



# The Girl and the Spider

a film by Ramon & Silvan Zürcher

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# SHORT SYNOPSIS & PRESS RELEASE

The Girl  
and  
the Spider

Lisa is moving out. Mara is left behind. As boxes are shifted, walls painted and cupboards built, abysses begin to open up, yearnings fill the room and an emotional rollercoaster is set in motion. A tragicomic catastrophe film. A poetic ballad about change and transience.

The Swiss twin brothers Ramon and Silvan Zürcher compose a poetic panopticon of forms of human relationships, that meanders between a study of everyday life, a fairy-tale and a psychological portrait of a brittle world. After their Berlinale-hit *THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT* (2013), *THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER* is the second instalment of a trilogy about human togetherness. A ballad about the need for closeness and the pain of separation.

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## LONG SYNOPSIS

The time has finally come: LISA is moving into her first apartment on her own. For years she has lived in a flat share with MARA and MARKUS, her move now means the end of an era. While Lisa is looking forward to the change, for Mara it triggers a rollercoaster of emotions.

The day before moving day, boxes are being packed, clothes sorted and the first pieces of furniture go into Lisa's new apartment. Lisa's mother ASTRID is there to help too. Amid all the hustle and bustle, longings, secret desires and tensions come to the surface. As is the case with Lisa and her mother, who flirts with the removal man JUREK. A strange dynamic also emerges between Jurek's helper JAN and Mara. And then, KAREN, the new neighbour turns up. Lisa gets on with her straight away, but Mara is jealous of her.

In the evening, Lisa organizes a leaving-do at her old apartment. Jan comes by too, but instead of getting closer to Mara, he ends up in bed with the neighbour KERSTIN, whose strange flatmate NORA is an eerie bystander throughout the night.

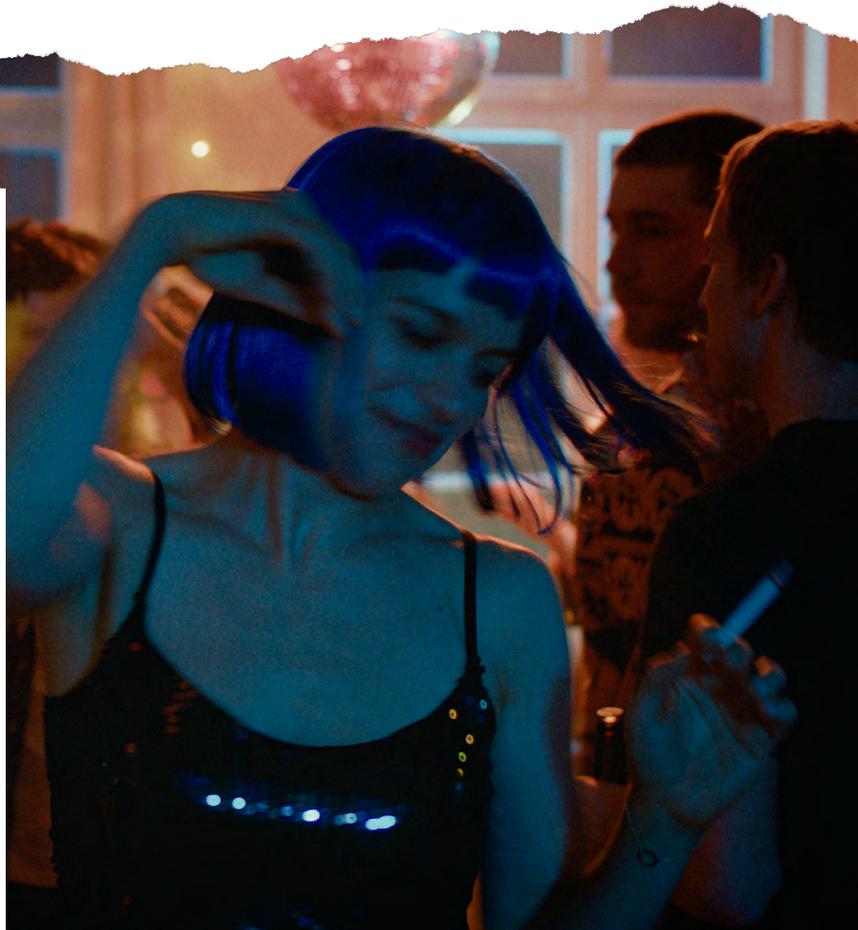
After a feverish night, Lisa's moving day is upon them. Astrid again, lends them a hand, even though her strife with her daughter becomes increasingly tense. Meanwhile, Jan becomes a pawn in a merry-go-round of desire, in which MS. ARNOLD, who once kidnapped the neighbour's cat, and a young pharmaceutical assistant to whom Mara feels strangely attracted also make an appearance. And then there's also the mysterious chambermaid who years ago, used to live in Lisa's old room and is said to have taken off on a cruise ship. Surrounded by change, Mara's desire for connection emerges ever more strongly, turning the room into a whirring body of longing.

# DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

As with our first film *THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT*, which was about a family bound by constraints, in *THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER* we once again take a familiar, everyday scene as the starting point for the film. This time it's about moving house. It forms the framework for us to tell the story of the separation between the two friends, Mara and Lisa. Lisa moving out breaks up the unity her and Mara have forged over the years. One force trying to push away collides with another seeking closeness and shatters the world around them.

Lisa's move triggers a back and forth of longing for closeness and the pain of separation and loneliness. The principles of proximity and distance manifest themselves not only between Mara and Lisa, but permeate the entire film - a dynamic that never comes to rest. The characters wander through a fragile cosmos as if driven by their desires, in which harm can be inflicted just as quickly, as affection or intimacy can be shown.

Ramon & Silvan Zürcher



MARA Henriette Confurius  
LISA Liliane Amuat  
ASTRID Ursina Lardi  
JAN Flurin Giger  
JUREK André M. Hennicke  
MARKUS Ivan Georgiev  
KERSTIN Dagna Litzenberger Vinet  
NORA Lea Draeger  
KAREN Sabine Timoteo  
MS. ARNOLD Margherita Schoch  
PHARMACY EMPLOYEE Seraphina Schweiger  
CHAMBERMAID Birte Schnöink  
ELENI Yuna Andres  
HAMID Dorian Heiniger  
EMMA Ella Gfeller

Cinematography Alexander Haßkerl • Sound Balthasar Jucker •  
Lights Oliver Geissler • Production Design Sabina Winkler &  
Mortimer Chen • Costumes Anne-Sophie Raemy • Make-up  
Simone Enkerli • Casting Ulrike Müller • Line Producer Andrea  
Blaser • Assistant Director Nicole Schink • Production Manager  
Anna Fanzun • Editing Ramon Zürcher & Katharina Bhend • Music  
Philipp Moll • Sound Design Felix Bussmann • Sound Mix Denis  
Séchaud • Visual Effects Eugen Danzinger • Colour Grading  
Roger Sommer

Production Beauvoir Films, Aline Schmid & Adrian Blaser •  
in co-production with Zürcher Film and Swiss Radio and Television

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SWISSLOS / Kultur Kanton Bern • Cinéforum & Loterie  
Romande • Kulturfonds Suissimage • Aargauer Kuratorium •  
Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien (BKM) •  
Burggemeinde Bern



# RAMON ZÜRCHER

Script, director, editor



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Ramon Zürcher (\*1982) after high school enrolls in a preliminary design course at the Biel/Bienne School of Design (Switzerland). From 2002 to 2005 he completes a Visual Arts degree at the Bern School of Arts (HKB). In 2005, he is awarded the Kiefer Hablitzel Prize (national scholarship) for his art videos. Subsequently, from 2006 to 2014 he studies Film Directing at the German Film and TV Academy Berlin (DFFB). He completes his degree with his first feature-length fiction film *THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT (DAS MERKWÜRDIGE KÄTZCHEN)*, which premieres at the Berlinale Forum in 2013 and is shown at numerous international festival (incl. Toronto, Cannes, Viennale, New Directors/ New Films) and receives several awards (incl. the New Talent Grand PIX Award at CPH:PIX, the Special Jury Award for Best First Film at the IFF Minsk, the SIYAD-Film Critic Prize at the IFF Antalya and the "Standard" – Audience Jury Award at the Viennale). *THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER* is his second feature-length film.

## FILMOGRAPHY (Script, director, editor)

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2013 | <i>DAS MERKWÜRDIGE KÄTZCHEN<br/>(THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT)</i>    |
| 2021 | <i>DAS MÄDCHEN UND DIE SPINNE<br/>(THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER)</i> |

# SILVAN ZÜRCHER

Script, co-director, co-producer

Silvan Zürcher (\* 1982) from 2002 to 2008, he studies philosophy, film studies and German studies at the Universities of Bern and Zurich. Simultaneously he works as a projectionist at a cinema in Bern. From 2009 to 2014 he studies film production at the German Film and TV Academy Berlin (DFFB). During his degree, he produces a series of short and medium-length films. On the side, he works as a director's assistant and develops his own material for fiction films. 2013 he completes his degree with his first feature-length fiction film *THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT*, which goes on to receive several awards.

## FILMOGRAPHY (Production)

- 2013 *DAS MERKWÜRDIGE KÄTZCHEN*  
(*THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT*)  
(Dir: Ramon Zürcher)
- 2021 *DAS MÄDCHEN UND DIE SPINNE*  
(*THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER*)



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# INTERVIEW WITH RAMON AND SILVAN ZÜRCHER

The Girl  
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*Your first film THE STRANGE LITTLE CAT caused somewhat of a hype at the Berlinale in 2013 and was then screened at over 80 festivals worldwide and became a big critics' favourite. How did you experience this success?*

Ramon: We spent over a year on the road with the film and were able to present it in many countries and cities and had countless exciting encounters. The film was then also released in several countries, including Germany, France, Switzerland and the USA. It was an exciting journey that we were not quite prepared for, especially since our previous short and medium-length films were hardly shown at festivals. Maybe that's why it took some time to get back into the energy of creative writing, to focus and develop new characters and scenes. Looking back, it was an exciting time.

*With your second film THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER, you at first planned to film in Germany. At the last moment, it became a Swiss production. How did that happen?*

Silvan: We both studied in Berlin at the DFFB and due to all the attention we received for *LITTLE CAT*, it didn't take long for us to get in touch with several producers. Then, in a roundabout way, we came across Aline Schmid, who runs the production company Beauvoir

Films alongside Adrian Blaser in Geneva. With her, we further developed *THE SPIDER* and eventually financed and shot it in Switzerland.

*How did you develop the material together?*

Ramon: While we were travelling from one festival to the next with *LITTLE CAT*, Silvan started working on *THE SPIDER*. At that time, I was working on a family drama called *DER SPATZ IM KAMIN (THE SPARROW IN THE CHIMNEY)*. We then decided to create *THE SPIDER* together first, simply because the material was further along. Then, while working on the script, we came up with the idea of making a loose trilogy about human togetherness.

Silvan: The inspiration behind *THE SPIDER* in fact was a real event. Ramon and I lived together for a couple of years in Berlin, before he moved out. This special break up of a symbiotic foundation was the starting point for the story, which mainly focuses on separation and transience.

*What is the title about?*

Ramon: The spider is a very self-sufficient animal, that can quickly create a new home with its own resources in different places. Its

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web, however, is a fragile, temporary home, of which only a delicate trace remains as time goes by. Like the spider weaves its web, the film weaves together characters and stories. An increasingly complex web in which the characters breathe a longing for freedom, for boundlessness.

*How autobiographical is the film?*

Silvan: We did actually experience certain scenes like this or in a similar way, but when writing we condensed them, connected them in new ways and also paired them with fantastical elements.

Ramon: Instead of a purely naturalistic portrayal, we are fascinated by raising the degree of stylisation in phases. By combining minimalist storytelling with this fantastical dimension, we try to create a subjective interpretation of reality.

*Where did you shoot?*

Ramon: We filmed in the empty premises of a former beer brewery in Bern. There we had studio-like conditions and were able to recreate all the apartments. At first, we had also looked for original locations, but couldn't find anything that coincided with the floor plans in the script or that had the necessary shooting conditions we required. We had almost agreed to two apartments, when suddenly the opportunity with the brewery presented itself, at the very last minute.

Silvan: We put a green screen up in front of each window, so that in post-production, we could add in the exterior views we shot in Bern and to a small extent in Berlin. This was extremely time-consuming

in post-production, but it did allow us more time for the shoot itself, especially since we didn't have to travel from one place to another with the whole crew.



*Even though the film mainly takes place in the two apartments, it also ventures outside a couple of times ...*

Ramon: The two houses with Lisa's old flat-share and her new flat form the central heart chambers. However, the film also opens up in two directions: to outside spaces on the one hand and the characters' spaces of memory and longing on the other. Thus dreams and flashbacks become a part of the action. Our goal was to create a poetic everyday world.

*How was work on set like? And can you say something about the style of the production?*

Silvan: As with our first film, Alexander Haßkerl did the camera work. Ramon directed, I was 1st assistant director.

Ramon: Like *LITTLE CAT*, *THE SPIDER* is also characterised by the contrast of a mostly static camera and a dynamic staging. The position of the camera was already considered in the script in order to coordinate the editing rhythm and the mise-en-scène.

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*The music plays a central role. How did you come up with it?*

Ramon: The chambermaid's piano has a special meaning in the film, so early on, it became clear to us that the piano would become the central instrument of the film score. We came across the Belarusian waltz "Gramophone" by Eugen Doga by chance. We like its dynamics and melancholy - and the contrast it forms to the rather dramatic mood of the film. What we love most about "Voyage, Voyage" by Desireless is the 80's pop and the longing, which fits well with Mara's state of mind.

*Do you have role models that have influenced you?*

Ramon: I am impressed by Angela Schanelec's work. In her very personal and idiosyncratic films, I often get the feeling I am meeting people. The mixture of formal rigour and great sensitivity and the unpredictability of the narrative enliven me, make me happy. Bresson and his condensed film language, as well as Bergman's and Antonioni's treatment of the body and psyche, also never cease to inspire me greatly.

Silvan: And Rohmer's work. His films breathe a simplicity without ever being banal. He manages to create vivid characters and poetic, philosophical worlds quite effortlessly and light-footedly. The rich colours in his films also inspire us. But there are also influences from literature. For example, the characters in Salinger, often outsiders, unconventional and touching. Those aspects also crop up, again and again.

*What can we expect in the third part of the trilogy?*

Silvan: The third part, *THE SPARROW IN THE CHIMNEY* will focus on the family again: this tricky structure we are born into and which for a long time, we accept as matter of course and we never question. At the centre of the action is an all-controlling mother. It is all about the rebellion of the family members, who no longer accept that their lives are constantly determined by others. Rebellion is to become the pulsating heart of the film.

Ramon: The film is to be a Swiss-German co-production. We are very much looking forward to this collaboration and are excited about the adventure that awaits us.





**Henriette Confurius** made her acting debut at the age of ten in the TV comedy *DIE MEUTE DER ERBEN* (2001). In 2004 and 2009, she was awarded the Newcomer Award at the German Television Awards. On the big screen she can be seen in a supporting role in Julie Delpy's historical drama *THE COUNTESS* (D/F/USA 2009) and in Dominik Graf's Berlinale competition entry *BELOVED SISTERS* (2012). She received a Bambi for her role in *TANNBACH* in 2015. In 2018 she played the lead role in the coming-of-age drama *GOLDEN TWENTIES*, as well as in Stefan Ruzowitzky's adaptation of *NARZISS UND GOLDMUND*. In 2019 she could be seen in the Netflix series *TRIBES OF EUROPA*.



**Liliane Amuat** already as a drama student, performs at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna at the Schauspielhaus Zurich and at the Wiener Festwochen. From 2011 to 2015 she was part of the ensemble at the Burgtheater in Vienna, then at the Theater Basel. In 2019 she moved on to the Residenztheater in Munich. She is nominated for the Swiss Film Award for her leading role in the feature film *SKETCHES BY LOU*, and also receives the Swiss Television Film Award in 2017 for *LOTTO* by Micha Lewinsky. In 2020 she was awarded the Kurt Meisel Prize.



**Ursina Lardi** grew up in Switzerland. She moved to Berlin in 1992, where she studied at the Ernst Busch Acting School. Performances at several theatres follow, including at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin, the Schauspiel Frankfurt and the Berliner Ensemble. She has been a permanent ensemble member of the Berliner Schaubühne since 2012. Ursina Lardi is most notably known for her TV appearances or for her role Michael Haneke's *THE WHITE RIBBON*. In 2014 she received the Swiss Film Award for her role in *TRAUMLAND* (2013). Ursina Lardi can also be seen in successful Swiss films such as *AKTE GRÜNINGER* or *DER VERDINGBUB*. In 2017, she was awarded the Hans Reinhart Ring, the most acclaimed award in Swiss theatre.



## BEAUVOIR FILMS

produces author-driven documentary and fiction features for festival and theatrical releases as well as TV. We work with directors who have a distinct visual and narrative approach and strive to push the boundaries of storytelling in compelling and creative ways. The film *WALDEN* by Daniel Zimmermann receives the Special Jury Prize 2018 at the Karlovy Vary Festival and is presented at the Sundance Festival 2019. *CLOSING TIME* by Nicole Vögele wins the Leopard Jury Prize at the Locarno Festival 2018. *THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER* will begin its career 2021 at Berlinale Encounters. The documentary *THE ART OF SILENCE* about Marcel Marceau, directed by Maurizius Staerkle Drux, and *SIRIRI - THE CARDINAL & THE IMAM* by Manuel von Sturler (*WINTER NOMADS*) are currently in post-production.



After graduating from the University of Freiburg, Aline Schmid studied scriptwriting in Stuttgart. With Intermezzo Films (Geneva), she has produced several creative documentaries and fiction features, such as *SONITA* (Sundance / IDFA), *BROKEN LAND* (Locarno / Rotterdam), *CANTOS* (Dok.Munich / Mostra Sao Paulo) and *HORIZONTES* (Karlovy Vary). She participated in the programs Emerging Producer (Jihlava 2013) and Producer on the Move (Cannes 2015).



Adrian Blaser comes to Lausanne in 1992 to study. He works for several television and cinema productions (e.g. *CORN IN PARLIAMENT* and *CLEVELAND VS WALL-STREET* by Jean-Stéphane Bron, *HOME* by Ursula Meier). In 2007, he produces at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade and becomes 2011 executive producer of Bande à part Films in Lausanne (*THE BLOCHER EXPERIENCE*, *THE BRIDGES OF SARAJEVO*, *MOKA*, *THE PARIS OPERA*). He joins Aline Schmid at Beauvoir in 2017, both producers are members of the European Film Academy EFA.

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# The Girl and the Spider

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Switzerland

2021

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