

The Invisibles

Claus Räfle

Country: Germany
Year: 2017
Running Time: 110 min.
Language: German
Director: Claus Räfle
Producer: Frank Evers
Claus Räfle
Jörg Schulze
Screenwriter: Alejandra López
Claus Räfle
Cinematographer: Jörg Widmer
Editor: Julia Oehring
Cast: Max Mauff
Alice Dwyer
Ruby O. Fee

In June 1943, Germany infamously declared Berlin "judenfrei"—"free of Jews." But at that moment there were still 7,000 Jews living in the Nazi capital: hiding in attics, basements, and warehouses, protected by courageous Berliners while desperately trying to avoid deportation. Only 1,700 lived to liberation. *The Invisibles* tells the stories of four survivors, interweaving their testimony with highly accomplished dramatizations, an unusual hybrid approach that brings edge-of-the-seat suspense to their years spent underground. The two men and two women whose stories unfold are well chosen, and their younger selves are sensitively portrayed: Cioma is an art student who uses his drafting skills to forge passports in exchange for food ration cards; Hanni dyes her hair blond and tries to pass as Aryan; teenager Eugen is handed to a succession of sympathetic Communist families; and Ruth must resort to roaming the streets before being taken in by a surprising protector. If their stories sound contrived, *The Invisibles* makes their veracity all the more stunning.



Since the early '90s, Claus Räfle's body of work, distinctive through its modern journalistic approach and visual sophistication, has been noted by jurors and TV critics for its signature humor and laconic narrative style. Many of his almost 40 feature-length TV documentaries, on which he has also served as writer, are distinct through their unconventional perspective, thoroughly entertaining in the best sense of the word, and have found their way across borders. His satirical TV documentary, *Die Heftmacher*, was praised by the jury of the German Grimme Award as the most important work of TV journalism in that year. His video clips from the 1990s garnered lots of attention with their pointedly told stories. Räfle developed and wrote *The Invisibles* with Alejandra López.