

DREHBUCH VERBAND AUSTRIA

2011/2012

After the most successful year 2010, 2011 was prosperous too. The number of members of our association is steadily increasing; we currently have 92 members, a raise of 4 screenwriters since last year.

The number of registered visitors of our programs and events remain constant by about 800 people, but what counts more is the mostly very positive feedback we got and the advantage the writers and the whole Austrian film sector could take from our work.

Overview of our activities

New managing director

Since spring 2012 Wilbirg Brainin-Donnenberg has been appointed new managing director of drehbuchVERBAND Austria. She has studied psychology and sociology in Salzburg, Paris and Vienna, has worked from 1993-2004 for sixpackfilm, since then as a freelance film curator for the Austrian Filmmuseum, Generali Foundation Vienna, the Liechtenstein Museum etc. and as a organizer of symposiums and conferences like the Industry Meeting of the Diagonale - Festival of Austrian Films. She also has published on several topics, foremost her book on Gustav Deutsch, co-edited with M. Loewenstein.

Even before Brainin-Donnenberg joined Drehbuchverband Wien as managing director she curated for the Drehbuchforum a series dealing with Vienna as a film city, jointly with B. Pichler) and *Script meets literature, two islands or a continent?*) and she initiated two script competitions of the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research, dealing with female scientists in film, and biodiversity.

Focus: Script meets Literature

Film adaptations of novels exist since the beginning of the cinema. But what are the differences between writing literature and writing a screenplay and what have they in common? These are the questions we have been stressing in the last one and a half years.

We started with an open forum combining prominent guests from both areas. Many of our events of this year stood on this issue like the workshop by the writer Sabine Scholl on Female Mythic Figures.

Let's talk about scripts

Let's talk about scripts is our main program to call attention to the work of the screenwriters. In several discussions about the latest Austrian films with screenwriters we approach on the one hand the movie audience and on the other hand writers who can share their experiences with the panellists.

Among Austrian guests we had two international screenwriters invited for special events: Peter Morgan, who lives in Vienna was willing to give a lecture and Paul Schrader came at our invitation to talk about his work after a screening of his masterwork *adaptation*.

Unknown places

To inspire the writers creativity, we offer excursions to places, where someone could not go so easily. Themes of last year's trips were working places and everyday life. Among others we have been to the Islamic centre in Vienna and visited "Sophie", a place of education and information for female sex workers.

Kreativ IMPULS

Kreativ IMPULS started 2010 with workshops to stimulate the potential of creativity. Focus audience: *The Human Factor*, a lecture and seminar from Roland Zag examined the emotional trigger in storytelling processes.

Jürgen Wolff and his seminar *Improvisation for screenwriters* delved into the subject of alternative writing techniques. With exercises inspiring creativity the participants learned to develop the basics of narration without preparation.

In spring 2012 we offered a 2-day workshop of comic and comedy in film. Pia Hierzegger and Josef Hader, two well-known Austrian actors and writers worked with acting techniques on several aspects of humour in the writing process. A half-day briefing 3 months after the workshop gave the participants feedback about their worked out scenes.

Website

In 2011 we re-launched our website. One of the most important innovations is the possibility for every member to have his own separate site. Besides other innovations it is now clearly structured and convenient in handling and very appreciated by the Austrian Film Community.

Model Contract

Inspired from the Swiss guild we are working on a model contract for all possible scripts. Prepared from our lawyer, this contract should give all

involved parties legal certainty. Together with our contract checklist we will have a package including an overview of the current legal situation and of course all details one should mention before signing a contract.

Thomas Pluch Prize

Every year we award the biggest national prize for screenplays at the Diagonale, the festival of Austrian Film in Graz. Thomas Pluch is one of the founders of our Association, in his name 22.000,- Euro will be awarded for the most talented and the best screenplay which was filmed in the last year. 2012 was the 20th year this prize was awarded.

scriptLAB feature & scriptLAB doku

2010 we wanted to extend our script development program scriptLAB for documentaries. At that time it was not realizable. Our second attempt seems to be more successful: 2013 we hope to help authors in the early phase of writing to optimise their documentary script. It is available for both professional and even young writer. The authors are working in close cooperation with a dramaturge and are financially supported by the Austrian Screenwriters Association.

scriptLAB for feature scripts proceeds as usual, it started 6 years ago. In that time we received 450 submissions, 68 scripts were taken into the program.

Lobbying

After a long time of making preparations we achieved to lift the list price for screenplays (cinema) in the main Austrian funding administration ÖFI. The remunerations for writers increased significantly, in the case of a two million budget film from 43.000,- Euros to 60.000,- Euros.

Besides our everyday expert advice in legal concerns we had a grievous case 2011: one of our members, a young writer just graduated from film school worked about 2 years as a co-writer together with the filmmaker. An imprecise contract and personal differences draw consequences in extreme underpayment and a refusal of the credit title.

To avoid a lawsuit we had several talks with the production company and the filmmaker himself. After the threat to make this case public a consensual regulation was possible.

For this and the next year we are planning a number of activities about the extensive topic of copyright law. To get an overview of all aspects we are collecting on our website online-panels, legal opinions, proposals for solutions and points of view from political parties or other organisations. To make it more concrete we invited experts for lectures and discussions for a one-day conference in December.