAGS

There are a lot of Turkish flags seen in *THE EDGE OF HEAVEN*. Go ahead and count them. I guess the nationalists will interpret that as a sign of love for Turkey, but I didn't put one in. They were all already there. I didn't change the locations. I shot them the way they were. Maybe I went too far, there are so many Turkish flags!



INTELLIGENCE IS SEXY

I think intelligence is sexy, so I made the character of Nejat a professor. And a German professor of Turkish origin breaks certain clichés which still exist in Germany. Turks today play a significant role in German culture, politics and science. They're not just hustling in the streets. For Yeter, education is important enough for her to prostitute herself to provide one for her daughter. Nejat can relate to this desire for knowledge. I liked the irony that when Nejat goes to Istanbul he trades places with a German intellectual running a bookstore.

EDUCATION CAN SAVE THE WORLD

Literacy, education, plays a profound role in *THE EDGE OF HEAVEN*. A book is a key image in the conflict between Nejat and his father. Which book to show? It was a very difficult decision for me. I didn't want "Siddhartha" or "The Hobbit" or anything too full of some parallel meaning. So I thought I would advertise my friend's fantastic book. I chose "Die Tochter des Schmieds (The Blacksmith's Daughter)" by Selim Ozdogan. In regards to the film, the key element is about reading. Reading stands for education. And education is the only thing that can save the world.

HANNA AND TUNCEL

I imagined this German mother coming to Istanbul looking for her missing daughter. I had this image early on with Hanna Schygyulla in mind. I had met her in Belgrade in 2004 and she put a spell on me. I was really into the idea of working with her. Some German journalists have compared my career to that of Fassbinder's, but I don't see it at all. I come from the streets, not the theater. Yilmaz Güney is more my background, independent against the norm. What Fassbinder was to Hanna, Güney was similar to actor Tuncel Kurtiz, who I also imagined early on to be part of THE EDGE OF HEAVEN. But my goal wasn't to use them as icons from films by Fassbinder and Güney. It would have been vain of me to try and use them like no one else before. I didn't want my direction to be affected like that. For me, my job is storytelling. And both Hanna and Tuncel fit the idea I had for the parents in the story.

SAMPLING

The challenge for me as a filmmaker is not to repeat myself. I like to surprise myself and ultimately the audience. I hope that all my films will seem different. I guess we'll be able to judge that five films from now. When my ideas come, they all come at the same time and they come from a lot of different sources. I even recycle, like sampling in hip hop music, which I love. They use known bass lines to create something new from something old, and it's a sort of homage at the same time. Some of the issues in THE EDGE OF HEAVEN were sampled from CROSSING THE BRIDGE. The character of the political activist Ayten was inspired by those Kurdish singers. Here in the West, we don't have to fight for freedom of speech. But the war for justice is still going on in Turkey.

PASSION IS SEXY

Fighting for something with passion is sexy. And I wanted a sexy character for THE EDGE OF HEAVEN. Ayten is very emotional. She's street-smart and very attractive. She's a political person. At first, actress Nurgül Yesilçay didn't feel comfortable with the political background of the character. When she finally agreed, she went all the way. I was fascinated by how well she knew her character. I know a lot of women like Ayten and Nurgül is not one of them. Ayten is sort of a female version of me. She believes in one thing, but later she will surprise herself and change her ideas.

AM I POLITICAL?

I want to change the world – am I political? My film hopes the world will change – is it political? Probably more philosophical, but I think everything is political in today's world. In the times we live in, I think it's impossible to separate life and politics and art. I believe in the stuff I believe in, but I might change my mind tomorrow. I try not to be dogmatic. Whatever people believe in – religion or politics – everything has limits, everything heads in one direction. I wanted to make a film about going to the other side of all that, going beyond all that. I tried to make this film with some distance, as a viewer from the outside. But it didn't seem to be possible. Sometimes it's not the head which directs. I guess it's a part of me that's much more irrational, like the heart.

GERMANY AND TURKEY

As Germans, Susanne and Lotte represent the European Union, while Ayten and Yeter represent Turkey. Everything that happens between them in THE EDGE OF HEAVEN is representative of the relationship of those systems. I had some fun with the argument between Susanne and Ayten regarding the European Union. But where I stand is not the point. I wrote this dialogue based on what I have often heard from real people around me. By the end of the film, German Susanne and Turkish Ayten both experience a profound change in how they see and feel about things. In the bookstore scene at the end where they hug, I noticed a small detail only in the edit. Not far from the women, there are two small flags, one German, the other Turkish. My friend and partner, Andreas Thiel, who passed away during the last week of the shoot, put them there. This stands for something. I guess it's also a film about the relationship between the two countries.



FATIH AKIN

BIOGRAPHY

THE EDGE OF HEAVEN (AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE) is Fatih Akin's fifth fiction feature and makes its world premiere in Competition at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival. 2005's CROSSING THE BRIDGE – THE SOUND OF ISTANBUL presented the variety of music found in contemporary Turkey. 2003's HEAD-ON (GEGEN DIE WAND) won the Berlinale Golden Bear, as well as Best Film at the German and European Film Awards.

Fatih Akin was born in 1973 in Hamburg of Turkish parentage. While studying Visual Communications at Hamburg's College of Fine Arts, he wrote and directed his first short in 1995: SENSIN – YOU'RE THE ONE! (SENSIN - DU BIST ES!), which received the Audience Award at the Hamburg International Short Film Festival, followed by WEED (GETUERKT, 1996). His first feature, SHORT SHARP SHOCK (KURZ UND SCHMERZLOS, 1998), won Locarno's Bronze Leopard and the Bavarian Film Award for Best Young Director.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2007 THE EDGE OF HEAVEN (AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE)
- 2005 CROSSING THE BRIDGE – THE SOUND OF ISTANBUL (documentary)
- 2003 HEAD-ON (GEGEN DIE WAND)
- 2002 SOLINO
- 2001 WIR HABEN VERGESSEN ZURUECKZUKEHREN (documentary)
- 2000 IN JULY (IM JULI)
- 1998 SHORT SHARP SHOCK (KURZ UND SCHMERZLOS)



CAST



BAKI DAVRAK as NEJAT AKSU

Baki Davrak made a smash debut performance in Kutlug Ataman's 1997 German Turkish drama *LOLA AND BILIDIKID*. He was recently seen in Harald Bergmann's 2006 film *BRINK-MANN'S ZORN*. His other film credits include Willem Droste's *PAST BY NIGHT*, Ulli Schüppel's *PLANET ALEX* and Thomas Arslan's *DEALER*, a hit at the 1999 Berlin Film Festival.

Baki is an accomplished theatre actor and he also frequently appears on TV in series such as "Kommissarin Lucas", "Wolffs Revier", "Eva Blond", "Der Puma" and "Tatort". He starred in Stefan Holtz's 2005 made-for-TV movie "Meine verrückte türkische Hochzeit". Baki is also an author and a collection of his poetry will be published later this year.



NURSEL KÖSE as YETER ÖZTÜRK

Nursel Köse starred in Buket Alakus' 2002 film *ANAM (MY MOTHER)* as a mother trying to save her teenage son from the drug scene. She was recently seen in Alakus' *IN ANOTHER LEAGUE (EINE ANDERE LIGA)*, a touching teenage drama which won the audience award at the Max Ophüls Festival. Her other film credits include Anno Saul's *KEBAB CONNECTION* and Hark Bohm's *YASEMIN*, the award-winning 1988 film about a traditional Turkish family in Germany.

Nursel's television work includes the 2005 Turkish miniseries "Sessiz Gece" and Ruth Olschan's 2003 German TV movie "Savannah".



HANNA SCHYGULLA as SUSANNE STAUB

Hanna Schygulla did not know that she would ever become a professional actor till a girlfriend invited her to join a performing arts course in Munich. There she met a young actor: Rainer Werner Fassbinder. They never finished school, but instead, founded their own theatre: the Anti Theatre, began filming, and became one of the most famous and productive couples in German cinematography (*EFFIE BRIEST, THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN, THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT, LILI MARLEEN* and many others). She has also worked with directors Andrej Wajda (*A LOVE IN GERMANY*), Wim Wenders (*THE WRONG MOVEMENT*), Volker Schlöndorff (*CIRCLE OF DECEIT*), Margarethe von Trotta (*SHEER MADNESS*), Jean-Luc Godard (*PASSION*), Ettore Scola (*IL MONDO NUOVO*), Marco Ferreri (*THE FUTURE IS WOMAN, THE STORY OF PIERA*, for which she won Best Actress at the 1983 Cannes Film Festival), Kenneth Branagh (*DEAD AGAIN*), Amos Gitai (*PROMISED LAND*) and Bela Tarr (*WERKMEISTERS HARMONIES*).

Hannah Schygulla also directed her own film, 1979's *TRAUMPROTOKOLLE*, an experimental revue of night dreams, which is now part of the film collection at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). She has recently begun to work with a new generation of filmmakers like Till Franzen (*DIE BLAUE GRENZE*), Hans Steinbichler (*WINTERREISE*) and Fatih Akin (*THE EDGE OF HEAVEN / AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE*).



TUNCCEL KURTIZ as ALI AKSU

With a career spanning over 40 years and dozens of films, Tuncel Kurtiz has become one of Turkey's most beloved actors. Kurtiz can currently be seen in the Turkish TV series "Kara Duvak". He also recently starred in the mini-series "Haci". Recent film credits include Carlo Mazzacurati's A CAVALLO DELLA TIGRE / JAILBREAK and Semir Aslanyürek's THE WATERFALL. Other film credits include Yilmaz Güney's DUVAR and UMUT, Ömer Kavur's AKREBIN YOLCULUGU / CLOCK TOWER, Reis Celik's HOSCAKAL YARIN, Dervis Zaim's TABUTTA RÖVASATA / SOMERSAULT IN A COFFIN, Zeki Ökten's SÜRÜ, Hiner Saleem's VIVE LA MARIÉE, Erden Kiral's KANAL and Peter Brook's film version of THE MAHABHARATA.

He has won numerous awards, including Best Actor at the 1986 Berlinale for Shimon Dotan's HIUH HAGDI / THE SMILE OF THE LAMB and Best Supporting Actor at 1994's Antalya Festival for Tunca Yönder's BIR ASK UGRUNA. Kurtiz was born in 1936 in Bilecik, Turkey.

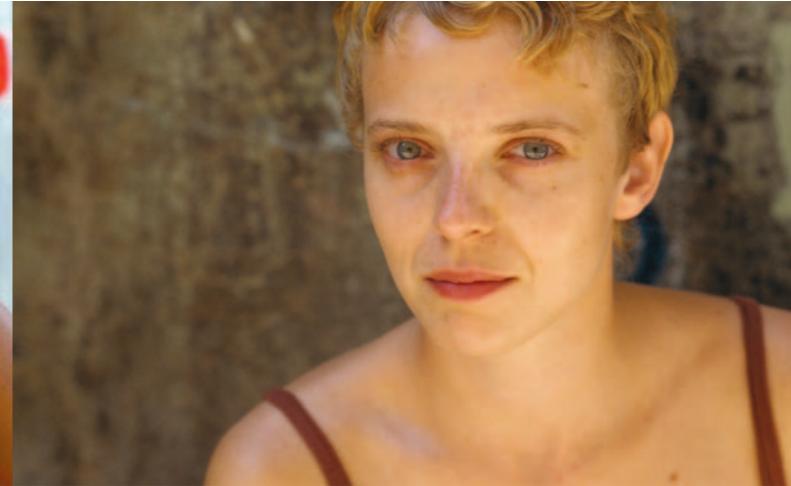


NURGÜL YEŞİLÇAY as AYTEN ÖZTÜRK

Nurgül Yeşilçay is one of Turkey's most admired young actresses. She was recently seen in Baris Pirhasan's heartwarming village story ADAM AND THE DEVIL (ADEM'IN TRENLERI), presented at the 2007 Istanbul Film Festival. Her other film credits include the Atif Yilmaz's 2005 comedy drama BORROWED BRIDE (EGRETI GELIN), Yucel Yolcu's SLEEPING BEAUTY segment of 2005's ISTANBUL TALES (ANLAT ISTANBUL), Haluk Özenç's 2002 comedy adventure RUNAWAY MUMMY (MUMYA FIRARDA), Semir Aslanyurek's 2001 historical drama WATERFALL (Sellale) and Omer Vargi's 1999 cult comedy EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE GREAT (HERSEY ÇOK GÜZEL OLACAK).

Nurgül reprised her starring role in Abdullah Oguz's 2003 film ASMALI KONAK: HAYAT, based on the popular TV series. Her other TV series include "Ezo Gelin", "Ikinci Bahar", "Meleker Adasi/Angel Island" and "Belali Baldiz".

Born in Afyon, Turkey, Nurgül studied drama at the Anatolia State Conservatory and the Eskisehir University Drama School. Her stage performances include Ophelia in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Blanche DuBois in "A Streetcar Named Desire".



PATRYCIA ZIOLKOWSKA as LOTTE STAUB

Patrycia Ziolkowska was featured in Fatih Akin's SOLINO and Buket Alakus' ANAM. She also played leading roles in the recent short films VERGISS SIE (dir. Lale Nalpantoglu) and RIEN NE VA PLUS (dir. Katja Pratschke, Gustav Hamos).

Patrycia has had featured roles in the German TV series „Stubbe“, “Nikola“, “Tatort“, “Schimanski” and “Der Ermittler”. An accomplished theatre actor, Patrycia has had leading roles for the past several years at Bonn's Schauspiel – Polly in “Dreigroschenoper”, Ellida Wangel in “Die Frau vom Meer”, Johanna in “Die Jungfrau von Orleans”, Marie in “Woyzeck” and Egle in “Der Streit”. She has also guest played at Volksheater Wien (Vienna, Austria) in the leading role of Elisabeth in „Glaube Liebe Hoffnung“, as well as in Vereinigte Bühnen (Graz, Austria), Niedersächsisches Staatstheater (Hannover, Germany), Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Schauspielhaus Bochum and Volksbühne Berlin.

Patrycia is currently in rehearsals with director Luc Perceval for Berlin's Schauspiel production of „Moliere. Eine Passion“, which will premiere at Salzburger Festspiele in August 2007.





CREW

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commissioning editor	JEANETTE WÜRL (NDR)
director of photography	RAINER KLAUSMANN (BVK)
editor	ANDREW BIRD
casting	MONIQUE AKIN
production design	TAMO KUNZ, SIRMA BRADLEY
music composer	SHANTEL
sound	KAI LÜDE
sound mix	RICHARD BOROWSKI
make-up	DANIEL SCHRÖDER
costumes	KATRIN ASCHENDORF
line producer	CHRISTIAN SPRINGER
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THE EDGE OF HEAVEN

AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE / DE L'AUTRE CÔTÉ
A FILM BY FATİH AKIN

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