



Kino

Jürgen Fauth

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Jurgen Fauth

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With a cast of characters that includes Joseph Goebbels, Fritz Lang and Leni Riefenstahl, Fauth concocts a genre-busting blend of German history, film, and art into a fast, sinister tale of redemption. The tightly woven narrative is filled with thuggish darkness and back alley shadows running neck-and-neck with cinematic light and intri

Kino Details

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Author : Jurgen Fauth

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From Reader Review Kino for online ebook

Susannah says

Amazing, amazing book. Move over, Palahniuk - and I don't say this lightly - Jurgen Fauth is here.

I need to process this book for just a bit before I write a real review, but just wanted to say: **read it.** It's one of *those* books, the ones that make you think and gasp in awe at what the writer has actually done, and I look forward to reading more of this talented author's work.

Marjean Murray says

A nail-biting, thought-provoking, thriller that takes you to a world filled with film and film history, deep narcissistic characters, human relationships and the sacrifices we make to keep them or lose them.

The art of this book though, is its tremendous woven structure: intricate, erratic, confusing, fast-paced, poignant, and above all, well-written. Reading the last pages and closing the cover has me thinking about Oscar Wilde's "life imitates art" statement and the eerie Kino-powered vision that it does, possibly more than we may ever know.

Is there a next installment of this story, a sequel, that would show us this path and help us splice together art and history? Fascinating and fun to thing about.

Elizabeth says

Jürgen Fauth's snappy first novel, *Kino*, is a pastiche of genre: thriller, historical mystery, and even a kind of sly female version of the *bildungsroman*, although, as is often the case in contemporary coming-of-age stories, the protagonist should be grown up by now. Wilhemina "Mina" Kobletz returns home from the hospital, where her new husband Sam has spoiled their honeymoon by coming down with dengue fever. A flighty, aimless young woman, Mina is more concerned with the aborted honeymoon than with her husband's long-term prognosis. ("She was beginning to resent the long hours at the hospital," we learn almost immediately.) She trips over a parcel – another wedding present? No, it a print of *Tulpendedie* (The Tulip Thief), the classic 1927 silent film directed by her grandfather Klaus Kobitz, never seen outside of Germany and long presumed, like all his other films, to have been destroyed by the Nazis.

After a few calls to film scholars the next morning, Mina sprints off to Berlin (because of the size of the film, it can only be shown on an antique German projector), leaving behind her hospitalized husband and falling into a comic cloak-and-dagger discovery of the lives of her grandparents. Her grandfather, who committed suicide in Hollywood after the failure of his one American film. Mina's father was just a boy at the time and is outraged at her exhumation of a painful past. Was Kino a visionary, a madman, a brute, a Nazi collaborator? Certainly he had the ego to give himself the nickname "Kino," which means "cinema." Is he, as his granddaughter becomes, too obsessed by "Kino" to pay attention to what is actually occurring around him?

"Watching a perfect movie" Kino writes in his diary, "is like climbing a smooth wall – there's nowhere for your fingers to grab hold. I was always looking for something broken, a scar, a sign of struggle or damage, something that didn't fit, a crack that would create a space for everything that wasn't perfect.

The world saw later, in black-and-white footage from the liberated camps, the true face of German perfection. A vision of a rigid world without contradiction, where flaws and weaknesses were removed, suffocated, exterminated, and burned. My world would have all the freaks, homos and Jews in it, and all the gypsies and pimps, Tauntziengirls and Bonzen, too. The innocent were blessed along with the sinners, and that's why everyone gets hold at the end of *Tulpendiebe*. Goebbels was no idiot, but he didn't understand art or truth – he dealt only in death and control."

The film is stolen from Mina. She is handed Kino's diary, flies from Berlin to Hollywood to confront her grandmother, and is stalked by various shady characters who want the film for various nefarious reasons. Do Kino's films haunt the dreams and even the waking life of those who see them? Can they be used as an instrument of torture? It is here that the novel strays into hyper-realist and even magic realist territory which it never satisfactorily resolves.

But the resolution, in which Mina finds a family she was unable to create in her marriage, is a heartfelt one. The depiction of the German film industry in the 30's, told through Kino's diary with appearances by Fritz Lang, Emil Jannings, Marlene Dietrich and the rest of the gang, will delight any student of film history.

Kino

Jürgen Fauth

Novel, Atticus Books, 2012

258 pages

from the website <http://www.somuchsomanysofew.wordpress.com/2012/01/27/the-literature-of-world-war-ii/>

David Marshall says

This is a fascinating read blending history into a thrillerish vehicle for the exploration of some semiotics on the uses and abuses of the visual media.

<http://opionator.wordpress.com/2012/01/27/the-literature-of-world-war-ii/>

PopcornReads says

I must be a book cover junkie because so many times I find interesting new novels by being drawn to their book covers. The Kino book cover isn't beautiful or picturesque but there is something about it that drew me in. I'm glad it did because Kino by Jürgen Fauth is an interesting genre mix. It combines a contemporary thriller with historical fiction about the golden age of German filmmaking and, as odd as that may sound, it works. Read the rest of my review at <http://popcornreads.com/?p=3678>

Nan says

Kino starts like a roller coaster ride. It instantly grabbed me as a reader and kept me riding through turns, twists, and narrow escapes. The ending of the book was a bit of a disappointment. Ribbons weren't tied and the bow wasn't on the gift; there was something lacking.

Our protagonist Mina is acceptable as a person, but I don't know how genuine her character is. I don't know yet if I sympathize with her.

We never really know Kino. We learn only what he writes about his life and what everybody else tells us about him. To some he is revered, by others he is scorned. He is both a prophet and a hedonistic fool.

Sam, the husband of Mina leaves? Just up and leaves? His character needed to be fleshed out; I felt no connection to him. That bothered me.

The characters are nonsympathetic, self-absorbed, and unlikeable. Maybe that's one of the points of the entire novel. No one is as he or she is "supposed" to be. Everything in life is fleeting, just an image, just a moment in time. There is no reality. Gestalt.

Hmmmm.

Jason Pettus says

(Reprinted from the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this essay, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted illegally.)

I recently joined a new service called NetGalley.com, an internet startup that aims to be the tech-savvy middleman between publishers who are handing out electronic ARCs (advance reading copies) and independent reviewers like me who are seeking out such ARCs; and this was the very first title I requested through the service, because it sounded like something right up my alley, a thriller about an old German movie from the 1920s that mysteriously appears on the doorstep of the filmmaker's granddaughter one day, after decades of assumptions that every copy had long ago been destroyed, which supposedly through flashback form was also going to explore the heady days of the Weimer Republic in that country, a brief window between the world wars in which radical liberals were put in charge of the government and experimental art was allowed to flourish in a way that few industrialized nations had seen before or have witnessed since. But alas, in reality this turned out to be more like *The Historian* meets *The Da Vinci Code*, two novels I've actually read in the past and have despised in both cases, a lazy exercise in empty name-dropping (hey, look, everyone, our narrator is talking to *Fritz Lang!* Oh, and now he's talking to *Leni Riefenstahl!*) that much like *Forrest Gump* only mentions these people merely to be mentioning them, not to give us even the slightest insight as to what it must've been like to be an artist within such an exciting, apocalyptic time in history (instead, see something more like *Berlin Alexanderplatz*); and with go-nowhere modern scenes that seem to exist only as a cheap framing device for introducing the flashbacks in the first place, until veering into ridiculously silly territory in the third act with the introduction of a shadowy Opus-Dei-type cabal of European cinema scholars slash professional assassins, who even in the 21st century go around destroying subversive films from the 1920s and killing the people who have seen them so that NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW THE AWFUL TRUTH (or, er, something like that). The kind of book that tries

to convince you you're in Germany by occasionally having characters slip in "gut" instead of "good" in their English conversations, this is exactly the kind of hacky, dumbed-down mess I expressly try to avoid here at CCLaP, and I hope it's not an early sign that NetGalley is to become the place where mainstream presses dump their unreadable crap on an unsuspecting pool of amateur litbloggers. It does not come recommended.

Out of 10: **3.3**

Liviu says

This is a book I would rate as an A-/***/ 1/2 but I would still recommend as it has some great, great stuff mixed with some mediocre such, while the last part raises it above the "run of the mill" thriller with its "save the world" bla, bla that it threatened to devolve into.

I still believe the author missed writing an unforgettable book by going too much the Hollywood way with chases, men in black, etc at some point - though luckily he backs away in the end from that aspect which ultimately looks even more pointless - while the comparisons of the McCarthy era and later of Bush's invasion of Iraq with Nazi Germany are beyond the pale and that aspect is even clearer today in the "new era" of drone executions and take no prisoners navy seals assaults ordered by our current Nobel Peace Prize winner president to the unembarrassed silence and even cheering of the former Bush critics...

But the good parts - the diary of Kino about his life that arrives into the hand of his granddaughter Mina and later the revelations of his still living 92 year old wife (Mina's grandma though she has been estranged from her son for ages) - the portrait of the Weimar republic and the sketches of Nazi Germany, together with the examination of the role of art in society - are just great stuff.

Where the book misses its greatest potential is though in the sff aspect which justifies the chases and men in black - since that part is ultimately glossed over way too much as if the author wanted to write a "realistic thriller" and was embarrassed to delve too much into the supernatural; too bad as the potential lost there is huge, but at least the last part of the book stands back from the men in black and that was a huge plus

Overall the pages mostly turn by themselves and with few exceptions when the men in black appear the book is quite the page turner, but I still wish the author would have had the courage to go the sff route and embrace fully that aspect

FBC Review:

INTRODUCTION: With the blurb below and coming from Atticus Books of which I saw and heard quite a lot of good things, I was very interested in Kino and read it pretty much on obtaining an e-arc a few months ago, while the book is scheduled to be published April 17, though Amazon has it already shipping. While mostly a cross between historical fiction and standard contemporary thriller, Kino has a sfnal aspect too, but more about this below.

Here is a quote from Kino's diary:

"I came from nothing, I scaled the Olymp, and I can do it again. Even when the Nazis burned my movies, I clung to hope. You have marked me crazy and yet you ask me to explain myself. Art will prevail! I'll make

another movie yet. Cinema cannot be detained! Nothing can stop me, for I am Kino."

Here is the actual blurb:

"When the long lost, first-ever silent film from visionary director Kino arrives mysteriously on his granddaughter Mina's doorstep, the mission to discover the man she barely knew begins. As Kino's journals plunge the reader into the depraved glamour and infectious panic of 1920s and '30s Germany, Mina turns her life upside down to redeem her grandfather's legend.

With a cast of characters that includes Joseph Goebbels, Fritz Lang and Leni Riefenstahl, Fauth concocts a genre-busting blend of German history, film, and art into a fast, sinister tale of redemption. The tightly woven narrative is filled with thuggish darkness and back alley shadows running neck-and-neck with cinematic light and intrigue."

ANALYSYS: "Kino" is a book which I would rate as an A- but I would still recommend as it has some great stuff mixed with some more common such, while the last part raises it above the "run of the mill" thriller with its "save the world, etc" that it threatened to devolve into.

I believe the author missed writing an unforgettable book by going too much the Hollywood way with chases, men in black, etc - though luckily he backs away in the end from that aspect which ultimately looks even more pointless. I also found the comparisons of the McCarthy era and later of Bush's invasion of Iraq with Nazi Germany beyond the pale and that aspect is even clearer today in the "new era" of drone executions and take no prisoners navy seals assaults ordered by our Nobel Peace Prize winner president to the unembarrassed silence and even cheering of the former Bush critics. As another negative, in the Net Galley e-arc copy I read there were also a few historical mistakes like situating Pearl Harbor in 1943, but those may have been corrected.

However the good parts - the diary of Kino about his life which arrives into the hand of his granddaughter Mina and later the revelations of his still living 92 year old wife, Mina's grandma though she has been estranged from her son for ages, the portrait of the Weimar republic and the sketches of Nazi Germany, together with the examination of the role of art in society - are just great stuff and I'd rather read those 100+ pages and the mostly standard present day thriller that fills in the rest, than many other books.

Where the book misses its greatest potential is in the sff aspect which the author uses to justify the chases and men in black as Kino's movies..., well read the book to find out why they are believed to be important even today. That part is sadly glossed over as if the author wanted to write a "realistic thriller" and was embarrassed to delve too much into the sfnal; too bad, as the potential loss there is significant, but at least the finale of the novel stands back from the men in black and that was a big plus for me.

Overall the pages mostly turn by themselves and with few exceptions when the men in black appear the book is quite the page turner, but I still wish the author would have had the courage to go the sff route and embrace fully that aspect.

Caitlyn Duffy says

I can't stop thinking about this book. It reads like several books crammed into one, effortlessly taking the

reader from pre-WWII Germany to modern-day Hollywood and Berlin. The chapters in the book written as journal entries from Kino himself paint a picture of pre-war Berlin with vivid detail not unlike scenes from Baz Luhrman films. Mina is a flawed person but a likable heroine; she's lost in her new marriage and still trying to figure out exactly who she is (something to which, I think, many women in their thirties in New York can relate). The film canisters left for Mina at her apartment are like a rope being thrown down to her off a cliff she can't even see, offering her an opportunity to climb up and discover a surprising and rich history of both her grandparents' home country and the role her eccentric genius of a grandfather played in the creation of modern media. Anyone who appreciates the collaborative artistic nature of modern media should read this book... the final chapters are both baffling in terms of the characters' story arcs (why, oh why, does Sam do what he does?) and so intriguing in terms of the meta outside the book itself related to how we, now, as 20th century consumers of media, share artistic visions, re-purpose them, blog about them, and influence each other not only with our creation of art but with our individual perceptions of it. This book really just blew my mind.

Daisy says

Except for a few hokey chase scenes that the heroine of this novel herself can't believe are happening, this is a very entertaining, imaginative story.

(more thoughts to come)

Ilana says

Pretty well-written, very engaging tale of a recently married woman who comes home one day to find reels of a long-lost movie of her grandfather, a famous movie director in pre-WWII Germany. A noir-ish plot develops in which she travels to Germany to find out more about the movie, and her grandfather.

Good book, not great. Engaging and a pretty quick read. I may have recommended it for Book Fight had we not just read a book about WWII and Nazi Germany :)

Meaghan says

AMAZING!!! Please read my full review here: <http://mwgerard.com/review-kino-by-ju...>

Nicki Markus says

This book is an interesting quasi-thriller that combines questions on art with high speed car chases.

Mina was a great character, flawed and yet engaging, and I enjoyed following her as she tried to discover the truth about her film-maker grandfather.

The plot moves along at a good pace as we alternate between Mina's adventures and her grandfather's journal. With so many conflicting opinions about Kino, we struggle along with Mina to separate the truth from the fiction.

At times the storyline felt a little 'Hollywood', but I got the impression that was an intentional choice by the author as it tied in with ideas in the story about the nature of art and intellectual property. Unlike a Hollywood movie, though, there is not a completely happy ending and Fauth leaves it to the reader to decide if things have been resolved satisfactorily or not.

This book is an interesting, fairly quick read that both entertains and raises some thought-provoking questions. At times serious, at times quirky, this will appeal to readers who like something a little bit different.

I received this book as a free e-book ARC via NetGalley.

Jenn Ravey says

“What do you call the power to turn your imagination into reality?”

(Kino, p. 50)

In *Kino* by Jürgen Fauth, Mina Koblitz, home early from her disastrous wedding and honeymoon, knows three things about her German filmmaker grandfather Kino: his own son cannot stand the thought of him; he made a horrible film; he killed himself. When she finds two cans of celluloid with one of Kino's lost films outside her New York apartment, Mina calls on a film expert in Berlin, more to determine the monetary value of the film than anything else and hoping to possibly sell it. Instead, she begins to see that Kino was much more than he was made out to be – at the very least, his missing film *Tulpendiebe* is a sign that Kino once had a promising start. Unfortunately, Mina's interest in Kino is slight compared to those who want *Tulpendiebe* for their own purposes.

Kino's films are special, in part, because they have an odd after-effect. Once Mina sees the first film, she can't unsee it, and the scenes replay themselves before her – literally. Same camera angle, same incidents, same lighting. Mina's grandmother talks about this phenomenon because she once saw a man fall to his death amid broken lumber, the same scene having played out in *Tulpendiebe*: “[H]e called himself a visionary, and that suited him fine. He didn't understand his power, had no idea how to control it, and he didn't care. His movies set events in motion...It was extraordinary” (Kino, p. 120).

Presented as a dabbling, irresponsible artist by some and personally describing himself as a “conduit” of the images, Kino created himself in the bars and whorehouses of Berlin before the rise of Hitler and Goebbels. With his friend Steffen by his side, he assumed a new persona each night. Having lost a leg in a childhood accident, Kino finds women, drugs, and friends abound, particularly when Steffen dubs him a movie director. When Kino calls himself, instead, Kino - meaning cinema – it sticks, and as he says, the lies became truth as Kino goes from being an extra in Fritz Lang's films to directing his own film.

Ultimately, the novel revolves around this idea of lies as truth. Since Mina learns of her grandfather first through her own father, then through Kino's journal, and lastly through her drug-addled grandmother, the truth of Kino changes. Who he is and why he created what he did changes depending on who is being asked,

and as Mina's grandmother says about the films Kino was forced to make under Goebbels: "A screen doesn't just show things, it also hides them. There was no truth in Kino's operettas! They told splendid lies about gaiety and happiness when the reality was death and fear and destruction and oppression" (Kino, 125). But in a sense, those lies became the Germany many wanted to see.

Thwarted from fame in Germany by Goebbels and saddled with an unsupportive wife, Kino cannot fully realize his potential until it is much, much too late. When Kino is finally able to create a film without control after immigrating to America, he goes off the rails, and his friend and producer Marty tells Mina: "He turned it into something we weren't ready for, using every trick he had learned....Twenty-Twelve contained bits and pieces from earlier stories, scenes pilfered from his other movies, and a strange private mythology. It was reality-warping and prophetic" (Kino, p. 150).

Kino is obsessive, working as a cab driver in LA, writing and rewriting scripts, picturing films in the dozens of red light changes he passes on the Hollywood boulevards, and pitching ideas when and where he can. For Klaus Koblitz, the man known as Kino, is deeply unhappy. As Uma, Mina's grandmother pointed out about Kino's operettas, film hides truths as well as telling lies. Kino's life is much like this, and even at the end of the novel, the reader must parse the facets of Kino's life to find some semblance of the man.

Funny at times but deeply despairing, Kino is a testament to the visionary but destructive power of genius and how such genius alters the world around us.

David says

"Kino" is all at once beautiful, tragic, and darkly seductive. It blurs the lines between suspense thriller and biographical documentary, reality and dream. Beyond all else, it absolutely sucked me right in. I loved every word.
