

Annual report End 2020 and 2021

drehbuchVERBAND Austria Austrian screenwriters association

Currently we count 139 members (Nov 2021)

24 of these are Rookie (junior) members and receive special rates

Our events including seminars and discussions were attended by about 1580 participants (2020), 440 in person, 1130 online.

Corona Crisis

Due to the intensified situation in the course of the Corona crisis, we supported and initiated extensive campaigns and petitions on a national and international level in order to reduce the effects on the authors and the entire art and cultural scene. It was important for us to create a compact and comprehensible overview of the state subsidy and emergency measures. We offered advice to our members and communicated omissions and improvements by consulting with the umbrella organization of Austrian filmmakers. A central aspect was to create an awareness for lawmakers and the general public regarding the catastrophic situation for filmmakers and all the creative talent in the industry. The possibilities for financial support in this country in particular thus were expanded and gradually improved in the course of the pandemic. Nevertheless, many scriptwriters had to face hardships, so in individual cases we did not collect membership dues.

Draft copyright amendment

fatal effects for Austrian filmmakers

The serious effects of the copyright amendment 2021, which threatens to hit the Austrian creative artists, are fatal, massive deteriorations are imminent:

- No money from internet platforms
- No collective rights management
- Austrian filmmakers will be treated worse than their foreign colleagues.

Furthermore, in the medium term, the associations and film festivals will no longer receive funding from the SKE Fund ("Social and Cultural Institutions"), initiatives such as #we_do! (A platform catering to support all working in the Austrian film- and television industry, against discrimination and unequal employment, abuse of power, sexual harassment and violation of employment laws), also the legal advice during the Corona Pandemic by the umbrella organization will no longer exist. In particular, the fact that filmmakers - like all other artists, by the way - will have no direct claim to remuneration from the major Internet platforms caused severe concern.

The umbrella organization of Austrian filmmakers has already pointed out this fact in numerous brochures and mailings, and the Austrian Screenwriters Association has submitted its own statement on the draft of the law to parliament.

Pursuing these efforts there is a petition supporting the demands for an appropriate and fair draft for such a law and various activities such as publicly effective performances in front of the Austrian parliament are in the planning. But the prospect of an amendment of this draft in our sense seems very unlikely from today's point of view. A formal legal challenge of this draft is therefore already being planned.

Contracts for screenwriters

Our model contracts for scriptwriters for cinema feature film, television and film treatment, as well as the contracts for co-authors and script editors find a ready market. The continuous strive to establish standards and practices in the domestic film industry and to strengthen the independence of the authors in contract negotiations appears successful.

The model contracts are used as a template in whole but also in parts, they are broken down into individual components for better usability and adaption. Each element of the contract contains a commentary to add clarity and in some cases examples to ensure better adaptability.

The contracts were created after intensive work especially in the communication with our members. We understand this publication as a work-in-progress process, where we welcome suggestions and ideas for ongoing edits.

In 2021 a model option contract has been drawn up by our lawyer based on the experience of our members, it was presented to and discussed with the members at our General Assembly in November.

Initiative Screenplay 2021 / Drehbuch2021

In June 2021, the Austrian Screenwriters' Association presented the Screenplay 2021 initiative to the industry at the Diagonale, Festival of Austrian Film.

Internationally, the essential importance of screenwriters in film and series production has long been taken into account. In Germany, for example, Kontrakt18 guidelines were established three years ago that define the rights and obligations of screenwriters in the production process and are used in contract negotiations.

With Drehbuch2021, the Austrian Screenwriters' Association has now also developed standards for Austria that define the conditions for fair and cooperative collaboration between production, broadcaster, director and screenplay - a kind of quality stamp to which all parties involved are committed. The paper includes a number of concrete demands. These range from fair contractual terms and fair remuneration to a say in key steps within the production process and adequate mention in all exploitation measures.

The guidelines were presented to the producers' associations, the directors' associations and the ORF in internal preliminary talks and were sent to all key stakeholders.

Online Fee Calculator

At the end of summer, we developed an online fee calculator that takes into account all conceivable options for determining adequate fees for screenwriting work. The basis is the fee rates of the Österreichischen Filminstitut (Austrian Filminstitute) and the Public Television, the results range from average to very well calculated fees.

At the moment it is being tested by selected members, after which their experiences will be incorporated into a revision of the calculator. Access will only be granted to members in a separate section of the website.

Thomas Pluch Prize 2021

The DrehbuchVERBAND Austria is awarding the best national filmed screenplays every year at the Diagonale, Festival of the Austrian Film in Graz. The award is named after Thomas Pluch, one of the founders of the Drehbuchverband Austria. Endowed with 22.000.- Euro it is one of the biggest film awards in the Austrian film industry.

After a year of corona-related cancellations and improvisations, the festive awards ceremony could once again take place at the Diagonale in Graz, and the prizes were awarded together with the Carl Mayer Screenplay Prize in a ceremony on June 11, 2021.

The award-winning screenplays were presented via video feed. Text passages from the screenplays were faded in and read aloud, and finally superimposed on the selected scenes of the final film. The process, the creation of the film from the screenplay, could thus be impressively visualized.

The award ceremony has developed into an important film-political event, especially this year, which on the one hand points outward as a publicity-effective sign, but on the other hand also strengthens the position of the screenwriters within the industry, which confirmed the great acceptance and presence of the domestic film industry and representatives of the cultural-political institutions.

The winners 2021 are:

- Thomas Pluch prize for best screenplay of a full-length feature film or a feature-length TV movie, awarded with 12.000 Euros

Ulrike Kofler, Sandra Bohle and Marie Kreutzer for *Was wir wollten* (The Way Things Go – also available on Netflix)

- Thomas Pluch Special Jury Award
awarded with 7.000 Euros
goes in equal parts to

Arman T. Riahi for *Fuchs im Bau*

and

Pia Hierzegger for *Waidmannsdank*

For the best screenplay for feature films with a minimum length of 15 minutes to a maximum of 70 minutes.

The Thomas Pluch Prize for short or midlength fiction films 3.000.- Euro goes in equal parts to

Klara von Veegh for *Fidibus*

and

Mo Harawe for *Life on the Horn*

drehbuchFORUM Wien

public events

Let's talk about scripts

Panel - Discussions

Let's talk about scripts is our main program focus on the work of the screenwriters. In several discussions with screenwriters about the latest Austrian films we on the one hand reach the movie audiences, on the other hand writers can share their experiences with the panelists. The popularity among the audience is notably increasing every year, at the last 7 events this year we had about 480 participants who joined us in lively discussions.

trans script – the script from the perspective of other departments

The series trans script relates the work of other departments to the practice of screenwriters. By what means do other departments work on characters or suspense and how can the script support their possibilities. We started this series in 2015 with the cinematographer Sophie Maintigneux, 2017 we continued with editing with Karina Ressler and in 2018 with production designer Katharina Wöppermann. For November 2019 sound and sound-design was the main topic. Due to corona we had to postpone the planned events.

Arbeit Alltag Welt – Everyday's Work, Unknown places Excursions

To inspire writers creativity, we offer excursions to places, where someone could not go so easily as a single, private person.

Sex workers - Shiva Prugger

December 17, 2020 by Zoom

BSÖ, a new association that represents the concerns of sex workers, was founded in the summer. In addition to the current difficulties, the association is primarily committed to fundamental issues: for example, the legal recognition of sex work as a free profession is sought, discrimination in the search for housing and a place to live, in banks and insurance companies is denounced, a homogeneous legal regulation of sexual services in Austria is generally demanded. The discussion with Shiva Prugger, self-employed dominatrix in Vienna and founder of the association, was extremely informative and was attended by many participants. She and one of her colleagues told us about their intimate working world, provided information about the needs and challenges of the professional representation and took a lot of time for the many questions.

National control center emergency call 133

March 23, 2021, by Zoom

Whether it's the neighbor's noisy party, a car accident with personal injury, acts of violence, or the terrorist attack in Vienna: the police are the first point of contact in these cases.

Up to 4,000 calls a day are received by the Vienna regional control center on emergency number 133 or the Euro emergency number 112; in 2020, there were 1,195,821 recorded calls throughout Austria. On average, the officers pass on every third case to a dispatcher at the radio desk, the rest are mostly "mystifications" (joke calls) and several calls about one and the same event.

We visited the emergency call center via online conference, talked to head of unit Lt. Col. Harald Trottmann and one of his colleagues about the work on the emergency call, the handling of individual emergency situations and the necessary requirements.

Shepherd*in and flock of sheep

Mon, 21.6.2021, Danube Island

Since 2019, sheep have been grazing parts of the Danube island as sustainable, environmentally friendly lawnmowers. This area is left in its natural state and is not intensively used.

The use of the sheep is a test trial within the framework of the EU project LIFE DICCA of Vienna's city administration (MA 45). It is also part of a project that combines near-natural care of ecosystems with the creation of training and jobs for long-term unemployed people aged 24 to 60. The social agriculture project offers 24 age- and performance-appropriate transit jobs, social work support, targeted further training and technical support for obtaining an extraordinary apprenticeship diploma as a landscape gardener. The goal is to strengthen people for reentering the labor market.

Farm manager Ursula Königer told us about the entire project, the ecological and social aspects and everything that concerns the sheep and the work with them.

Federal Office for Sectarian Issues / Ulrike Schiesser

Tue, 30.11.2021, by Zoom

Conspiracy myths, superstition, esotericism, pseudoscience and the like - how does the state react to these forms of outlook on life? What are the basics for the evaluation and assessment of the individual directions, when do the alarm bells sound off and how can one monitor it?

We want to know this and much more from Ulrike Schiesser, an expert consultant at the Federal Office for Sectarian Issues.

This is a legally established, central information and counseling center on "so-called sects" and worldview issues. This includes topics such as alternative religious movements and world views, esotericism, spirit and miracle healings, guru movements, occultism, Satanism, and sovereign movements or state deniers, as well as Covid-19 conspiracy theories. The task of the Federal Agency is to document and provide information about dangers that may emanate from "sects" or sect-like activities.

script-development

scriptLAB fiction / scriptLAB docu

script-development program

scriptLAB helps authors to improve their script in the early phase of writing, it is available to both professional and also young writers. The authors are working in close cooperation with a script consultant and are financially supported by the Austrian Screenwriters Forum. With this efficient, low cost program we contribute to the diversity of projects, the innovative character and to the increase in quality of the scripts. Thus the writer/filmmaker can take direct advantage from the growing acceptance on the producers' side.

Since 2006 almost 1000 projects have been submitted of which more than 100 have been promoted. 26 script development projects are now available as a screenplay and are on their way to be adapted for the screen, 7 are already being filmed, 3 are currently made into films.

Since 2013 we have extended our script development programme scriptLAB also to documentaries.

With that we take into account the increasing mixing of the boundaries between fiction film and documentary and the need for script development of documentary films. More than 160 projects have been submitted, 4 are in preparation for being filmed, 2 are currently being made into film, and one had already a cinema release.

United Writers

A Weekend-Feedback-Workshop for professional screenwriters and filmmakers

In our program United Writers 4 professional scriptwriters or auteur-filmmakers have the opportunity to get feedback to their script. The workshop is moderated by an experienced script-consultant, but the main interchange is between the writers themselves. Each script gets feedback for half a day.

The projects can be in varying stages between an elaborated treatment and various versions of a finished script. Due to the high demand United Writers takes place twice a year, giving 8 scriptwriters per year the opportunity to work on their scripts by this successful model of collaboration. Due to Corona we were forced to postpone it, though

IF SHE CAN SEE IT, SHE CAN BE IT

Figures of women beyond clichés - competition

The two-stage competition for screenplays takes place for the sixth time in 2021. The aim of the competition is to promote the heightened representation of differentiated and complex female characters beyond the clichés for the Austrian cinema.

The response in the last two years was surprising: The enormous number of submissions was unexpected and has shown that there are enough ideas to portrait women away from traditional stereotypes.

Prizes are awarded for a total amount of 40.000 Euro in two stages, the prize money will benefit the screenwriters. In addition, the screenwriters are given script-consultant support to the equivalent of 10.500.- Euro to develop the story. In the first step 5 scripts are being selected by a jury to be worked into treatments. In the second step one of these five treatments will be expanded into a feature length screenplay.

Additionally, we invited 20 authors for a pitching, where they had the chance to present their exposés to female producers. This competition is financed by and conducted in cooperation with The Austrian Film Institute.

table reading for dialogues

November 2021

Due to the very positive feedback, we organized table reading for dialogues a third time in 2021. This model of supporting writers and actors in dialogue writing, which has proved very successful at the Writers Guild of Great Britain, is intended to provide assistance with the development of individual screenplay scenes in the script phase. The competence of actors in dialogue scenes is exploited by winning them to read selected passages of the screenplay with distributed roles. Each project has 90 minutes to be read and to discuss the screenplay scenes. In a moderated conversation, the impressions are shared with the actors and the other authors, possible solutions are debated.

Table reading for dialogues is not a public event but a closed round of participants.

Workshops / Masterclasses

Masterclass with Helen Jacey on the conception of TV miniseries.

October 20, 2020, online via Zoom

Developing a TV mini-series - online masterclass with Helen Jacey

On the occasion of the screenplay competition Heroines in Series, where we conceived and organized the mentoring program, we were able to engage Helen Jacey, in addition to providing feedback to the winners, for a masterclass on miniseries. The seminar focused on the creative development of a miniseries from conception to pilot. Helen Jacey referred to the 1st season of the miniseries Top of the Lake (by Jane Campion and Gerard Lee) to illustrate the dramaturgical elements such as characterization, theme, plot, antagonists and unification.

In analyzing the series, participants addressed how choices about representation in development can affect characters and create differentiated female characters. Questions were then answered in detail.

Helen Jacey is Creative Director of Shedunnit Productions, a writer, screenwriter, story development consultant, and lecturer. Helen's screenwriting guide, The Woman in the Story: Creating Memorable Female Characters, published in 2010, is considered the standard work on developing female characters for film and established Helen Jacey as a pioneer in the portrayal of female characters. She has traveled the world with it over the past decade giving trainings, workshops, keynotes, and interviews. She launched the MA in Creative Writing and Publishing at Bournemouth University and has an MA and PhD in Screenwriting.

Giving Notes and Getting Notes - Interactive Online Workshop with Pilar Alessandra (USA)

March 17, 2021

To make the most of the time of massively limited event opportunities, at least online, we have managed to secure Los Angeles-based playwright, lecturer and non-fiction writer Pilar Alessandra. She is an annual star of the London Screenwriters Festival and held a four-part interactive online workshop on re-writing and, in addition, as a finale, the interactive seminar Giving Notes and Getting Notes.

Re-writing techniques – Four Part Interactive Online Workshop with Pilar Alessandra (February-March 2021)

Pilar Alessandra taught re-writing techniques in a very clear and enjoyable way and gave concrete tasks to the participants. In addition to the 90-minute sessions, there was an additional 30 minutes to ask specific questions.

Giving Notes and Getting Notes was aimed primarily at screenwriters, dramaturgs, producers and TV editors and provides suggestions on the art of giving feedback and how to deal with feedback received.

Pilar Alessandra is the director of the instructional writing program On The Page®, host of the On the Page podcast, and renowned lecturer and script consultant for screenwriters at Disney, DreamWorks, ABC and AFM. She is also the author of The Coffee Break Screenwriter and The Coffee Break Screenwriter Breaks the Rules. Pilar's greatest achievement is the success of her students*, they work for television series such as Homeland, The 100, Dear White People, Greys Anatomy, Silicon Valley and The Chi, their feature films can be seen at Netflix, Sony, Warner Bros. and other major studios.

On Writing, On Cinema - In conversation with Terence Davies

Sun 24.10.2021, Viennale Int. Film Festival

We could continue our cooperation with the Viennale on outstanding screenwriters in 2021: This time with the British screenwriter and director Terence Davies, to whom the "Monograph - Capturing Time in Images and Words" is dedicated at the Viennale. In the process, it was possible to (re)discover his entire oeuvre to date, including his latest film Benediction, for which he won the award for best screenplay in San Sebastian. The conversation On Writing, On Cinema dealt with Davies' autobiographical beginnings and the interweaving of the biographical, the literary and the historical that is so special to him.

Keynote speech on Heroines in Series 2.0 Next generation / Maya Götz

November 22, 2021 7:00 p.m., Zoom

The Austrian Federal Ministry for Digitalization and Economic Development, together with FISA, has announced the script competition "Heroines in Series" for the second time, looking for ideas for series for a young target audience with at least one central female main character from the fields of MINT - mathematics, computer science, natural science and technology. The deadline for submissions is January 16, 2022, and Drehbuchforum is in charge of the mentoring program for the authors.

We have invited media scientist Maya Götz to give an online talk as an impetus for this competition. She spoke on November 22, 2021, under the telling title "Stressed, unsympathetic and always with a guilty conscience: How Film and Television Narrates Working Women and How That Can Be Changed", she gave an entertaining talk on her approach to the topic.

Maya Götz (media scientist, Munich) is head of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) at Bayerischer Rundfunk and of PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL. She has led more than 180 empirical studies on daily soaps, casting shows, learning with television, television characters and identity work, among others, and is the pedagogical director of SogehMedien, the media competence platform of ARD and ZDF.

She has published more than 250 scientific articles, 15 books and is active in training courses for children's television editors worldwide.