

PETRA KELLY – ACT NOW!



A FILM BY
DORIS METZ

90 mins / 2024 / English, German, English Subtitles / Germany



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SYNOPSIS

Petra Kelly, co-founder of the German Green Party, was a pioneering advocate for peace, environmental protection, and human rights. Inspired by the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King's concept of civil disobedience, she championed radical social change and solidarity worldwide. Her issues are today more topical than ever before.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

At the beginning of the 1980s, I was among the enormous crowd of people demonstrating for peace and disarmament in front of Bonn University – a 21-year-old in a green parka. At the time, there was still a wall dividing Germany and Bonn was the capital of the old Federal Republic of Germany. The superpowers wanted to rearm; we wanted peace instead of new nuclear missiles. Hundreds and thousands of people were there – an entire generation had set out to send their government a resounding “no!” to Pershing II and Cruise Missiles. It was a historic moment, the greatest demonstration in German post-war history and my first step into political life.

For me, Petra Kelly was what Greta Thunberg is for today's Climate Kids – a figure of hope. The way this young woman took to the stage at this first major Bonn peace demonstration – calm and composed next to celebrities like Heinrich Böll, Harry Belafonte and Coretta King – and cast her spell on hundreds and thousands of people. She spoke quickly and plainly, had all the facts at the ready, was passionate about the cause and was simply different to the others. I had my own personal experience of Petra Kelly in the 1980s – firstly when I was a student with a keen interest in environmentalism and the peace movement in my Bavarian home town and later as a young journalist in the Bonn offices of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. During the Greens' first election campaign in Bavaria in 1982, I had a front-row seat at Kelly's electoral campaign and saw her address a small group of environmentalist friends. Back then, Petra Kelly was not yet the media star that she would go on to become. During my newspaper internship in Bonn, I also had plenty of opportunities to see Petra Kelly in action in parliament.

She fought against the patriarchal authoritarian state, the arms race, nuclear power and uranium mining. And spoke out for the rights of Native Americans and indigenous people in Australia, and for political prisoners and the politically persecuted all over the world. She met Joan Baez, Josef Beuys, the Dalai Lama and high-profile politicians from East and West. She spoke several languages, had chutzpah and talent, and a network that extended all over the world. For me, Petra Kelly embodied a political turning point and a new political culture. Looking back, it is increasingly clear that she was the first German politician with a truly global outlook and, in this respect, was well ahead of her time. This allows me to see her in a whole new light today.

Because we are hearing the same exhortations 40 years later. When it comes to saving the planet, there can be no compromises – “Act now!”, “Time is running out!”. Here, modern-day climate activists are entirely at one with their famous predecessor Petra Kelly. The parallels are great – the young frontwomen in the public eye at *Fridays for Future* and the *Last Generation* even feel constantly under threat in the same way as the mythical Green Party founder did. It is not very well known that Petra Kelly was the most threatened politician of her time and that she was systematically stalked around the world by the US extreme-right Lyndon LaRouche organization. At the time, there was no public awareness of right-wing violence and hate – or of

violence in private relationships. In my view, the need to show the exposed fragility of women in political life and to illustrate the correlation between fears and actual physical threats is central to a new examination of the global activist and Green politician Petra Kelly, who was murdered in October 1992 at the age of 44.

Her life story, her political rise and fall, her visionary thinking and her global political activities are a major subject for discussion in Germany. A subject that still moves people today, both in Germany and further afield. Her end, her violent death in the middle of Bonn and the myth of a double suicide that seems to have been etched permanently into our collective memory – all of this makes her story a tragedy and continues to overshadow her real political achievements. I aim to change this with this film.

Doris Metz

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Doris Metz was born in Oberstdorf, Bavaria, Germany. She writes and directs documentary films and is a producer for cinema and television. Prior to this, she was a writer and editor for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in the field of media and politics for ten years. After the fall of the Berlin Wall up until the reunification of Germany, she worked as a reporter for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* covering the former GDR. In 2005, she shot a widely acclaimed cinema documentary film – SCHATTENVÄTER (Ghost Fathers) – about Matthias Brandt and Pierre Boom, the sons of Willy Brandt and GDR spy Günter Guillaume. TRANS – I GOT LIFE, her most recent cinema documentary film, for which she teamed up with co-director Imogen Kimmel, follows the lives of seven transgender people in Munich, Moscow and San Francisco and the different paths they take to become the person they really are. This highly relevant plea for freedom, self-determination and a more tolerant society received the Audience Award (Bayern2 and SZ Audience Award) at the Munich International Film Festival 2021 and was shown at many other international festivals. PETRA KELLY – ACT NOW! will be the fourth cinema film that Doris Metz has made with renowned cinematographer Sophie Maintigneux. In 2017, Doris Metz founded Kimmel & Metz Filmproduktion together with Imogen Kimmel. <https://www.kimmel-metz-film.de/>

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Writer and Director	Doris Metz
Cinematographers	Sophie Maintigneux Tom Bergmann Daniel Erb Christine A. Maier BVK, AAC
Editor	Nina Ergang BFS
Script Consultant	Birgit Schulz
Music	Cico Beck
Original Sound	Ivonne Gärber Martin Paret Johannes Schneeweiss
Camera Assistants	Daniel Erb Fabian Anger

Editing Assistant	Helge Hack Julia Baumann Felix Länge Sebastian Steimel
Head of Production	Katharina Jakobs
Producer / Production Manager	Monika Mack
Film Management	Kerstin Becker
Archival Producer	Vanessa Christoffers-Trinks
Archival Research	Peter Till Kolano
Additional Research	Marina Friedt Göran Rieche
Sound Supervision, Original Sound, Editing, Mixing	Michael Hinreiner BVFT
Sound Design	Kirsten Kunhardt
Sound Effects	Roland Platz
Color	Fabiana Cardalda BVK, CSI
Line Producer NYC / USA	Sabine Schenk
Still Photography	Daniel Erb Martin Paret
Graphics Editing	Tinka Kuhlmann
Title Design	Thomas Schmidl
Subtitling aka Film & Language Transfer	
Producer	Birgit Schulz
Editors	Jens Stubenrauch / RBB Dagmar Mielke / RBB/ARTE Petra Felber / BR Martin Kowalczyk / BR Thomas von Bötticher / RB