

Script: Stephan Kolditz, Xavier Koller
Camera: Pio Corradi
Editing: Patricia Rommer
Sound: Heinz Ebner
Musik: Kol Simcha

Original Version: German (English subtitles)
Art Direction: Peter Manhardt
Cast: Ulrich Noethen, Heike Makatsch, Jasmin Tabatabai, Marcus

Thomas, Sara Föttiger, Annette Felber, Katharina Blaschke, Leif Lijeroth, Inger Nillson, Rudolf Wessely, Horst Krause
Production: Catpics AG, Thomas

Wilkening Filmgesellschaft, Dor Film, SF DRS, Teleclub
World Rights: Catpics AG

Xavier Koller

GRIPSHOLM



2000 | 35mm | colour | 97' | Original Title: Gripsholm

A sweeping, wide-screen portrayal of friendships savored on the cusp of history, *Gripsholm* is an involving, beautifully shot period drama that reinvigorates familiar elements. Margin German writer Kurt Tucholsky's semi-autobiographical novel *Schloss Gripsholm* with elements from the scribe's own life, Swiss director/writer Xavier Koller and German scripter Stefan Kolditz have come up with an emotionally dense "Summer of 32" that melds the last-gasp frippery of pre-Nazi Europe with moving portrayal of how relationships can be reshaped by exterior circumstances without denying the sincerity of their origins. [...] Koller gives the material an impressive flow and suppleness, aided by nimble Cinemascope camerawork by Swiss D.P. Pio Corradi and a big screen score that matches the visuals. VARIETY, November 20-26, 2000

Berlin, 1932. The summer before the National Socialist Party comes to power. Kurt Tucholsky, a pugnacious Jewish essayist and journalist with a clear vision about Germany's future, travels to Sweden to spend the summer at Gripsholm Castle, together with his girl friend Lydia, nicknamed The Princess. Known as an author of very ironic novels, he is also a celebrated librettist and writer of risqué chansons for various Cabaret shows of Swinging Berlin. Two of their best friends, Karlchen, a passionate hobby pilot, and Billie, the sensual cabaret star, join them for a while in their love nest in Sweden, adding some extra spice to their leisure time. But the past reaches Kurt at his vacation retreat and his future looks grim, for the German Reichswehr filed charges against him, based on his editorial, headlined "Soldiers are Murderers". Sensing the "Brown Danger" looming over the horizon, Kurt decides not to return to Germany. "One always thinks love outlasts time, but time always outlasts love", Tucholsky wrote in his famous novel, this movie is based on. That's what our four friends, Kurt, Lydia, Karlchen and Billie come to realize at the end of their sensual, boisterous, melancholic and bittersweet summer journey to the north. Soon nothing will be the same ever again.

Script: Xavier Koller, Feride Çiçekoglu
Camera: Elemer Ragalyi
Editing: Galip Iyitanir
Sound: Pavol Jasovsky
Musik: Jan Gabarek, Terje Raydal,

Arlid Andersen
Original Version: Turkish, Italian,
Swiss-German (English subtitles)
Art Direction: Kathrin Brunner
Cast: Nur Sürer, Necmettin

Çobanoğlu, Emin Sivas, Erdinç Akbas,
Yaman Okay, Mathias Gnädinger,
Dietmar Schönherr
Production: Catpics AG, Condor Films
World Rights: Catpics AG

Prizes: Bronze Leopard, Locarno International Film Festival (1990); Sergio Leone Award, Italy (1990); Oscar, Academy Award for Best Foreign Film (1991)

Xavier Koller

JOURNEY OF HOPE



1990 | 35mm | colour | 114' | Original Title: Reise der Hoffnung

Journey of Hope is a compassionate plea for humanity and tolerance, bound to stir up emotions. Director Xavier Koller wisely avoids one-sided polemics, but never leaves any doubt on which side he stands.

Variety, 10.12.1990

Xavier Koller creates a powerful bond between the audience and this family. A humanist with roots in the Swiss working class, he makes sure we know his characters as human beings - never mind that they're Turkish peasants lacking every rudimentary street smarts. Koller picks and chooses his moments carefully, alternating hum-drum and the horrific. The film has the nail-biting tension of a first-class thriller, steadily and unequivocally building to a shattering climax.

Film Comment, May-June 1991

This is the true story of a Turkish couple, Haydar and Meryem, who start their "Journey of Hope" from a small village in the mountains of South-East Turkey in September 1988. They decide to take their 7 year-old Mehmet Ali, the brightest and wittiest of their eight children, along: "He is a fresh seedling to grow roots in the new soil of your future" grandfather suggests. It is a journey, which is meant to take them from their poor country into rich Switzerland. The family has sold their livestock and their farmland in order to finance the trip to the supposed Paradise of milk and chocolate. Their first stop after leaving their Kurdish homeland is Istanbul, where they're stowed away on a freighter to Genoa. Once in Italy, they are taken to the mountains by smugglers and sent on towards Switzerland without guidance, despite the snow and the cold. Their Journey of Hope now turns into their worst nightmare.

Script: Xavier Koller, Walter Deuber
Camera: Elemer Ragalyi
Editing: Fee Liechti
Sound: Hans Künzi
Music: Hardy Hepp

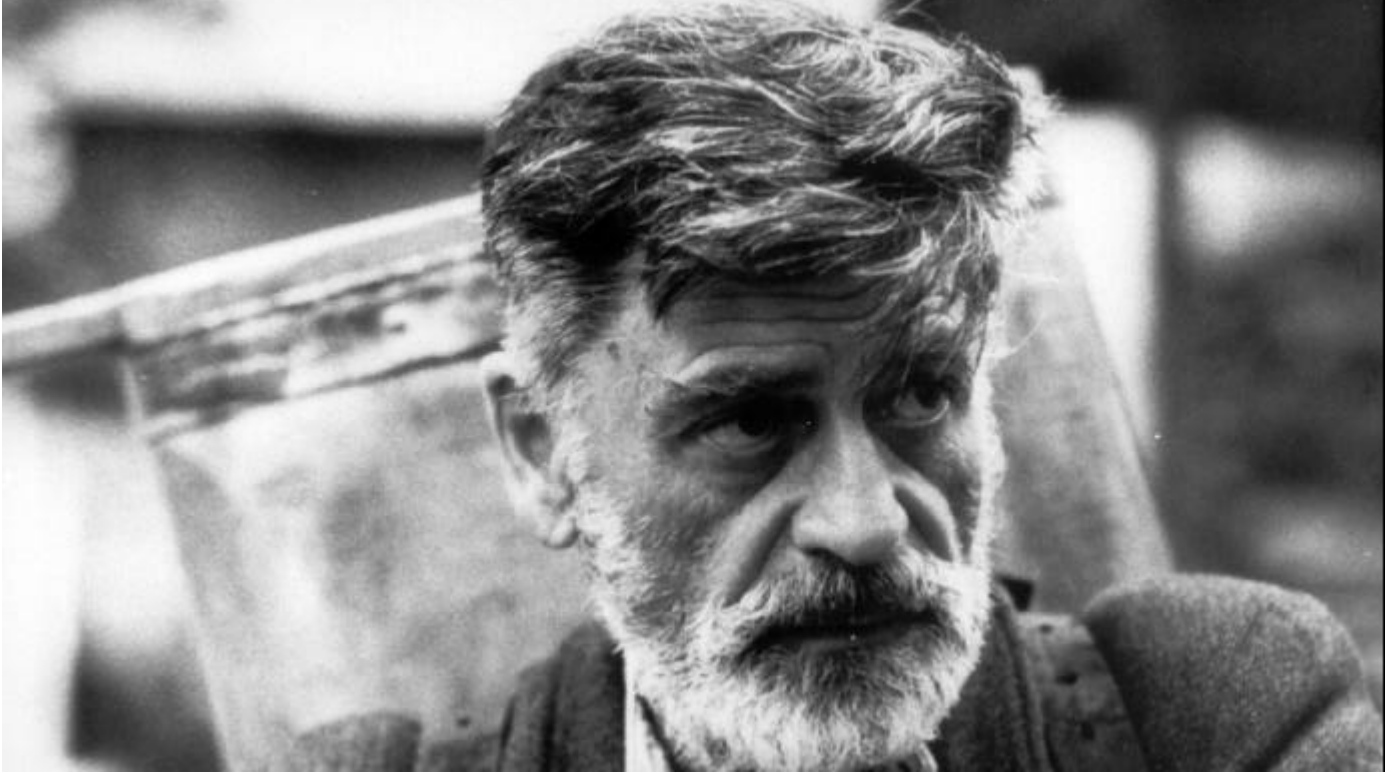
Original version: Swiss-German
(English subtitles)
Art Direction: Rolf Engler
Cast: Otto Mächtlinger, Dietmar
Schönherr, Renate Steiger, Heinz

Bühlmann, Giovanni Früh, Jürgen
Cziesla, Albert Freuler, Ernst Sigrist,
Ingold Wildenauer
Production: Catpics, SF DRS, ZDF, ORF
World Rights: Catpics AG

Prizes: Grand Jury's Special Prize,
Karlovy Vary Film Festival (1986);
FIPRESCI Award, Montreal Film
Festival (1986)

Xavier Koller

TANNER, THE REBELLION



1985 | 35mm | colour | 106'

Original Title: Der schwarze Tanner

Koller has succeeded in making plausible Tanner's authority-defying stand as an early predecessor to today's young protestors. There is no nostalgia involved when he evokes the past. The general style is straightforward, unsentimental and authentic. Apart from a leisurely-paced first half, the pace is just right. Elemér Ragalyi's excellent lensing, in mostly subdued colors, is an important asset. *Variety*, 22.1.1986

Solothurn Film Days: The best of the features was undoubtedly *Der schwarze Tanner* by Xavier Koller, one of the best developed, scripted and acted films I've seen in a long time. The scenario, though depicting a serious situation in wartime Switzerland, is laced with humor...

Monthly Journal of the British Federation of Film Societies, April, 1986

19 41. World War II. Kaspar Tanner runs a farm in the mountains. In order to feed the population during the war, the Swiss Federal Government orders all land owners to grow grain and potatoes. Tanner is a true patriot and a democrat, prepared to defend his homeland at all times, but he nevertheless refuses to let be regimented by his own government. "Those steep mountain pastures of mine have been providing grass for my meagre livestock for generations to produce milk and cheese and I'll keep it that way the generations to come. The soil will be washed away from the rocks it is grabbing on to in this terrain as soon as I till it. I'm not going to destroy the nature of this land just to obey an unjust order of my government."

Threats of legal action and fines only make Tanner even more determined. His good sense of humour confuses the officials as well as it entertains his fellow farmers. After being their hero at first, he becomes the red herring of the community, as under the increasing governmental pressure all of his friends bend and obey. Isolated and with his back to the wall he finally gets arrested and is thrown into prison. Used to hardship throughout his life not even prison can break this upright man. His stoic stubbornness causes the officials even more headaches now than before up on his mountain farm.

Script: Xavier Koller
Camera: Hans Liechti
Editing: Fee Liechti
Sound: Peter Begert,
Stanislav Hrodmadnik

Music: Hardy Hepp
Original version: Swiss-German
(English subtitles)
Art Direction: Rolf Engler
Cast: Sigfrit Steiner, Paul Bühlmann,

Günter Lamprecht, Otto Mächtlinger,
Heinz Bühlmann, Giovanni Früh,
Emilia Krakowska, Erwin Kohlund
Production: Ciné Groupe
World Rights: Xavier Koller

Xavier Koller

THE FROZEN HEART



1979 | 35mm | colour | 108' | Original Title: Das gefrorene Herz

Xavier Koller's adaptation and direction of Meinrad Inglin's short story is spiced with a great sense of humor. A comedy at its best! He easily managed to broaden the slim Inglin text to the proportion of a full-length feature and paints a baroque, expressionistic picture of those two sleepy mountain villages and it's burlesque inhabitants. Koller enriched the piece by inventing new characters, creating fresh motivations and a fair amount of very funny situations to push the story forward. His ensemble of excellent actors, the atmospheric dense camera work by Hans Liechti, the extended use of make up as well as a unique costume design and art direction create a world of its own: A fairy tale of authentic, universal quality - and a lot of fun.

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 25.1.1980

Winter. Two small villages in the Swiss mountains: Vorderau and Hinterau. Two outlaws, an umbrella-mender and a basket-maker become friends. After one too many schnapps the umbrella-mender, searching for his lost love, freezes to death in the rugged forest between the two villages. The basket-maker finds the body of his friend and reports the death to the authorities of Hinterau. Since the dead man is entirely without means, his body is secretly smuggled to and fro over the border of the two communities, since each village wishes the other to pay for the funeral. Thanks to the cunning basket-maker the umbrella-mender is finally ceremoniously buried in Hinterau. The basket-maker, who had told his friend that he was done with women, meets the dead man's girl-friend, Rosy, who finally shows him that true love and lust really is worth dying for.

Script: James Redford
Camera: Andy Dintenfass
Editing: Anthony Sherin
Sound: Leslie Shatz, Patric Dodd
Musik: Dan Licht

Original Version: English
Art Direction: Linda Sheeris
Cast: Kiefer Sutherland, Marcus
Thomas, Melinda Dillon,
Pete Postlethwaite, Daryl Hannah,

Molly Ringwald, Bo Hopkins,
Russell Means
Production: Neverland Films
World Rights: Neverland Films

Xavier Koller

RING OF FIRE



1999 | 35mm | colour | 90' | Original Title: Ring of Fire

Rising rodeo bull-riding star Ely Braxton (Marcus Thomas) is recovering from injuries that almost took his life, but his determination to follow his father's footsteps as bull-riding champion. His brother, Hank (Kiefer Sutherland) is a rodeo clown, a bull-riding teacher. He developed a philosophy for riding bulls which is closer to meditation, opposing the teachings of his successful but violent father who's credo was to dominate and hate the creature underneath in order to succeed. As a stock provider for the bull-riding circuit Hank owns the un-ridden champion bull Zapata, the meanest creature on the tour. Even though the two work together at their home ranch and in the arena, Ely feels closer to his father's riding technique than to Hank's "dancing with bull philosophy". Their loving brotherly relationship is deteriorating rapidly when Ely starts dating the woman (Daryl Hannah) Hank is in love with. Alienated from anyone he loves, Ely must face his demons and finally encounters the most terrifying eight seconds of his life in pursuit of the championship when his draw is his brother's bull, Zapata.