



F.C.

DER FRANZ CLUB

Title: Der Franz Club

Format: Creative Documentary

Estimated Duration: 70 min

Production Countries: Spain – Germany

Director: Dani Rebner

Production Company: Vinyl
Producciones

Project Status: In development

CONCEPT

An intimate journey through the *Franz Club* diary, in which a group of young Germans celebrate life in a wounded, interwar Germany. A century later, this diary becomes a mirror of an uncertain present, where social, ideological, and geopolitical tensions resurface. What do these voices from the past tell us about the fragility of our memory, identity, and sense of belonging?

SYNOPSIS

A forgotten diary, written a hundred years ago, reappears among old family papers. In it, a group of young Germans — the *Franz Club* — recount excursions, celebrations, inside jokes, and promises of eternal friendship. Their words, full of vitality and enthusiasm, were written during the turbulent years of interwar Germany, in a Europe scarred by defeat and instability.

For the filmmaker, this discovery is not just a historical document: among the club's members appear some of his own ancestors. Although he has German blood, he knows almost nothing about his forebears. Driven by the desire to reconstruct his family story and understand his roots, he embarks on an intimate and emotional journey to find the voices that wrote this diary. Who were they? What did they dream of? How did they live in the years leading up to the greatest moral and human collapse of the 20th century?

Der Franz Club is a documentary that weaves together memory, history, and the present. Through reading the diary, the film travels across the landscapes of postwar Germany, reconstructs the cultural and political climate of the 1920s and 1930s, and portrays a youth who celebrated life on the edge of the abyss.

But this is not only a story of the past. In a world where geopolitical tensions, hate speech, and fear of the future are re-emerging, the voices of the *Franz Club* resonate with unsettling relevance. The documentary draws a subtle yet powerful parallel between that disenchanted Europe and today: how much have we learned? And how much are we willing to forget?

With an intimate, poetic, and contemplative tone, the film blends collective memory with family memory. It is also the journey of the filmmaker — and of the viewer — toward a deeper reflection on youth, identity, the fragility of peace... and the need to listen to the small voices of the past to avoid repeating the great mistakes of the future.

DOCUMENTARY SUBGENRES

Der Franz Club is a hybrid documentary that interlaces different subgenres to build a sensitive, intimate, and reflective experience:

- **Autobiographical / Personal Documentary:** Originates from the discovery of a diary written by young Germans, including the filmmaker's ancestors.
 - **Essay Documentary:** Free structure, first-person narrative, contemplative and poetic tone.
 - **Historical Documentary:** Set in interwar Germany, with echoes of its political and cultural context.
 - **Memory and Archive Documentary:** Narrative use of a real document (the diary), exploring family and collective memory.
 - **Poetic / Contemplative Documentary:** Lyrical images, slow pacing, intimate sound, emphasis on emotion and inner resonance.
 - **Travel / Quest Documentary:** Structured around the filmmaker's physical and emotional journey.
 - **Light Investigative Documentary:** Searching for clues, reconstructing identities, dialogue between past and present.
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AESTHETIC AND NARRATIVE APPROACH

Der Franz Club is an emotional journey using the diary as a vehicle for memory, identity, and belonging. It also uncovers the political, social, and cultural climate of interwar Germany and its similarity to Europe's current atmosphere.

- **Visual Style:** Sober, close, intimate cinematography. Attention to detail, texture, and the passage of time (paper, ink, dust). Contemplative landscapes. Subtle use of natural light.
 - **Narration:** The filmmaker's voice-over as the main thread. Alternating with diary readings (in German). Occasional appearances by close people (friends, researchers, family members).
 - **Archival Material:** The original diary as the central document. Possible integration of historical footage, family photographs, or altered visuals.
 - **Sound:** Immersive sound design. Present-day noises (pages, footsteps, breathing) combined with subtle, nostalgic original music. Possible musical fragments from the era.
 - **Structure:** Fragmented and non-linear. The diary acts as a trigger device for each thematic chapter (friendship, youth, war, identity, belonging...).
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SPECIFIC THEMATIC APPROACHES

Friendship as resistance

- How personal relationships served as refuge against uncertainty and social trauma after World War I.

Forgotten heritage

- What happened to the club members? Are there descendants? How has this diary survived? A light investigative component could trace their families or mentioned places.

A mirror of the present

- Compare the *Franz Club* experiences with the concerns and social lives of today's youth — ideal to attract younger audiences.
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TARGET AUDIENCE

Der Franz Club addresses a broad, cross-generational audience that values personal stories with historical and emotional resonance. The documentary especially connects with viewers who appreciate auteur cinema, identity-search narratives, and stories that interweave memory and the present.

Primary audience

- Young adults and adults (30–65 years old)
- Documentary film lovers, European history enthusiasts, and those interested in introspective narratives.
- Audiences curious about interwar politics and culture, and about contemporary reflections on the past. Likely to consume content on platforms such as Filmin, MUBI, Netflix, or attend film festivals and cultural events.

People with family roots or cultural sensitivity toward Germany and Central Europe

- The film appeals to descendants of migrants, families marked by Europe's 20th century, or those interested in family reconstruction and intergenerational memory.
- This audience can be found in Spain, Germany, Latin America, the U.S., and other countries with historical European communities.

Essay film and creative documentary lovers

- Filmmakers, film students, programmers, critics, and festival/independent cinema audiences.
- *Der Franz Club* aligns with the tradition of hybrid, poetic, auteur cinema, appealing to viewers seeking deeper and more aesthetic cinematic experiences.

Secondary audiences

- **Academic and student communities:** History, cultural studies, social sciences, anthropology — using cinema as a tool for reflecting on memory, identity, and historical trauma.
- **Art history enthusiasts:** The club was “maybe” founded by painter Erich Buchholz and writer Gerhard Zeidler, making it appealing for those interested in exploring artistic circles of the time.
- **Viewers sensitive to family memory, identity, and inherited silences:** People seeking to understand their families’ past, exiles, wartime ruptures, or interested in emotional and subjective memory.
- **Cultural programmers, curators, and memory institutions:** Museums, historical archives, cultural centers, European institutes, and universities may see this documentary as a poetic and critical tool to spark dialogue across generations and regions.

Desired emotional connection

- Empathy with a youth living on the brink.
 - Identification with the filmmaker’s intimate journey, which many may feel as their own.
 - Nostalgia for what was and no longer is — but also for what we can still recover.
 - Reflection on how echoes of the past manifest today.
 - Urgency to avoid repeating historical mistakes by listening to the small voices of yesterday.
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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dani Rebner

When the *Franz Club* diary came into my hands, I didn't know I had just opened a door to a past that was as foreign to me as it was deeply mine. In its pages, young Germans described their days with joy, irony, and tenderness. They were friends, dreamers, survivors of a war that still resonated in their bodies and spirits. And without knowing it, they were writing from the edge of an abyss.

Reading their words, I discovered more than just a historical document: I discovered the silenced voice of my ancestors. Although I have German blood, I knew almost nothing about my family history in that country. This diary became a compass — pushing me to reconstruct not only the lives of those young people, but also my own origins.

With this documentary, I do not seek to make a treatise on interwar Germany, although that history will always be present. Nor do I intend to judge or redeem. I simply want to look closely at a generation that celebrated life while the world crumbled around them. To listen to their small voices, to understand their fears, their laughter, perhaps their naivety... and to ask myself how much of them lives in us.

We live in uncertain times, marked by a new global unease, by the resurgence of exclusionary discourse, by a silent fear of the future. In this context, this documentary is also an invitation to look back and hear the warnings history left us. Because sometimes, the most valuable things are not found in grand speeches, but in the intimate pages of a diary.

I want to tell this story with delicacy, with emotion, and with respect. I will combine historical research with a poetic and contemplative narrative, intertwining past and present. Not just to reconstruct an era, but to reflect on identity, memory, and belonging. On what remains when time passes... and what we can still learn from those who, a century ago, also sought meaning in the midst of chaos.

REFERENCES

1. **La casa Emak Bakia** (Oskar Alegría, 2012)
2. **Una historia para los Modlin** (Sergio Oksman, 2012)
3. **The Gleaners and I** (*Les glaneurs et la glaneuse*, Agnès Varda, 2000)
4. **Clash of Futures** (2018)
5. **My Mexican Bretzel** (Nuria Giménez Lorang, 2019)
6. **Mapa** (León Simiani, 2013)
7. **Cemetery of Splendour** (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015)