

GHOSTED

A FILM BY MONIKA TREUT

(Chinese title: Ai-mei)

In German & Mandarin w/English Subtitles

89 minutes, color, 2009

35mm/1.85/ dolby SR



FIRST RUN FEATURES

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Short Synopsis

Monika Treut (*Female Misbehaviour, Gendernauts*) returns to narrative filmmaking after a decade in documentary work with a mysterious love story about a Hamburg artist, Sophie, who is trying to come to terms with her Taiwanese lover Ai-Ling's murder. To ease her grief Sophie creates a video installation about Ai-Ling, and when she brings the exhibition to Taipei she meets the ambitious and seductive Mei-Li, a journalist who is investigating Ai-Ling's death. Unable to forget her dead lover and confused by Mei-Li's advances, she flees back to Hamburg. But when Mei-Li turns up on her doorstep, Sophie begins to suspect something strange is going on.

Long Synopsis

German artist Sophie travels to Taiwan after the sudden, unexplained death of her lover, Ai-ling, in Hamburg. In Taipei, a journalist follows her, seemingly obsessed by Ai-ling's fate, and making every effort to seduce Sophie.

The shy Ai-ling (Ke Huan-Ru) used all her strength to gain permission from her mother (Lu Yi-Ching) to travel with Sophie to Germany. The young Taiwanese girl wanted to learn more from her uncle in Hamburg Chen Fu (Jack Kao) about her father, who died when she was a child. Chen Fu finds Ai-ling work in his restaurant, as well as accommodation for the family of Patrick (Kevin Chen), who's father (Chian-Tze Liu) also works for him.

Five months later, the artist Sophie Schmitt (Inga Busch) has come to Taiwan to present her new work, "Remembrance". This video installation has as its subject her beloved Ai-ling. Beautiful and confident Mei-li (Ting-Ting Hu) shows at the opening. She gravitates to Sophie, and finally persuades her to allow her to give her a tour of Taipei's night markets. Mei-li is interested in knowing the fate of Ai-ling. Sophie remembers her first meeting with Ai-ling, shortly before the screening of a Taiwanese film, just as she was going back into the Chinese restaurant with Patrick. Sophie persuades Ai-ling to stay. The innocent charm of the young Taiwanese woman enchanted Sophie. After the pained moans of Patrick's mother (Lu Yi-Ching) become unbearable, Ai-ling moves in with Sophie.

Back from the night market in Taipei, Sophie is started as she is awoken from her sleep by the embraces of Mei-li. She fends her off, still in grief over Ai-ling. The next day, Mei-li finds only a few boxes in Sophie's Taipei apartment, where she sees photos in which Sophie and Ai-ling radiate happiness together.

Flashback to Hamburg, where the lovers are happy to be spending every minute together. Then Sophie suffers a serious illness, and after recovering forces herself to begin a new project. She finds it strange that her friend is on the phone with her mother in Taiwan every single day. Then she discovers that Ai-ling had a secret paternity test done, because she suspects that her uncle Chen Fu didn't tell her the truth about her own father. Shortly thereafter, Sophie forgets that she has a trip planned with Ai-Ling, and instead goes with the internet artist Judy (Chang Nai Wen) to Berlin. Ai-ling is heartbroken and jealous. In a bar, she flirts with the Attorney Katrin Bendersen (Jana Schulz).

In Taipei, Mei-li's article on Sophie Schmitt is so well received that they ask her to write more. Shortly thereafter, she stands in front of Sophie's Loft in Hamburg, but only finds her neighbor Leon (Marek Harloff) there. Sophie has stopped using the apartment since Ai-ling's death. The

artist is excited to see Mei-li so quickly again. Her tenacity and her serious interest in Ai-ling finally dispel's Sophie's reservations. She feels affection for the young Taiwanese woman.

But Mei-li abused her trust and secretly searched her loft, as Leon later informs Sophie. Becoming suspicious, Sophie investigates Mei-li, and finds that no one under the name Mei-li Wang entered Germany, or works for the Taipei news service. Who is the beautiful stranger who entered her life?

The Chinese Ghost Months

The seventh month of the lunar calendar is used in Taiwan as the "Ghost Month", which is when supposedly the gates to the underworld are open. Many precautions must be taken and procedures are to be observed at this time, and numerous festivals are celebrated, banquets are held and rituals followed in order to ward off or appease the evil spirits of the dead which are wandering the Earth.

The climax of the celebrations is the Ghost Festival in the 14th night of the ghost month. The exact origins of the ghost month are not known, but it is closely connected with the Han Chinese belief in life after death and ancestor worship. In all the temples of the country, countless amount of "dead money", made from burnt paper, can be found. According to the Taoist and Buddhist tradition, these sacrifices appease the dead, who then bestow the living with blessings and rewards. These customs are observed by the young as well as the older generations in Taiwan. Thus the age-old customs of the Ghost Month are preserved and passed on.

Director Bio

Monika Treut has written, directed and produced award-winning independent features and documentaries which screened at numerous film festivals throughout the world and enjoy international distribution. Retrospectives have been held in Mexico City, Sao Paolo, Taipei, Toronto, Cambridge, Helsinki, Hamburg, Thessaloniki, Los Angeles and Lisbon. Treut's first feature, co-directed with Elfi Mikesch, was the controversial *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* in 1985, which since has become a cult classic. Other films include *The Virgin Machine*, *My Father is Coming*, *Female Misbehavior*, *Didn't Do It For Love* and *Gendernauts*.

Since 1990 Treut has also been teaching and lecturing at Colleges (Vassar, Hollins, and Dartmouth), Art Institutes (SFAI) and Universities (UI Chicago, UC San Diego and Cornell U) in the U.S. Most of Treut's films are available from First Run Features, including her latest feature, *Ghosted*.

Cast

Sophie Schmitt: Inga Busch
Ai-ling Chen: Huan-Ru Ke
Mei-li Wang: Ting-Ting Hu
Katrin Bendersen: Jana Schulz
Leon: Marek Harloff
Chen Fu: Jack Kao
Ya-Ching: Yi-Ching Lu
Patrick: Kevin Chen
Patrick's father: Sha-Liu
Patrick's mother: Yi-ching Lu

Mr. Lee: Nick Dong-Sik
Gottfried Jaspers: Michael Varnhorn
Mark Menton: Sean McCormack
Mr. Hsie: Tzen-ping Su
Judy Chang: Wen Nai
Young Taiwanese girl: Hui-ju Li

Crew

Producer: Monika Treut
Co-Producer: Li-Fen Chien / Aileen Li
Screenwriter: Monika Treut / Astrid Ströher
Director: Monika Treut
First Assistant Director: Bruno Grass
Intercultural Consultant/Coach: Chang Nai-Wen
Director of Photography: Bernd Meiners
Assistant Camera: Jörg Jahn
Gaffer: Gunter (Gandhi) Damm
Line Producer: Patrick Brandt
Production Office: Sonja Meyer
Office Hyena Films: Sabine Linz
Production Accountant: Klaus Kraft
Assistant: Konstantin Geisel
Unit Manager: Christoph Heitmann
Costume Designer: Petra Kilian
Makeup Artist: Fe Ferber

Crew Hamburg

Location Manager/ Unit Manager: Marten Riese
Set Manager: Marie Sorgenfrei
Script/Continuity: Kerstin Wahrlich
Electrician: Klaus Pirch
Still Photographer: Baernd Fraatz
Art Director: Isolde Rueter
Production Design: Sabine Kasch
Property Master: Meike Pauly
Props Assistant: Laura Naschlenas
Swing Gang: Gerald Gustav / Cine Bau
Stunt: Rainer Werner
Makeup Assistant: Britt Schaefer
Costume Assistant: Diana Dietrich
Wardrobe: Sa Yang
Sound Mixer: Andreas Pitann
Boom Operator: Thomas Ott

Crew Taiwan

Production Accountant: Shu Ling Chen
Line Producer: Kids Syu
Production Coordinator: Tzu-Yi Chang

Second Assistant Director: Isadorna Huang
Script: Sonja Meyer
Electrician: Jhang Sian-Jyue
Recording Supervisor: Yang Chiao-hao
Boom Operator: Chang Shan-Jhih
Art Director: (Sao-Yi) Cheng-YI Yang
Art Assistant: Shating Syu
Art Assistant: Hua Zi
Art Assistant: Jin-Siang Lai
Costume Assistant: Joy Yen
Makeup Assistant: Eva Wang
Production Assistant: Garbo He
Production Assistant: Fat-Cat Wu
Production Assistant: Chuan-Yu Sun
Production Assistant: Jia-Jing Wu

Post Production

Editor: Renate Ober
Assistant Editor: Nana Novosad
Composer: Uwe Haas
Tape Transfers: Thomas Bronner
Title Design: Oliver Lammert
Translations
German/English: Finbar Morrin, Neil Sakamano
English/Chinese: Chen Ting
Chinese/German: Chang Nai Wen, Martina Hasse
Color Timing: Robin Schmude, Chroma
Subtitles German/English: Tonike Traum / Colin Richardson
PR: Doris Bandhold
Avid Support: Roland Musolff / Wang Zhi-tian / Matthias Kahrs
Making Of: Oli Lammert / Madeleine Dewald
Legal Advice: Christian Füllgraf
Tax Consultancy: Steuerbüro Lehmann & Piekarek / Margret Stuhr

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