

The New York Times

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In Berlin, 395 Films, 18 Premieres, and 1 Award to Streep

By **Emilie Trice** February 9, 2012 6:00 am

Berlin's annual film festival, the **Berlinale**, showcases a total of 395 films from around the world in its 62nd installment, which runs from Thursday through Feb. 19. Among these movies, 18 are world premieres in the running for the festival's highest honors, the Golden and Silver Bear trophies.

The festival has already chosen one award recipient: its Lifetime Achievement award, or "Honorary Golden Bear," goes to Meryl Streep. She will receive the award on Feb. 14 at a screening of "The Iron Lady," and the festival's Homage section will feature six of her other films, including "Kramer vs. Kramer" and "Sophie's Choice."

This year's Berlinale exhibits a high ratio of politically charged films, especially within its more avant-garde "art cinema" sub-programs. The **Panorama** section will feature four films inspired by last year's Arab Spring, while **Forum** includes three documentaries that each confront the effects of Japan's nuclear crisis at Fukushima. Angelina Jolie's wartime love story, "In the Land of Blood and Honey," will also be screened, and she will attend the annual "Cinema for Peace" charity gala, where she'll be honored for her humanitarian efforts.

Another directorial debut is the documentary "Oma and Bella" by a Berlin native, Alexa Karolinski. Originally conceived as Ms. Karolinski's master's thesis while she was a graduate student at the School of Visual Arts in New York, "Oma and Bella" is a touching portrait of two Holocaust survivors living in Berlin, bound together by their shared histories and a passion for cooking. To fund her first

feature-length film, Ms. Karolinski sought donations via [kickstarter.com](https://www.kickstarter.com), ultimately raising \$44,000, more than twice her goal. She and Oma, her grandmother, have since baked over 1,000 cookies for her Kickstarter donors, their “reward” for backing her project. “Oma and Bella” will have its world premiere at the Berlinale in the Culinary Cinema section, which will screen a series of food and eco-related films in partnership with the International Slow Food Movement at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, followed by a gourmet dinner in the “Gropius Mirror” pop-up restaurant.

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