



Robert Cambrinus

FAMILY CONSTELLATIONS

Familienaufstellung





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**We are worst bent and tormented
by invisible hands.**

*Thus Spoke Zarathustra,
Friedrich Nietzsche*

Short Synopsis

Friedrich Nietzsche's Zarathustra returns in the shape of a female travelling teacher seeking shelter at the Alpine chalet of a bourgeois family. The mother rejects the stranger outright. The son's girlfriend does not understand her teaching. The father finds it trite as he has heard it all before. The son, however, is encouraged by the teacher's words. He feels pressured into a career as a lawyer by his dominant father. All the son really wants is to become a writer and "to be free". But the mix of philosophical aspiration and petty-bourgeois attitudes proves explosive.

Original Title
English Title
by

Familienaufstellung
Family Constellations
Robert Cambrinus

Premiere

New Horizons Film Festival
(Wroclaw, Poland)



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All roles are played by shop-window mannequins.

Crew

Writer/Director	Robert Cambrinus
Art Director	Anita Kern
Camera/Sound/Edit	Robert Cambrinus
Dialogue Recording	Martin Laumann
Casting (Mannequins)	Joana Mirow
Drone Operator	Ralf Moschitz
Props Maker	Peter Marchart
Taxidermist	Helmut Raith
Sound Mixer	Martin Laumann
Shellac Digitization	Franz Masser
DCP Production	Wolfgang Pielmeier
Stills Photographer	Vilma Pflaum
Stills Post Production	Thomas Bakos
Producer	Robert Cambrinus

Technical Specs

Genre	Drama
Running Time	126 min
Production	Austria 2021
Language	German (English subs)
Shooting Format	HD
Aspect Ratio	16:9 (DCP 1.85:1)
Sound	Stereo 3.0

Cast

	Voices
Father	Hannes Bickel
Son	Samuel Pock
Teacher	Dolores Winkler
Mother	Vanessa Payer Kumar
Girlfriend	Roswitha Szyszkowitz
Interviewer	Martin Gross



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About the puppets

Pierre Albert-Birot, a poet and playwright with Dadaist leanings, writes in a Parisian magazine in 1924: “The actor from flesh and blood has a heart and admirable joints. That is all too marvellous, walks all by itself. I want an actor from cardboard, who doesn’t have feelings and walks awkwardly. I want an actor who isn’t human. Only he will be wonderfully human, only he will not play a role. He will be the character.”

“The artificial body, the puppet (also marionette, mannequin, waxwork, robot) as an opponent or double of modern man merges the highest fascination with the deepest horror.” (Uta Brandes in her preface to Tom Bieling’s *Gender Puppets*, 2008)

From Fritz Lang’s robot in *Metropolis* to Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* we find countless versions of artificial humans in film history. Shop-window mannequins have played almost no part so far. But on closer inspection their function as an image of man is compelling. >

Director’s Statement

A question of form

A key aspect of my work concerns the destruction of illusion. I propose that it is not the “willing suspension of disbelief” (Samuel T. Coleridge) that brings about an immersive film experience, as is widely claimed, but rather the opposite: the awareness of the artificiality of the setup facilitates an uncompromised engagement with the

film’s subject — what it is all about. I do not want to entertain an audience that sits back and passively consumes a spectacle. Manipulating an audience’s emotions covertly, may help to make them believe they are witnessing something moving or meaningful. But exposing the fictionality of film stimulates the intellect. The focus turns to meaning because the audience make their own discoveries. They become active participants and immerse themselves willingly.



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In the 1950s film stars like Anna Magnani, Silvana Mangano and Gina Lollobrigida were used as templates for the production of mannequins. Today facial casts of models are used while their bodies conform to current tastes and assume a set of recognizable postures, each representing a particular attitude.

I believe that we all assume a personal stance early on, a default position, which we adhere to for much, if not all, of our lives. Yes, we can move our limbs. Yet we can hardly change our position.

My mannequins are, like Albert-Birot's cardboard figures, the perfect actors and actresses as their inanimate surfaces serve as blank canvasses, on which to project the images. They do not play roles. They are what they are — and what we see in them.

Shop-window mannequins conform to a socially and economically determined ideal in respect of looks, body shape and clothing with the intention to prompt the onlooker to aspire to this ideal (by buying the merchandise on display). At the same time, this constructed ideal must not be too far removed from the real-world experience of potential customers so that they are able to identify with the idealised effigy.

Therefore, decorators and marketing managers prefer to rely on gender politics in shop windows that are either conservative or, at least, clichéd. Mannequins have to be both aspirational (the ideal) and recognisable (the stereotype). It is this dual role that forms the basis for the relationship between onlooker and mannequin, in which both parties influence each other.



Director's Biography

Robert Cambrinus was born in Vienna and first studied economics and business management in Vienna and Cambridge (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). He worked as a business consultant in Berlin and became an industrial entrepreneur in Saxony (Germany). Then he moved to London to study drama/media at East 15 Acting School. During his first engagements as an actor he already started to develop his own film productions. His latest short film *A DAD* was submitted to the Oscars (Academy Awards) in 2018. *Familienaufstellung (Family Constellations)* is his first feature film.

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Director's Filmography

A DAD (Animation/AUT 2016/11 min)
I can't cry much louder than this (Essay Film/AUT 2013/11 min)
Home Video (Drama/UK 2011/15 min)
Commentary (Essay Film/UK 2009/15 min)
The Good Muslim (Drama/UK 2009/15 min)
Hil'jab (Micro Short/UK 2006/1 min)
Illegal (Drama/UK 2006/12 min)

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Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra

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A film for all and none

Producers and Rights Owners

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DOLORES WINLER SAMUEL POCH VANESSA PAYER KUMAR HANNES BICKEL ROSWITHA SZYSZKOWITZ
Writer/Director: ROBERT CAMBRINUS Art Director: ANITA KERN Manikins: JOANA MIROW Soundmix: MARTIN LAUMANN