



SIFF / 2021

金爵奖参赛影片

GOLDEN GOBLET AWARD
COMPETITION

FUTURE IS A LONELY PLACE

BY MARTIN HAWIE & LAURA HARWARTH

PRODUCED BY
HUPE Film Fiktion Produktion GmbH



IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH
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FUTURE IS A LONELY PLACE / DIE ZUKUNFT IST EIN EINSAMER ORT

Germany 2021 Drama 101 Min.

In order to take revenge on the man responsible for the death of his family Frank commits a crime to end up in the same prison like the “murderer” of his wife and daughter. There he starts his campaign of vengeance.

CAST

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Frank | Lucas Gregorowicz |
| Susanna | Katharina Schüttler |
| Fuad | Denis Moschitto |
| Walter | Ronald Kukulies |
| Miki | Slavko Popadic |
| Ibrahim | Vedat Erincin |
| Peter | Daniel Wiemer |
| Moha | Zejhun Demirov |
| Strauss | Daniel Drewes |

CREW

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Directors | Martin Hawie, Laura Harwarth |
| Scriptwriters | Laura Harwarth, Martin Hawie |
| Cinematographer | Mathias Prause |
| Editors | Martin Hawie, Laura Harwarth |
| Art Director | Pierre Pfundt |
| Costume | Elena Wegner |
| Sound | Michael Arens |
| Music | Gregor Keienburg |
| Producer | Andreas Brauer |
| Production | HUPE Film Fiktion Produktion GmbH |

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SYNOPSIS

Frank, a man with a spotless record, robs an armored car and then turns himself in. His motives are a mystery. In prison, he crosses path with the unscrupulous and mistrustful Fuad, who is under protection from his Arab clan. To get closer to Fuad, Frank gets involved in the drug trade behind bars, eventually getting caught in the crossfire between rival German and Arab inmates. The only person Frank trusts on the inside is Susanna, a prison guard. Unbeknownst to Frank, Susanna is part of Fuad's dealings, but is also sexually involved with him. Nevertheless, the two become close. What only Frank knows is the real reason for his incarceration: his wife and daughter died in a tragic hit-and-run with Fuad behind the wheel. As he escaped punishment, Frank has been out to exact revenge ever since.

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DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

Martin Hawie & Laura Harwarth

FUTURE IS A LONELY PLACE, told by a man who intentionally gets himself incarcerated to take revenge for the murder of his family. How did the idea come about to tell this story of revenge based in prison?

Martin: Initially, it was the fact that he gave up his freedom of his own volition that captivated us. For most people, their world would collapse if their liberty was taken from them. But Frank no longer sees a world possible of collapse.

Laura: Frank makes a calculated decision to embark on an emotional and physical martyrdom and so began a journey through his basest instincts. He enters a place, as a naïve family without any prior record, characterized by power struggles, humiliation and brutal assaults, that quickly begins to influence his person. In prison, the martyr transforms gradually into a monster.

And the characters are in the end all trapped in themselves.

Laura: Yes. The prison walls visually represent the walls that our characters have constructed. Frank is trapped in his need for revenge. That is what drives him and simultaneously it is what drives him further and further towards rock bottom. His obsession robs him of any chance at a new beginning.

Martin: Fuad, too, is trapped in his family constructs, from which he seeks to escape. He is stuck in a place governed by archaic rules, where only the strongest survive and the defeated are subjected to humiliation. And Susanna is trapped by her feelings of guilt. She's suffering from the trauma of a suicide she was unable to prevent. Her behavior is indicative of her

rebellion against an opportunistic apparatus that cannot protect the individual.

The film does not deliver a realistic depiction of German prisons, on the contrary. It has some surrealistic elements. Was that one of the primary factors in choosing the motif?

Martin: Yes, the prison very much appears like a remnant from the Iron Curtain, which is precisely what adds to the feeling of imprisonment. It was last used four decades ago as a detention facility, but when those old steel doors open and you see the drawings on the wall left behind by the inmates it becomes clear, how many fates crossed paths and how many souls are bound to this building.

Laura: Of course, this is not a modern prison story and it was never our intent to realistically tell the story of modern day-to-day prison life in all its facets. The setting is a parable that represents our society and the reality outside. Different cultures, and languages collide and remain amongst themselves. A kind of microcosm. Here the seeds of racism, hate distrust are sown. Problems that unfortunately continue to plague our world. But you are right. There is something fable-esque about the film. We like it when the boundaries of a certain genre are pushed to their limits. Cinema is something abstract, like a dream.

What captivating is the triangular relationship that takes place in the film. Prison guard Susanna is the only female character. Which role does she play?

Martin: The prison guard is a central character as she embodies much of

that which does not exist in this desolate, macho world. She is an oasis in a brutal world. The empathy she exudes is soothingly jarring.

Laura: She may be the strongest character in the film. Susanna stands for humanity, life and hope in the film. For us, she is a symbol of that which neither of the two have and takes on the role of mother, savior and healer. Her escape is liberating. And at the same time, her pregnancy towards the end of the film signals Fuad's death sentence.

How did you decide on filming long sequences and to forgo cuts in the scenes?

Laura: It was important to us that we gave viewers the feeling that we were following the characters and to make their journey palpable without fragmenting it with excessive cuts. It was our view as well that fewer cuts help maintain the tension and make the claustrophobic atmosphere within the walls perceptible.

Martin: It may all seem natural, but it is meticulously planned choreography between actors and camera, much like a dance. And at the moment where the sequences cease being believable is where we decided to cut.

How was your experience with the actors on set?

Martin: We were incredibly fortunate to have such a highly talented and veteran cast. The film was physically demanding and the actors had to maintain the drama and tension for minutes at a time. Timing is

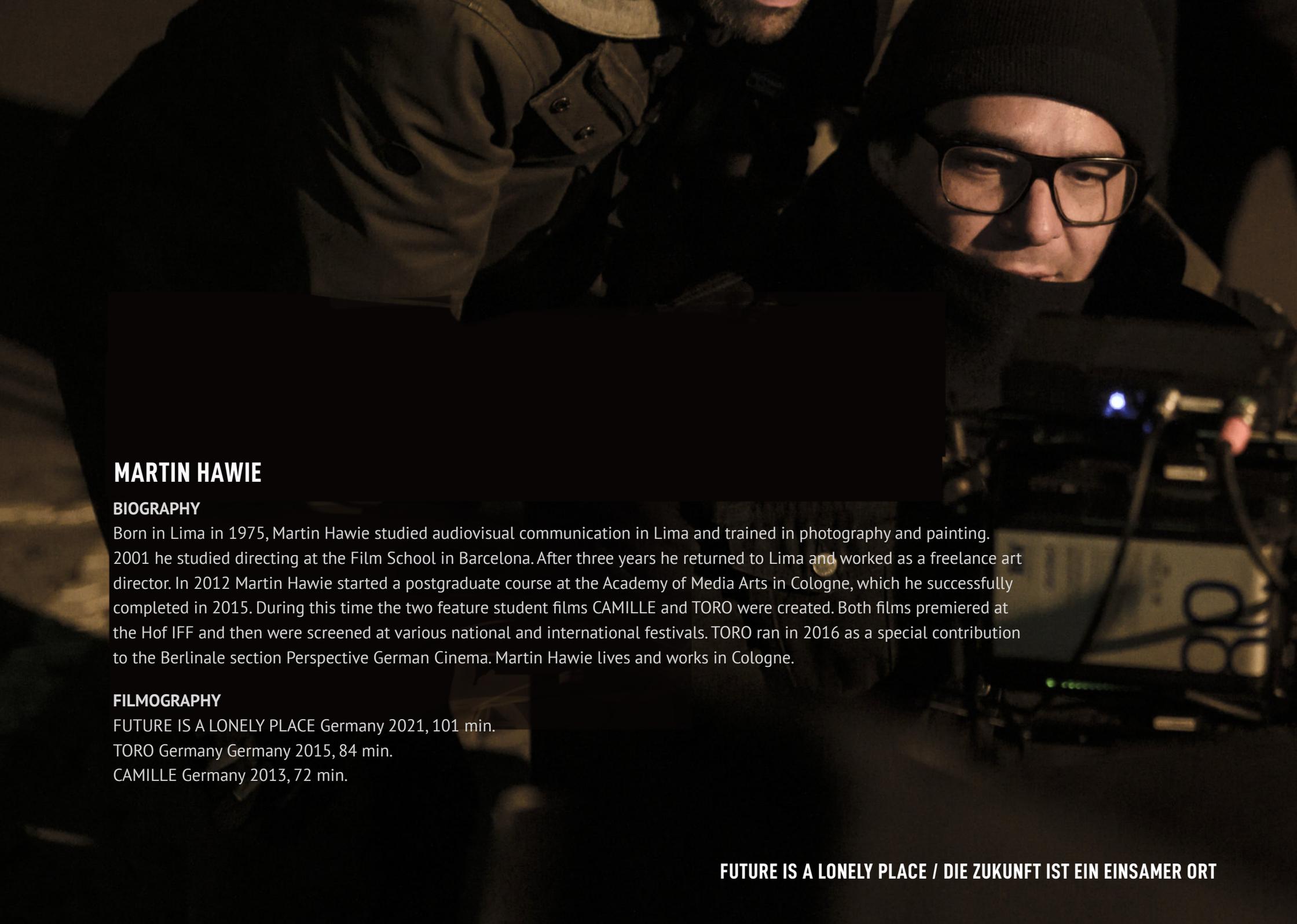
everything for such shoots, as is an understanding of the technical challenges present in such long takes.

Laura: It's a fantastic feeling when you see the entire ensemble working as one. They are all wonderful, creative individuals, from whom we both learned a great deal. It was important to have a great deal of trust present in the collaboration so that we could give the actors the space they needed to feel out a scene. This helped create some fantastic moments on film.

In the end, Frank is unable to get past his desire for revenge. We as an audience learn as well that while Fuad did commit a hit-and-run, he too is a victim of his circumstance.

Martin: The film seeks to ask questions of guilt. Who in the end for the victim and who was the perpetrator? Between Frank and Fuad there is an antithetical metamorphosis. His revenge is unable to grant him what he lost, it does not offer him peace. He is left with his own guilt. And at the moment that Fuad dies, Frank is no longer sure what reason he has to live. He decided to choose death instead of life.

Laura: In the end, the central question the film seeks to raise is what does hate do to us? What remains of our humanity when we are no longer able to forgive? We must be able to learn as people that hate only leads to more hate. It creates a never-ending spiral of violence that only leads to much worse.



MARTIN HAWIE

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Lima in 1975, Martin Hawie studied audiovisual communication in Lima and trained in photography and painting. In 2001 he studied directing at the Film School in Barcelona. After three years he returned to Lima and worked as a freelance art director. In 2012 Martin Hawie started a postgraduate course at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne, which he successfully completed in 2015. During this time the two feature student films CAMILLE and TORO were created. Both films premiered at the Hof IFF and then were screened at various national and international festivals. TORO ran in 2016 as a special contribution to the Berlinale section Perspective German Cinema. Martin Hawie lives and works in Cologne.

FILMOGRAPHY

FUTURE IS A LONELY PLACE Germany 2021, 101 min.

TORO Germany Germany 2015, 84 min.

CAMILLE Germany 2013, 72 min.

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A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark jacket, is looking off to the side with a serious expression. The background is dark and filled with the equipment of a film set, including scaffolding and lights.

LAURA HARWARTH

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Cologne in 1989, Laura Harwarth studied film and television production at the University of Media and Communication in Cologne. After completing her studies, she worked as a production assistant on various documentary film projects and later also as a production manager. In this context she occasionally supports student film projects at the Cologne Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. This is where the co-authorship with Martin Hawie to the feature film TORO developed, that was invited to various national and international festivals. Thereupon she developed the script for FUTURE IS A LONELY PLACE and thus makes her directorial debut. The company satire WARTEN AUF LOUIS and the future thriller ZONE are also under development. Laura Harwarth lives and works in Cologne.

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