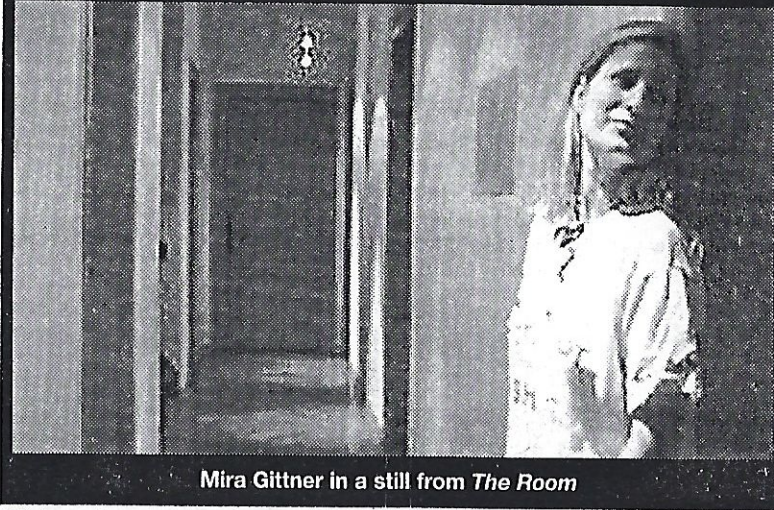


FROM GERMANY, WITH LOVE

If you meet 10 film enthusiasts in the Nandan complex in the first couple of days in this year's festival, at least six of them will talk to you about the German films on offer. Yes, they are turning out to be the surprise package of this year's selection. Colourful, vibrant, radical, dark, intriguing the short listed German films of the recent past have more than found a favour with the local audience. But what is more heartening is the fact that the German delegates are also in unalloyed love with the city and its people.

Three of the German films on offer come from the same production house - WTP International Film Production. There are as many as four delegates representing the production house and the three films - writer director Roland Reber, actor, cameraperson and editor Mira Gittner, actor producer Marina Anna

The actors, producers and directors who have brought along the German showcase are in love with the city, says Pratim D. Gupta



Mira Gittner in a still from *The Room*



Zoltan Paul

Eich and actor producer Patricia Koch. The best part about the films is that all three are on radically different themes - the multiple award winning psycho thriller *The Room*, the comedy *Pentamagica* and the tragedy *The Dark Side of our Inner Space*.

"I was here twelve years back for a personal reason and let me tell you, now that I am here again, everything has changed so much," said Ronald. "I went to the second Hoogly Bridge and to the Howrah station and the people no longer chase you and try and sell things. That they have started to take foreigners for granted is a huge step. The world outside does not know about this new Kolkata." Mira, who has won awards for her acting, editing and camerawork was also happy to be here. "Ronald had warned me about

the smell of garbage in the air but from the moment I stepped out of the aircraft, it's been so pleasant. I am loving every moment of it," she said.

Another much-talked-about German film in the festival has been *Gone* by Zoltan Paul. It was such a great moment for him when the packed Nandan crowd watched his first feature film in rapt attention for all of the 84 minutes. "They really understand cinema here," said Zoltan. "They kept discussing my film long after it was over. Even at the media meet the questions thrown at me were so

intelligent. I must admit I am very excited with all this."

And now they may not wait for the next festival to come back to the city. "If I can take time out from my schedule back in Germany, I am definitely coming here soon to explore more of Kolkata," said Patricia. "It's such a warm place!" We would love to have you here, Ma'm!

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Marina Anna Eich