



"AND ... ACTION!"

FILM HISTORY IN AND OUT OF PANKOW



Kultur- & Tourismusmarketing
Berlin-Pankow

Film Playground Pankow

A cinematic journey of discovery
for children and teenagers through
the district of Pankow

Dear friends and young film enthusiasts, dear guests,

I am very pleased to introduce our new tour specifically designed for children and teenagers! On this exciting tour, you will have the opportunity to discover the fascinating film and cinema history of our district, Pankow – from “Little Hollywood” to contemporary filming locations and cinemas.



Join us on a journey of exploration and learn all about the world’s first moving pictures, renowned shooting sites, and the historic film studios in Pankow. I hope you will be particularly enthused by the new tour focused on children’s and youth films that were produced in our district.

This tour complements our existing four themed routes that delve into the film and cinema history of the area. Together, they provide a comprehensive insight into the rich film heritage of Pankow. I am confident that you will find it as captivating as I do.

With warm regards,
Cordelia Koch
Mayor of Pankow

Film Playground Pankow – A Cinematic Adventure for Children and Teens in the District of Pankow.

Experience Berlin through the eyes of children and teenagers with this tour that explores filming locations and cinema history in Pankow.

Pankow is a family-oriented district, home to the largest number of families in Berlin. This makes it a fitting location to explore the film and cinema history from the perspective of children and teens. The tour leads to significant filming locations of important children’s and youth films set in Pankow. These stories not only showcase a world beyond adult perspectives but also reflect the tumultuous history of Berlin. Additionally, the tour reviews the importance of cinema in Pankow. To keep the experience engaging, some stations include small challenges to complete. If you are looking for more interactive tasks, visit the online version. There you will find quiz questions and tasks at each stop. The answers will add up to a secret word at the end. So, let’s head to the Film Playground Pankow!



Discover Pankow in a new way!

You can now experience fascinating film stories and walking tours digitally with the “Discover Pankow” web app. Just scan the QR code and dive into the film history of Pankow. Have fun!

**DISCOVER
PANKOW:**



1 Husemannstraße

Husemannstraße between Wörther Straße and Sredzkistraße, 10435 Berlin

Title *Kai aus der Kiste*
Country/Year DDR 1988
Director Günter Meyer
Duration 1 h 33 min / Color
Availability DVD; Prime Video

Kai aus der Kiste takes place in 1923, during Germany's hyperinflation. Money is losing its value at an alarming rate. Kai lives with his mother and two siblings in the working-class neighborhood of Prenzlauer Berg. The family struggles to get by, and Kai is always looking for ways to combat the poverty around him. When a wealthy American gum manufacturer comes to Berlin seeking a "King of Advertising" to promote his latest gum brand, Kai sees his chance. He hides in a box to be taken to the American, applying for the job. However, Kai faces competition from the experienced advertising man, Mr. Kubalski, leading to a fierce battle between them. The film is filled with Kai's creative advertising ideas and offers a light yet authentic depiction of early 1920s Berlin. There are also humorous nods to old silent films and musical interludes. The production of the 1988 film took place in Prenzlauer Berg, showcasing both the poor courtyards where Kai typically hangs out and the affluent streets where Mr. Kubalski lives. Husemannstraße plays a particularly prominent role as it was newly restored just before filming, highlighting its historic charm.



2 Playground at Helmholtzplatz

Raumerstraße 6, 10437 Berlin

Title *Spielplatz*
 (Documentary)
Country/Year DDR 1966
Director Heinz Müller
Duration 13 min / B&W
Availability DVD (included in Prenzlauer Berginale Kiezfilme 1965–2004)



Title *Einmal in der Woche schrein*
 (Documentary)
Country/Year DDR 1982
Director Günter Jordan
Duration 17 min / Color
Availability DVD (included in Prenzlauer Berginale Kiezfilme 1965–2004)



© DEFA Foundation/ M. Lösche

For nearly ten years, there has been a small film festival in the Pankow district. The "Prenzlauer Berginale" – the name is, of course, a reference to the major Berlinale – showcases feature and documentary films related to the famous neighborhood of Pankow and helps rediscover forgotten cinematic gems. Included among the rediscoveries are two short documentaries, *Spielplatz* and *Einmal in der Woche schrein*, that center on Helmholtzplatz. In *Spielplatz* from the 1960s, Helmholtzplatz is depicted as a green oasis amid the apartment buildings, a gathering place for children, mothers, grandmothers, chess players, and skat enthusiasts. Here, the neighborhood comes together, and everyone finds their place. A bit louder and less serene, *Einmal in der Woche schrein* from the early 1980s follows teens who hang out at Helmholtzplatz, flaunting their mopeds and showcasing the latest fashion trends. They have created a small club in a shop where they organize a concert for the rock band "Pankow" while enjoying Club-Cola and simple sandwiches. Helmholtzplatz remains a meeting point for young and old alike today. The films offer a time travel experience where one can see much has changed, but some things will always stay the same, even if they look different.



And action! Take a photo of you on or with your favorite playground equipment at the playground at Helmholtzplatz.

3 Intersection at Eberswalder Straße U-Bahn Station

Pappelallee 1, 10437 Berlin

Title *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*
Country/Year DDR 1957
Director Gerhard Klein
Duration 1 h 19 min / B&W
Availability DVD; Prime Video/
 alles kino

Title *Ikarus*
Country/Year DDR 1975
Director Heiner Carow
Duration 1 h 28 min / Color
Availability DVD

This is not just any street intersection; it is THE film intersection in Prenzlauer Berg and indeed all of Berlin! The film *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* from 1957 gave the area around the Eberswalder Straße U-Bahn station its nickname and is a true classic of Berlin cinema. *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* tells the story of young people's lives in East Berlin during the 1950s, when Berlin was still a city without a wall. The scars of World War II are still palpable, both in the urban landscape and among families. In the East, there is a lack of money, jobs, and housing, which is countered by socialist support from the youth organization FDJ. The West, while more glamorous and full of new opportunities, is not the paradise it seems. Violence is ever-present, and so is the longing for love and happiness. The meeting place for the boys and the girl Angela is the "corner", where they gather for music and dares – long before that term was even coined.

Since then, the "Ecke Schönhauser" has been featured in numerous films and is still regarded as the cinematic landmark of Prenzlauer Berg. With its unique street layout and elevated train tracks, it has high recognition value. For example, in the film *Ikarus* from 1975, we immediately see that the main character Mathias lives in an old building near the intersection with his mother. His parents are divorced, and Mathias's 9th birthday is approaching. When Mathias learns from his father about the Greek legend of Icarus, believing that his father will gift him a flight over Berlin for his birthday, disappointment looms. *Ikarus* is a sensitive portrait of a child of divorce, which remains just as relevant today as when it was made.



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S. Holstein, H. Schneider



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And action! Feel like a movie star and take a photo or video of yourself in front of the famous street intersection with the elevated train tracks!

4 Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Sports Park

Cantianstraße 24, 10437 Berlin

Title *1-2-3 Corona*
Country/Year D 1948
Director Hans Müller
Duration 1 h 26 min /
 B&W
Availability DVD

The great era of circuses is history, but clowns and performers still delight audiences of all ages in the ring. Most of the permanent circuses in Berlin are now located in the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district, with none remaining in Pankow. Before the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Sports Park was established, the famous Circus Barlay was once located here on an old parade ground. The film *1-2-3 Corona* is set in the circus world. In this film, "Corona" is not the name of a virus but a young performer who appears with her traveling circus in Berlin.

It's the summer of 1945, shortly after the end of World War II. Berlin lies in ruins. Schools are still closed, and between the rubble, juggling, magic, and trapeze performances take place. Corona meets two orphaned boys, Gerhard and Dietrich, who are engaging in black-market trading of coal and cigarettes. Due to a foolish mistake, the boys accidentally cause a serious accident involving Corona. Hospitals are overcrowded, and their circus abandons her, leaving Gerhard and Dietrich to care for her themselves. To cheer her up, the boys, under Corona's guidance, set up their own little circus. Eventually, even the director of the grand Circus Barlay takes notice of them.

Naturally, in this so-called "rubble film", there is little that resembles today's Berlin. However, *1-2-3 Corona* serves as an important and exciting narrative document portraying youth during times of great hardship and destruction, not allowing their dreams to be taken away.



©DEFA Foundation/H. Gehlen



And action! What act would you perform in a circus? Become the star of the ring and film yourself doing your act.

5 Film Theater Colosseum

Schönhauser Allee 123, 10437 Berlin

There are ten cinemas still operating in the Pankow district today, and among them, the Colosseum has perhaps the most unusual history. Everything started here with horses for the Berlin tram. The building was constructed in 1894 as a horse depot for the "Große Berliner Pferde-Eisenbahn AG". When horses were no longer needed for the tram, the stables were converted into a depot for tram cars. In 1924, the space was finally transformed into a cinema hall. The entrance and ticket area were decorated like a classic theater with columns. However, shortly after, the façade was simplified to allow ample space for film posters and neon signs. After World War II, the Colosseum briefly became a theater venue before resuming its operation as a cinema and becoming a premiere theater in East Berlin. After the reunification, the Colosseum was run by various major cinema chains, but it has always been a home for independent cinema, even serving as a venue for the Berlinale.



Today, after some renovations, the Colosseum operates as a mixed-use venue for cinema, culture, and events. So, you can now watch films, attend a cool Christmas market, or partake in small festivals here. However, there is still no space for horses. A few old columns in the interior and historical walls still remind visitors of the building's beginnings as a horse depot.

6 U-Bahn Hof Schönhauser Allee

Schönhauser Allee 75, 10439 Berlin

Title *Der tapfere Schulschwänzer*
Country/Year DDR 1967
Director Winfried Junge
Duration 1 h 07 min / Color
Availability DVD



©DEFA Foundation/A. Schittko

It's a beautiful summer day in Berlin. The fourth grader, Thomas, first takes his brother to kindergarten before heading to school. Thomas is a little dreamer who loves to get distracted by the hustle and bustle of the city. For instance, he prefers to take the U-Bahn between the Schönhauser Allee and Eberswalder Straße stations (which was called Dimitroffstraße back then) rather than walk the single station to school, so he can enjoy the exciting view from above. Yet something about this day feels too wonderful for school, and the train ride through the tunnel seems much more interesting to Thomas. As a result, instead of sitting in the classroom by 8 AM, the boy suddenly finds himself at Alexanderplatz, where many new buildings are being constructed. However, this will not be the most exciting experience Thomas has while skipping school ...

Der tapfere Schulschwänzer from 1967 follows its little hero on an almost documentary-like adventure through Berlin, starting in Prenzlauer Berg. At the beginning of the film, we see a chaotic street scene, hectic and loud, just as urban as it is today. And to be honest, one can understand Thomas – the U2 subway line, which sinks into the ground just after Eberswalder Straße, is indeed a fascinating part of Prenzlauer Berg!



And action! Hop on the U-Bahn U2 and ride back and forth between the Schönhauser Allee and Eberswalder Straße stations. Film what you can see out the window of the subway.



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7 Heinrich-Schliemann-Gymnasium Dunckerstraße 64, 10439 Berlin

Title *Sheriff Teddy*
Country/Year DDR 1957
Director Heiner Carow
Duration 1 h 08 min / B&W
Availability DVD

At the school on Dunckerstraße, conditions are dire: knuckle dusters fly through the classroom, forbidden magazines circulate, and wild brawls take place in the schoolyard. This chaos is caused by Sheriff Teddy, the new kid at school, in the film of the same name from 1957.

Sheriff Teddy's real name is Kalle; he recently moved from West Berlin, where he was the leader of a small gang. Now, Kalle quickly finds himself in trouble in Prenzlauer Berg, always talking back and filled with rage. His older brother gets him involved in shady smuggling deals. However, a compassionate new teacher ultimately brings Kalle onto the right path, and a classmate transforms from enemy to friend. *Sheriff Teddy* tells the story of a Berlin before the Berlin Wall, a city still permeated by two different political systems. Not only the boys are fighting in the schoolyard; the entire city is struggling to prove whether life is better in the East or the West. The DEFA film leaves no doubt about which side it supports. *Sheriff Teddy* is a film that embodies its time and, of course, contains elements of propaganda. However, how Kalle succeeds in leaving violence behind, finding new friends, and forging a new path for himself remains an engaging watch with a timelessly relevant message.

Kalle's new school in Prenzlauer Berg is today's Heinrich-Schliemann-Gymnasium, which is often prominently featured in visuals. According to the school's website, it aims "to build bridges". This certainly fits well.

8 Cinema Krokodil Greifenhagener Straße 32, 10437 Berlin

When it comes to cinema names, things can sometimes get a bit wild. For example, "Flea Cinema" was the nickname for small cinemas that usually lay outside the city center. They had nothing to do with the grand film palaces and were typically located on the ground floors of apartment buildings in vacant storefronts. They were also referred to as "hose cinema" or "narrow towel". The Krokodil cinema on Greifenhagener Straße is such a place. However, it was already planned as an integral part of the construction of the apartment building. In 1912, it opened under the name "Kino Nord". The inconspicuous entrance was directly off the street and led through a small ticket area to a long, narrow auditorium. It was a typical neighborhood cinema.



After the war, "Nord" continued operation until its closure in 1963. Curiously, the location stayed linked to the film business: it served as a warehouse for a carpentry shop that specialized in cinema seats. It wasn't until 1993 that films were once again shown here. Since 2004, it has been under new management and offers a program primarily dedicated to Central and Eastern European cinema, earning multiple awards for its independent programming. While the small cinema once had an astonishing 242 seats, it now holds only a third of that, but it offers much more comfort; each row now features a small table between the seats. With a history of over 110 years, the Krokodil cinema is one of the oldest in Berlin and is one of the very few storefront cinemas that has changed little in its structure over the decades.

9 Mural of Skladanowsky Film Rolls

Mühlenstraße 15, 13187 Berlin (behind the daycare)

Film and children – nowhere is this connection more vividly illustrated in Pankow than at Mühlenstraße 15. A large mural on a fire wall above a daycare centers on the early days of cinema and film in Berlin. It features a typical analog film strip with perforations on the sides. The scenes depicted show Berliners enjoying what were known as “living pictures” on a screen in the late 19th century: a juggler, an Italian folk dance, and especially a boxing kangaroo, which particularly excited audiences at the time.

These film scenes were filmed by the Skladanowsky brothers, Max and Emil, who presented them in 1895 at the famous Wintergarten variety theater in Berlin using a specially developed projector called the Bioskop. The very first screening, featuring eight different scenes, actually took place very close to the current mural, in a small establishment located at Berliner Straße 14. This establishment eventually became a full-fledged cinema, but that too no longer exists, and today, a supermarket stands in its place. A small mosaic strip in the pavement in front of the supermarket is the only remnant commemorating the site where cinema history was once made. The mural on Mühlenstraße has certainly left a more striking legacy. It has been there since 1997 and is almost 1,000 square meters in size, making it one of the oldest and largest murals in Berlin. It even extends into the daycare, allowing the famous film scenes by Max and Emil Skladanowsky to continue to amaze both adults and children today.



And action! Use the original film program from the Skladanowskys as inspiration for a photo or video. For example, box like a kangaroo or dance like a Cossack.



10 Carl-von-Ossietzky-Gymnasium

Görschstraße 42/44, 13187 Berlin

Title *Sonnenallee*
Country/Year D 1999
Director Leander Haußmann
Duration 1 h 41 min / Color
Availability DVD; Prime Video

It is the year 1973 in East Berlin. Micha and his friends live at the shorter end of Sonnenallee, in the shadow of the Berlin Wall, and are about to graduate from high school. The boys are preoccupied with whether to enlist for three years in the National People's Army to listen to forbidden rock music from the West and, of course, to think about girls. Sometimes they also enjoy frightening tourists from West Berlin who are visiting the East for fun.

In loose, historically not always accurate episodes, the film *Sonnenallee* from 1999 portrays the everyday madness of growing up under the conditions of “actually existing socialism”. It is an entertaining journey through the big and small worries that defined life in the eastern part of Berlin. The beautiful auditorium on the third floor of what is now the Carl-von-Ossietzky-Gymnasium serves as the auditorium of the “EOS Wilhelm Pieck”, which Micha and his friends attend in the film. Here, a memorable political event takes place, but Micha has eyes and ears only for his crush, Miriam.

The impressive old school complex in Pankow not only hosted engaged DDR students in *Sonnenallee*. In 1988, high school graduates there faced scrutiny from school authorities due to critical wall newspapers and signature lists, leading to an internal tribunal. Some students were even expelled. This harsh response became a scandal, with high school students from West Berlin expressing solidarity with their Eastern counterparts. But it wasn't until after reunification that the expelled students were finally able to graduate. Certainly, such harsh political realities are far removed from *Sonnenallee*. Perhaps this is also why the award-winning film was such a significant success at the box office.



And action! *Sonnenallee* ends with a large group dance scene in front of the Wall. Show off your wildest dance moves and film a small dance video in front of the school!



Delphi Filmverleih GmbH

Title *Der Greif*
Country/Year D 2023 (1 season, 6 episodes)
Director Sebastian Marka, Max Zähle
Duration Approx. 1 hour each episode / Color
Availability Prime Video

If you enjoy *Stranger Things* or *Dark*, a blend of fantasy mystery with retro charm, you might also like the series *Der Greif*. It is based on the same-named novel by Wolfgang and Heike Hohlbein from 1989. For the adaptation, the story is set in 1994 in the fictional small town of Krefelden, where 16-year-old Mark runs a record store with his older brother Thomas and his friend Memo. Joining the boys is Becky, who is new in town. There's a spark between her and Mark, but there's hardly any time for romance because a mysterious book and an old family tradition lead to Thomas being transported to a strange and eerie world ruled by a terrifying creature known as the Greif. Mark seems to have special abilities of which he was previously unaware. Together with Memo and Becky, he has no choice but to fight the Greif to save Thomas – and their world.

The six episodes of *Der Greif* are visually stunning, sometimes quite scary, and present a true fantasy experience. The brothers' record store, charmingly named "The Oracle of LP", adds to the grounded retro feel of the series. Filming took place in the courtyard of Heynstudios, which was also the site for an office set. The beautiful brick-look Heynstudios, with its versatile interiors, has become a popular filming location in Pankow in recent years, even hosting music videos.



Title *Alfons Zitterbacke*
Country/Year DDR 1966
Director Konrad Petzold
Duration 1 h 6 min / Color
Availability DVD; Prime Video

Zitterbacke – what a last name! No wonder that 10-year-old Alfons suffers because of it. But that's not the only problem for Alfons. The accident-prone boy always wants to do everything right and ends up sliding from one embarrassment to the next. It might happen that Alfons accidentally plans to eat 60 eggs, takes the biggest fish from his father, or causes a commotion at the swimming pool. He can never seem to please his father, who wants to make a real "Zitterbacke" out of him. Thankfully, Alfons has a vivid imagination, where he often escapes and is always the hero. Then he even decides to become an astronaut and starts training for his flight into space. But that only sets him on a path to more disasters ...

Alfons Zitterbacke from 1966 is the film adaptation of a beloved children's book classic by Gerhard Holtz-Baumert. Although primarily filmed in Jena, the swimming pool scenes were shot at Summer Pool Pankow, which had recently been built before the filming. The pool shines in vibrant colors in the film. In one of his fantasies, Alfons even manages to execute a perfect dive from the 10-meter platform. Unfortunately, that is no longer possible today. During the renovation of the Summer Pool in 2000, the diving platform was shortened. Alfons would now have to settle for 7.5 meters, which is still quite high.

In recent years, stories of Alfons Zitterbacke have been newly adapted, but only the charming original features the beautiful Summer Pool Pankow.



©DEFA Foundation/J. Borst



And action! How would you prepare for space? Make a short video with your ideas.



Discover Pankow in a new way!

You can experience fascinating film stories and walking tours digitally – with the "Discover Pankow" web app.



For more information and additional tours, please visit:

www.pankow-weissensee-prenzlauerberg.berlin/en/film-history-pankow

Tour at a glance

Start: Husemannstraße

Length: Approx. 11 km

Finish: Sommerbad Pankow

Duration: Approx. 45 min.



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