

of her father and thus is able to create a beautiful bowl that her sister is able to sell in Strobel's store. Will Marie be able to escape her abusive marriage and find a path to success in a profession that she is prohibited from pursuing?

The answer to these questions will determine the chance of both sisters for a self-determined life in which they are allowed to carve out a niche in a male dominated business. It is clear that the path to a happier personal life for the sisters requires a change in the abusive male behavior of the likes of Thomas Heimer or Friedhelm Strobel. The movie presents a positive male role model in the mild mannered glass painter Peter Maienbaum (Robert Gwisdek) who supports both sisters at the time when they are treated as outcasts. The American trader Max Miles also exhibits kindness and submits generous orders for "*Schalen und Glaskugeln für den Christbaum*" to pave the way for the economic success of the sisters. But while Miles seems to be an outsider who represents a more modern society that is not characterized by the 19th century tendency to suppress female ambitions, it is the older glass blower Wilhelm Heimer who intervenes on behalf of Marie in a critical moment of the conflict when he accepts Marie's more artistic glass products that do not compete with his more traditional glass wares. This business coexistence paves the way for a personal transformation apropos of a Christmas move.



Christmas Ornaments



Lauscha



Lauscha, Thüringen

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA Friday Film Fest Series



Die Glasbläserin (2016)

Directed by Christiane Balthasar

February 16th, 2024

• 6:30 PM •

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania

611 Spring Garden St.

Philadelphia, PA 19123

Support provided in part by the
Philadelphia Cultural Fund.



Die Glasbläserin

Director: Christiane Balthasar
Screenplay: Léonie-Claire Breinersdorfer
Camera: Hannes Hubach
Music: Johanna Kobilke
Production: Oliver Vogel
Editing: Andreas Althoff
Length: 88 minutes
Cast: **Luise Heyer** as Johanna Steinmann



Maria Ehrlich as Marie Steinmann
Franz Dinda as Thomas Heimer
Dirk Borchardt as Friedhelm Strobel
Robert Gwisdek as Peter Maienbaum
Max Hopp as Wilhelm Heimer
Ute Willing as Witwe Grün
Adam Richard Grimm as Juri
Johanna Bittenbinder as Marianne Bohn
Marc Barthel as Steven Miles

Literary adaption of the first volume of the Glasbläser-Trilogy by Petra Durst-Bennings. (Ullstein Verlag 2000)

Commentary by: Karl Moehlmann

“Die Glasbläserin”, a made for television movie, was first shown on Arte on December 9 2016 and on ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen) on December 12, 2016. It was the TV production with the highest rating during the Christmas season of that year.

Lauscha/Thüringen 1891

This historic drama takes place in the small town of Lauscha in Thüringen, to be precise in the *Thüringer Wald* in 1891. Family owned glass blowing businesses are the main industry of the region. The guild (*Zunft*) for this industry prohibits women from owning a business of this kind. The sisters Johanna and Marie Steinmann

are performing household chores for their father after their mother has died. All three must survive on the small income of the glass blowing business that their father operates. But when their father suddenly dies as well, the two sisters face a dire financial situation and a daunting dilemma. Marie, the younger of the two sisters, who has apprenticed with her father in the art of glass blowing and who also has a unique talent for glass painting, would like to continue the business on her own but is forbidden to do so. She is forced together with her sister Johanna to accept a poorly paid position with another glass blower in town, Wilhelm Heimer. Neither of the sisters is happy with this employment and they soon go in different directions to survive.

After an argument with Heimer, Johanna leaves the company and finds a position in the neighboring town of Sonneberg where she becomes a saleswoman in the store of Friedhelm Strobel. She advances to be the assistant of Strobel, improves her appearance with the help of a generous stipend by Strobel and gets in touch with influential customers. Strobel seems honorable and her path for professional advancement and personal emancipation looks promising. But is Strobel's generosity genuine or merely the pretext for more abusive and violent behavior?

Marie is forced to marry Thomas Heimer, the rough and volatile son of Wilhelm Heimer. He had beaten and raped Marie in Johanna's absence. Marie becomes pregnant with their daughter, but their marriage seems doomed because Marie is unwilling to submit to his ideas of male dominated marital roles. Whenever she can, she secretly practices the art of glass blowing in the workshop



Luise Heyer



Maria Ehrlich