

THOUGHTS FOR THE EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE, ABOUT THE FILM AND THE PEOPLE IN RUSSIA AND GERMANY - from Jochen Greve  
Panel discussion participants

Every culture is based on RITUALS and KNOWLEDGE.

There are enough rituals, especially in the relationship between Germans and Russians: Fear, defence, superiority reflexes, feelings of inferiority, but also admiration.

Knowledge is even less. What do we really know about Russia and Germany? Almost nothing at first hand.

As a scriptwriter, I am always interested in the dramatic moment, the aggravation, the paradox, the contrast, the contradiction. This is the material, the nucleus of every story - and the way man deals with it.

In my work with German-Russian youths and students in the first Bavarian-Russian Youth Culture Forum, this was my approach: What do we know about each other? As a rule, these are just prejudices. There is a very interesting Soviet feature film from the early 1920s: "The strange adventures of Mr. West in the land of the Bolsheviks". It is about the prejudices of an American traveller about the young Soviet Union - and how Russian filmmakers imagined and filmed these American prejudices about the Soviet man in 1924.

On the basis of this idea, we, my Russian colleague Andrey Bogatyrev and I, have collected and discussed the prejudices of the young people, who as people in Germany have about Russia. From icy cold, over vodka, deep soul, great human empathy to the exact opposite. By collecting and discussing these spontaneous ideas, the first ideas of how to develop a film material from them quickly became concentrated: For example, about people who correspond to these prejudices (although the Russian side is still missing of course), who meet each other and seem to feel confirmed in their simple and spontaneous judgments and opinions. But in the course of the film and the longer they are together, they will inevitably be confronted with the real people behind these prejudices and gain new, completely different experiences - and thus real knowledge.

At the same time, the discussion about our prejudices led to an exchange of views on filmic attempts at implementation, dramatic basic principles of film and theatre, the dramatic design of human figures and their feelings, the differences between Russian and German films, but also on the many overlaps and common views that make up a good film. It was precisely this exchange that was unusually interesting, as it showed the differences, but also the astonishing similarities in the views of German and Russian filmmakers before a common goal, the production of a "good" film.

It would certainly be exciting if we could continue this "experiment" on the Russian side as well. Because so far we have naturally only been able to capture the German side, its prejudices and the reflection on it. How do Russian young people and students see us Germans? How does this correlate and overlap with German prejudices? How can one merge both perspectives on film history and completely new perspectives on us as ordinary people in two countries?

I would be pleased if we could continue the project started in Munich and the exchange with our Russian colleagues in Moscow.

**Jochen Greve** studied in Munich's Communication Studies, Theatre Studies, Contemporary History, according to which he worked for a number of universities, cinemas and television stations. a. as receptionist, producer and producer. Since 1985 he has been a freelance film and television director. Since 2009 he has been a member of the board of directors of the German Screenwriter Association. In 2010, together with other television viewers, he greenly declares Germany's academia for television.