



# BECOMING BLACK

by Ines Johnson-Spain



## SYNOPSIS

Imagine that your parents are white but your skin colour is dark and they tell you that 's pure coincidence. This is what happened to a girl in East Berlin in the 1960s.

Years before, a group of African men came to study in a village nearby. Here the East German woman Sigrid falls in love with Lucien from Togo and gets pregnant. But she is already married to Armin.

The child is filmmaker Ines Johnson-Spain. Meeting her stepfather Armin and others from her childhood years, she tracks the astonishing strategies of denial her parents and the surroundings had developed.

In an intimate portrayal but also critical exploration she brings together painful and confusing childhood memories with matter-of-fact accounts that testify a culture of rejection and tight-lipped denial.

Yet, the movingly warm encounters with her Togolese family develop *Becoming Black* also into a reflection on themes such as identity, social norms and family ties, seen from a very personal perspective.

## FESTIVALS

2019

IDFA Amsterdam

2020

37 IFFF Dortmund | Cologne

## CAST AND CREW

DIRECTOR Ines Johnson-Spain · PRODUCER Anahita Nazemi ·

SCORE Jean-Paul Bourelly · SOUND Ulla Kösterke · EDITOR Yana

Höhnerbach · DOP Sebastian Winkels, Anne Misselwitz · SOUND

DESIGN Brooke Trezise

Germany 2019

91 min

### FORMAL CATEGORIES

Family, Children / Youth,  
Migration, POV, Travelling,  
Social issues

### ORIGINAL LANGUAGES

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### PREMIERE

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