

Director's Statement

TAB II is a continuation of a story that began fifteen years earlier, when we first met Tommy running a late-night shop in another part of Berlin. That first film was rooted in a particular time and place; this film returns to Tommy years later, now running a café, and asks what has changed – both around him and within him.

I didn't set out to make a film about gentrification. I wanted to explore what happens when a place that has given people a sense of belonging disappears.

The café in *TAB II* became the conduit for this exploration. It is an ordinary place, but over time a repository for friendship, memory, conflict and belonging. I wanted to capture the rituals that make such a place meaningful: the coffee, the conversations, the familiar faces, the returning customers.

Cinema often asks us to look at extraordinary events. I wanted *TAB II* to ask whether we are capable of looking closely at ordinary ones.

That is also why I chose to blur the boundary between fiction and documentary. The testimonies from the café patrons came from a desire to preserve something – not just information, but memory. I wanted these people to speak for themselves, to allow the film to become more an oral history of a disappearing space. Their stories don't simply explain the narrative; they expand it. They remind us that a place belongs to the memories people attach to it.

The film is intentionally patient. I want the audience to spend time in the café rather than simply observe it. To sit with the characters. To become familiar with their voices. To experience the pleasure of routine before beginning to understand what is at stake when that routine is threatened.

I don't think cinema can stop a neighbourhood from changing. I'm not sure it should try. But perhaps it can make us look more carefully at what change costs. And perhaps, for a moment, it can keep a disappearing location alive.

Ultimately, *TAB II* is about change, memory, the fragile things that make somewhere feel like home and what remains of the people and places we once knew.

Alex Ross