



# THE FINAL LAND

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# THE FINAL LAND

Cast:

TORBEN FÖLLMER, MILAN PEŠL

Produced by:

JOHANNES BADE, MARCEL BARION, PHILIPP BOJAHN, MASSIMO MÜLLER

Written and directed by:

MARCEL BARION

Original (German) title: DAS LETZTE LAND

Independent film production / No Budget (~ 20.000 Euro)

Runtime: 113 min.

Duration of production 2012-2019

Location of production: Siegen, Germany

So far 15 international film festival participations and 9 awards (list below)

Festival premieres so far in:

Germany, Czech Republic, UK, Italy, Australia, Sweden, Belgium, USA, South Korea

THE FINAL LAND is a German independent science fiction film with elements of drama and mystery, about two lonely men searching for a new home in the vastness of space. The story deals with topics like freedom, home, aimlessness and the fate of our planet Earth. Aesthetically, it's based on the American science fiction cinema of the late 70s and early 80s. Accordingly, all tricks were realized only through practical effects - there are no computer-generated images.

The crew consisted mainly of autodidacts. There was neither a film school background nor film funding. The film was produced completely outside the German film industry via crowdfunding. The team was small, the resources very limited and the production time correspondingly long.

[www.thefinalland.com](http://www.thefinalland.com) / (german URL: [www.dasletzteland.de](http://www.dasletzteland.de))

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Indeed Film

Dürener Strasse 363a / 50935 Köln

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Distributor for Norway:

FILM PÅ FARTA distribution

Måkeveien 9 / 3112 Tønsberg / Norway

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## FESTIVALS / AWARDS

### **Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis**

1/2019, Saarbrücken (Germany), Competition

Special Nomination for Torben Föllmer as „Best Young Actor (Leading Role)“

### **Berlin Independent Film Festival**

2/2019, Berlin (Germany), Competition

Award: „**BEST SCI FI / HORROR FEATURE**“

### **Neisse Film Festival**

5/2019, Görlitz (Germany) + Liberec (Czech Rep.), Out of Competition

### **Sci-Fi-London Film Festival**

5/2019, London (UK), Competition

### **Oltre lo specchio - Through the Looking Glass International Film Festival**

6/2019, Milan (Italy), Competition

Award: „**MOST ORIGINAL FILM**“

### **SciFi Film Festival**

9/2019, Sydney (Australia), Competition

Award: „**BEST FEATURE FILM**“

### **Filmfest Bremen**

9/2019, Bremen (Germany), Competition

### **Lund International Fantastic Film Festival**

9/2019, Lund (Sweden), Out of Competition

### **Razor Reel Flanders Film Festival**

10/2019, Bruges (Belgium), Competition

### **FILMZ - Festival des deutschen Kinos** („Festival of german Cinema“)

11/2019, Mainz (Germany), Competition

### **Berlin Sci-Fi Filmfest**

11/2019, Berlin (Germany), Competition

Award: „**OUTSTANDING GERMAN CONTRIBUTION**“

### **Other Worlds Film Festival**

12/2019, Austin, Texas (USA), Competition

Award: „**BEST FEATURE PRODUCTION DESIGN**“

### **Boston Science Fiction Film Festival (Boston SciFi)**

02/2020, Boston, Massachusetts (USA), Competition

### **Miami International Science Fiction Film Festival (SciFi Miami)**

4/2020, Miami, Florida (USA), Competition

Four Awards: „**BEST SCI-FI FEATURE RUNNER UP**“ / „**BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY FEATURE**“ / „**BEST SET DESIGN**“ / „**BEST PRACTICAL EFFECTS**“

### **Chuncheon Film Festival**

10/2020, Chuncheon City (South Korea), Out of Competition

### Upcoming: **Fancine Festival de Cine Fantástico**

11/2020, Málaga (Spain), Out of Competition

### Upcoming: **Utopia Film Fest**

12/2020, Tel Aviv (Israel), ?

## PRESS COMMENTS

***„Influences from „2001“ through „En attendant Godot“ to „DAS BOOT“ and the „Odyssey“ (including the sirens) add up to an original story with an existential touch, in which everything fits: a manifesto of cinematic creativity, powerful and thrilling.“ (translated from German)***

- Indiekino.de, 10/2020

***„Celebrated at several festivals, this science fiction film is a chamber play that is carried by its claustrophobic mood, its intensity, its dense field of tension on melancholy and manic obsession. An impressive film that shows that science fiction with little possibilities but great vision is also possible in Germany.“ (translated from German)***

- Programmkino.de, 10/2020

***„The Final Land is a gritty, energized sci-fi mystery, piercing with intrigue and claustrophobic atmosphere. It's a film that rewards paying attention, as the more you look, the more you find. The film's immersive atmosphere sucks you into the ship's story. I'll certainly be rewatching this film to see what more I can find.“***

- TheKnockturnal, 3/2020

***„The German film The Final Land stands as one of the best of the festival's six-year run thus far. [...] It stayed with me for days afterward, charting our collective dreams to the stars...and for Other Worlds Austin, a capstone for its sixth year.“***

- Medium, 12/2019

***„The German filmmaker Marcel Barion, in his first film, crafts an outstanding story, full of wonder and paranoia. Taking place primarily within the confines of a tiny old spaceship, conflicts erupt as two disparate men struggle to find a new home. The Final Land is a brilliant atmospheric film that incorporates the best of elements of science fiction, both hard and soft. Barion achieves magnificent, mindblowing vistas from outside the ship using only traditional effects. With nary a dull moment and an ideal science fiction ending, The Final Land comes highly recommended!“***

- The Geek Curmudgeon, 12/2019

***„Föllmer and Pesl are both superb in this two-hander, which naturally relies heavily on the actors to carry the weight of the film. Föllmer portrays Adem with a sort of reserved, optimistic melancholy, while Pesl invests his brusque alpha male with a manic obsessiveness. Writer/director/cinematographer/editor Marcel Barion — who also did the breathtaking visual***

***effects, which include gorgeous shots of outer space — creates a tense, claustrophobic setting within the spaceship, aided greatly by Massimo Muller's masterful set design. [...] Barion and Oliver Kranz's sound design is superlative, with each swipe of something dusty or dingy giving off sounds that practically make you feel the decay and squalor. The Final Land, a bold feast for the senses, is a mesmerizing journey that pits the wills and minds of two men against each other, themselves, and enigmatic outside forces."***

- Diabolique Magazine, 10/2019

***„Beautifully lit and shot, the intensity of these strangers' shared predicament feels up close and palpable."***

- Starburst Magazine, 5/2019

***„If you get the chance, you have to see this film. It is a dark, subtle and remarkably well made deep space film, something that is far too rare these days."***

- Mark Cole, Rivets on the Poster, 5/2019

***„Both Pesl and Follmer perform the roles admirably. Pesl shines when he's going off the rails, whilst Follmer is the frustrated escapee, struggling to bring Pesl around to the reality. [...] A brilliant debut, a visual feast for the eye and a head-scratching sci-fi which, at times, is just what you want."***

- OC Movies, 5/2019

***„Suggesting that Barion could go anywhere next."***

- Sight & Sound (British Film Institute), 5/2019

***„An Odysseus style pull to its conclusion and a desire to look closer at our protagonists, their experiences and motivations and while that doesn't sound like a thrilling adventure it is a brilliantly scripted, excellently performed and stunningly filmed one."***

- Horror DNA, 5/2019

***„A suspenseful, transcendental film mélange that proves you don't have to look to Hollywood for clever sci-fi stories." (translated from German)***

- Kino-Zeit.de, 1/2019

***„Atmospherically dense, kind of a „Das Boot“ in space." (translated from German)***

- Der Tagesspiegel, 1/2019

# LOGLINE

Two very different men flee from a desolate planet in a small old spaceship and embark on a quest for a new home.

## PITCH #1

Prison breakout, suddenly a spaceship in an ash storm, escape into space.  
But where do they flee to in a world where the earth is a children's fairy tale?  
„Only away“, says one, „but where to“, asks the other.  
What happened to the old crew? And where did the ship actually come from?  
Then suddenly: a terrible signal from far outside that pulls them in - deeper and deeper.

## PITCH #2

A strange planet beyond our solar system. Prison escapees Adem and deserter Novak flee and fight their way through a sandstorm. Suddenly a small, stranded spaceship appears in front of them - old and abandoned, but airworthy, as it soon turns out. At the last minute they manage to escape through the dusty clouds, the sky opens into the infinite universe.  
And now what? Where do they flee to without a goal? In their search for a better place, the two are drawn behind the last outposts of their world - and increasingly in fundamentally different directions.  
While Adem wants to find out where the ship actually comes from and what happened to the old crew, Novak is drawn more and more into the spell of a hypnotic power...

# SYNOPSIS (INCL. SPOILERS)

After his prison break, ex-convict Adem fled into the ash storms of the Black Desert. Unexpectedly, he finds shelter in a spaceship wreck. His pursuer Novak soon arrests him again - but when it turns out that the ship is still airworthy, the will to flee also stirs in him. United to form an unequal community of convenience, they bring the ship into the air and escape Novak's former comrades at the last moment. They leave their bleak past behind them and embark on an uncertain journey into space.

While Novak gets bogged down in endless repair work, Adem begins to take an interest in the ship's past, studying old logbook entries and other legacies of the former crew. He finds clues to their origin and their apparently devastating end. Novak simply wants to get as far away from here as possible and even prevents Adem's attempt to make contact with an old outpost they encounter at the edge of the solar system. Here, for the first time, they receive an unknown signal, a melody that captivates Novak and lures him far into foreign lands. Adem, on the other hand, who is afraid of nothing but this melody, recognizes the parallels to the fate of the lost crew, tries to move Novak to turn back and change course - to that legendary planet Earth, which he now considers to be the place of origin of their spaceship. But Novak is no longer impressed. Completely obsessed with the melody, he dismissed Earth as a children's fairy tale. Even when they encounter wreckage of ancient spaceships on their wrong track, Novak does not change course - and finally leads them to an unknown, bright golden planet. Meanwhile, Adem has found a suspicious-looking sequence of numbers (he suspects the coordinates of the Earth in them) and a hidden disc. However, he can no longer investigate its contents. Novak crushes it into a thousand pieces, ignores the weapon and locks Adem in the engine room. Then he steers the ship towards the planet.

When Adem frees himself from the engine room, they are already completely surrounded by golden gas clouds. Armed, he faces the apparently mad Novak - now ready to do anything to avert the deadly maneuver. But when the clouds open in front of them and a huge, circular cave appears, Adem is paralyzed and lets Novak steer straight into it. When things stop at the end, Novak - after Adem's last attempt to persuade him to stay - gets out of the ship, out into the golden-brown hall. He follows a path, deeper and deeper into the bowels of the planet. When Adem realizes that Novak is not coming back, he leaves this lost place and decides to take a course that might lead him to Earth before supplies run out - if Earth really exists.



## CHARACTERISTICS REGARDING PRODUCTION

About two thirds of the film was financed via crowdfunding (about 14,000 Euro). Beyond that there was no further support. The money flowed completely into the film itself. None of the participants earned money from the production.

With the exception of the two actors and film composer Oliver Kranz, all participants are autodidacts. Author and director Marcel Barion started filmmaking as a teenager and has since tried his hand at numerous short to medium-length films. In retrospect, these were mainly exercises and experiments, all of which have remained unpublished. THE FINAL LAND is his first film aimed at a public audience.

## CHARACTERISTICS REGARDING STYLE AND REALISATION

Production design, light and sound are stylistically based on the American science fiction cinemas of the late 70s and early 80s. The design paradigm was the monochrome tube monitor. Keywords: Retro-Sci-Fi / Tube-Punk. It was especially inspired by Ridley Scott's ALIEN (1979), but also by THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (1980) or BLADE RUNNER (1982).

No computer-generated images were used in the visualization of spaceships, outer space, landscapes and so on. Everything you see is based on real photography - practical effects. Only the compositing, the combining of the single components, was done using a computer.

## DETAILS ABOUT THE MAKING

The **very first idea** for the film contained nothing but two or three emaciated persons in a tight spaceship cockpit - which already described the basic situation between end-time chamber play and space roadmovie. But before the actual story was developed, the focus was on spaceship design and the question of where the limits of its realizability lay. An important question if you want to make a sci-fi film with little money that doesn't look like trash.

The answer: We remain in the spaceship. So we can concentrate on a small part of this world and mediate the larger part in other ways, for example through dialogue, but also through well-dosed effect shots.

The small **model** was built first, using the kit bashing method: Model kits of any kind were taken apart, single parts were rearranged on a wooden core. Predominantly parts of airplanes, a locomotive, several military vehicles and some Sci-Fi vehicles from well-known Sci-Fi universes were used. Lacquered and patinated, appropriately lit and set against the right backgrounds, they became our spaceship. Whenever you see it in the film from the outside, it's this model.

Of course, the **life-size set** had to be planned, calculated and constructed with more complexity. The basic construction of wood and steel had to be stable AND beautiful. Some elements, like the sliding door in the middle of the ship, were made especially for the scenery. For the design of large parts of the interior facades, however, we used a very similar procedure to that used for model making - only in larger and dirtier dimensions. Gradually, e-waste that had been specifically collected was dismantled into its components and recombined according to technical patterns and beauty criteria. Together with all the other custom-made products, uniformly painted and covered with dirt and patina, it became the rough, cavernous interior of a spaceship that had its best days behind it. This was exactly the kind of chamber we needed for our kind of chamber play. Through a lot of light and lively electronics, this chamber also became a vehicle, a functional space mobile for the two characters, so that the road movie aspect could also be fully brought to fruition. Their adventure should not only take place in the ship, but also wait for them outside in space.

The **shooting** in 2014 marks the most intensive phase of the project. Within only 14 days, all the necessary scenes were shot. Usually with only four or five people in the ship - the rest had to stay outside, move sliding doors, control the ship, blow in steam or simply wait. Because the ship was tight. A lot of choreography had to be done between actors, camera man and sound man, so that only what should be in front of the lens always came in front of the lens. In this context, it was of course advantageous that the director was both cameraman and lighting technician at the same time - the scenes were therefore illuminated almost exclusively with tiny, magnetic LED lamps. The rest was done by the numerous lighting elements of the scenery itself.

The narrative structure constructed in advance was implemented one-to-one, but the dialogue and

also the individual elements of the plot were refined in the course of the shooting. Just as the script had been written parallel to the construction of the scenery and adapted to it again and again, so a casual, sometimes even sloppy sound in language and play was created during the shooting as a response to the realistic atmosphere.

In the four years of the **post-production** not only the **editing** and the **color grading** was done, but also the **effects**, a complete sound design and the score. In each of these steps the same montage principle as in model and scenery construction was applied.

In order to make the universe visible, images of holes in black cardboard (stars), acrylic colour plays in the aquarium (gas nebulae) and cornflour formations (stardust) were combined. The landscapes in the film consist of correspondingly photographed gypsum rocks, styrofoam mountains, pancake deserts, glass planes and various miniature objects, but also pictures of real (Canarian and Icelandic) geology. The storm comes from the fog machine, the flying ash scraps are actually snowflakes from Siegen.

The **sound world** of the film was produced completely artificially and is based on a huge amount of sound recordings, for which of course the right sources had to be found first. To correspond to the 80s style, old calculating machines, tape recorders, dot matrix printers, refrigerators, oil heaters and a Volkswagen bus were recorded. In order to convey the condition of the ship, broken equipment was also recorded, a squeaking garage door or some metal clattering with an old wheelbarrow.

The **music** combines mainly classical tones with synthetic ones, whereby the classical tones were not all played with classical instruments. The main instrument is the cello, but the harmonica also plays a role. In addition, there are electronic synthesizers and many sounds of things that are not instruments but have been misused, including an (unplugged) egg slicer and a squeaky dinosaur. Now and then we even whistled. For the credits a vocal part was used - here again quite classical.

The small budget required a high density of ideas and courage for unusual methods. Even though we received almost 14,000 Euros during the construction of the spaceship in the course of a successful crowdfunding campaign, almost everything was invested in building materials, props, costumes and parts of the shooting equipment. The possibilities were very limited, but the film was able to develop very freely. The amateur film aspects of the production could be used productively.

# THE „CORE CREW“

## MARCEL BARION

(who directed, wrote, produced, shot, edited, made the sound design and more)

*Cineaste and cultural scientist Marcel Barion (born 1985 in Siegen) was the initiator of the project, author and director, and in some „departments“ the sole executive - including camera and lighting, editing, color grading, compositing and sound making. Not only did he encourage a handful of people to make a full-length science fiction film together, he also photographed a pancake to create a rocky desert and used an egg slicer as a plucked instrument.*

## JOHANNES BADE

(who produced, organized, crafted, created effects, cooked and more)

*Software developer and hobby musical actor Johannes Bade (born 1982 in Siegen) was involved in all parts of the project from start to finish. Starting with the first ideas, the development of the concept, the construction of the set, the props and the models, during the shooting and until the end of the postproduction he took over technical, creative and organizational tasks. And by the way, it was his very own model collection that was exploited in favor of the effect shots in „The Final Land“.*

## MASSIMO MÜLLER

(who produced, constructed, built, crafted, created effects and more)

*Master carpenter, construction technician and project maker Massimo Müller (born 1984 in Siegen, Germany) was mainly responsible for the construction and design of the spaceship set. Over a period of months he even built the elaborate backdrop on his own. He was also significantly involved in model making, props and special effects. He made star nebulae out of milk and pigments and created large parts of the model landscapes in his living room.*

## PHILIPP BOJAHR

(who produced, crafted, wired, soldered, programmed, created effects and more)

*Media scholar and fine motorist Philipp Bojahr (born 1987 in Recklinghausen) was the one who breathed life into the spaceship. He orchestrated his work from colourful lights and chattering monitors with the help of his own control panel. He also played a decisive role in model building, equipment and special effects. He enriched pyrotechnics with household remedies and invented a burning tool called Heidi to cut mountains out of polystyrene blocks.*

# CAST

## TORBEN FÖLLMER

(Adem)

*Torben Föllmer (born 1986 in Siegen) studied acting in Mainz. He participated in theatre productions of the Mainfrankentheater Würzburg, the Grenzlandtheater Aachen and the Apollo-Theater Siegen as well as in various radio plays and short films. Before „The Final Land“ he was able to gain his first feature film experience in „Homies“ (2011). His very first role (Faust), however, he already played at school - in a short film by Marcel Barion, to be precise.*

*For his performance in „The Final Land“ he was nominated for the Max Ophüls Prize in the category „Best Young Actor (Leading Role)“.*

## MILAN PEŠL

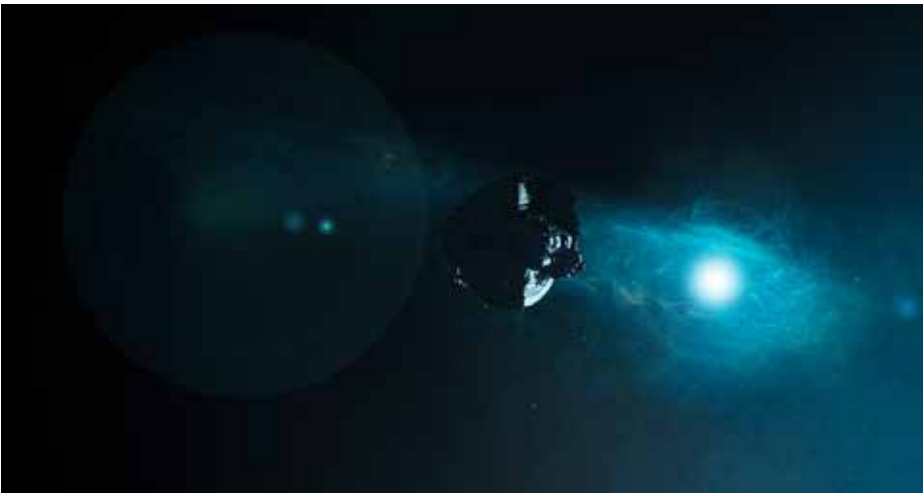
(Novak)

*Milan Pešl (born 1974 in Siegen) studied acting in Hamburg. In addition to various engagements in Hamburg, Munich and Karlsruhe, his work also took him to Colombia and South Korea. From 2009 to 2018 he was a permanent member of the Giessener Stadttheater.*

*Since 2011 he also belongs to the Brachland Ensemble and is working as author, director, composer and musician in theatre and radio play productions. In 2018 he founded the new Siegener Bruchwerk Theater with two colleagues. He calls „The Final Land“ his „Heart Project“.*



Adem, eye to eye  
with the blue star



The spaceship has  
passes the blue star



Adem (l.) und Novak (r.)



The spacestation



Effect shots:  
Johannes Bade at a  
Test shooting of the  
spacecraft model



Set construction:  
Massimo Müller at the  
surface design



Shooting:  
Marcel Barion shows the  
actors, where in space  
the space station is located.



Model making:  
Philipp Bojahr (l.) and  
Massimo Müller develop the  
basic shape of the space station

# CREDITS

Adem TORBEN FÖLLMER

Novak MILAN PEŠL

Written and directed by MARCEL BARION

Produced by JOHANNES BADE / MARCEL BARION  
PHILIPP BOJAHR / MASSIMO MÜLLER

Executive Producers JOHANNES BADE / MARCEL BARION

Shooting, Editing, Picture design MARCEL BARION

Production Design / Special Effects JOHANNES BADE / MARCEL BARION  
PHILIPP BOJAHR / MASSIMO MÜLLER

Set Constructor MASSIMO MÜLLER

Set Electronics PHILIPP BOJAHR

Music / Sound MARCEL BARION / OLIVER KRANZ

Sound Recording JAN WAGENER

Assistant Director CAROLIN UTSCH

Display Design MARTIN SCHMIDT

Galgos Voice VINCENZ TÜRPE

Sponsoring Producers THORSTEN BÖLCK / STEPHAN BOSENIUS  
WOLFGANG CHARLET / MICHAEL DRIESCH  
MARC GRUPPE / LARS IMMERTHAL  
OLAF SCHRÖDER



A whole series of helpers also participated sporadically in the production, mainly in the fields of set construction, props and costumes, sound, music and catering.

In addition, about 300 people supported the project via crowdfunding, including a few companies and corporations. The Sponsoring Producers (see above) and the Bürgerstiftung Siegen deserve special mention. The platform was „Startnext“.