

# FRANTZ

France (2016) 114 minutes

**Director:** François Ozon

**Cast:** Paula Beer (Anna), Pierre Niney (Adrien Rivoire), Anton von Lucke (Frantz Hoffmeister)



**Screening 20 September 2017 at Swindon Arts Centre**

## Synopsis

Set in Germany and France in the immediate aftermath of the First World War (1914-1918), *Frantz* recalls the mourning period that follows great national tragedies as seen through the eyes of the war's "lost generation": Anna, a bereft young German woman whose fiancé, Frantz, was killed during trench warfare, and Adrien, a French veteran of the war who shows up mysteriously in her town, placing flowers on Frantz's grave.

## Reviews



Not just one of France's most acclaimed filmmakers, François Ozon is also a master of versatility. He has embraced a variety of genre tendencies and range of tones for his films, whether drama, comedy, romance, mystery or musical, and even fused many of these elements within a single work. (His *Potiche*, *In the House*, *Swimming Pool*, *Under the Sand* and *8 Women* serve as just a few acclaimed examples). Yet his films emerge seamless, organic, original and surprising, with *Frantz* being another impressive example.

[...] Performances are outstanding, as is the realistic, nostalgic production design shimmering in both black-and-white and color that evokes post-war Paris and the German village. Visual references stretch from the works of German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich to Michael Haneke's *The White Ribbon*, another edgy early-1900s German memory piece.

Just as the film lifts viewers with its elegantly told but intricate tale of life's familiar complications, it also jolts as painful contrast to the shrill, vulgar, ugly upheaval that characterizes much of the present. Yet, with lies at its core, this period drama is also unexpectedly relevant.

After her fiancé's death in the first World War, Anna (Paula Beer) continues to live with her husband-to-be's devastated parents, Hans (Ernst Stötzner) and Magda (Marie Gruber) in defeated Germany.

She's all they have left: Frantz's body was not returned from the trenches. One day, Anna spies a stranger leaving flowers on his empty grave. Surprisingly, the man, named Adrien (Pierre Niney), is French. When he first calls on Frantz's father, Hans dismisses him: "All Frenchmen killed my only son." Slowly, however, the makeshift family, especially Anna, warm to their Gallic visitor, and delight in his tales of he and Frantz's pre-war adventures in Paris. But Adrien's broken demeanour speaks a darker history.

Director François Ozon remakes the Ernst Lubitsch's 1932 anti-war classic *Broken Lullaby* and seamlessly adds a new, poignant third act: all the better to admire the filmmaker's latest conflicted heroine-turned-detective.

[...] A splendid cast work through the complications and stages of grief to provide a scathingly anti-nationalist warning from history.

*Tara Brady, The Irish Times*

## Film Facts

- At the 2016 Venice film festival, Paula Beer won the Marcello Mastroianni Award for Best Emerging Actress.
- At the 42nd César Awards in France, *Frantz* was nominated in eleven categories, winning one for Best Cinematography.
- Edouard Manet's painting *Le Suicidé* is referenced and shown several times in the story. *Frantz* is a remake of the 1932 Ernst Lubitsch film *Broken Lullaby*.