

## **drehbuchVERBAND Austria**

**Austrian screenwriters association**

Currently we have 160 members (Oct 2023), 45 of these are Rookie (junior) members and receive special rates. Our events including seminars and discussions were attended by more than 800 participants (2022).

### **Contracts for screenwriters**

Our model contracts for scriptwriters for cinema feature film, television and film treatment, as well as the contracts for co-authors, script editors and script options 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 during contract negotiations is visibly improving. The model contracts are used as a template as a 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.

### **Initiative Drehbuch2021 / Screenplay2021**

With Drehbuch2021, the Austrian Screenwriters Association has developed standards for Austria that define the conditions for fair and cooperative collaboration between production, broadcaster, director and screenplay - a kind of seal of quality to which all parties involved commit. The paper includes a number of concrete demands. These range from fair contractual terms and fair remuneration to 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 - Austrian Broadcasting Association in internal preliminary talks and were sent to all the key parties involved, and are largely supported, especially by the ORF. The Austrian Screenwriters Association presented the Drehbuch2021 initiative for the first time in summer 2021 at the Diagonale - Austrian Film Festival and has been continuously implementing its demands since. In order to get an overview of the current situation, we started a survey within our members in October 2023. We will receive their results in November, further measures will follow 2024.

## **ORF - Austrian Broadcasting Association**

### **Successful Negotiations - Increase in fees**

We have always strived to improve the working conditions for Austrian screenwriters, this year we reached a satisfactory agreement with ORF. After the pandemic years and the current wave of inflation, a renegotiation of these rates as well as a more advantageous payment modality was a priority concern for us. We have now achieved this with a very successful outcome.

The book fees are increased by 10%.

In addition, there has been a significant improvement in the distribution of the fees: Up to now, it has been about 1/6 each at signature and acceptance, and about 2/3 as a total buy-out at the start of production. In the future, a larger share of the fee will be paid upon signature and acceptance - namely 27.5% each.

This agreement is of course also applicable on installments to shorter serial formats. It is valid immediately and initially until the end of 2024, at which point talks on a fee adjustment are to be resumed.

### **Copyright - Representativeness**

We want to file an application pursuant to § 37b UrhG to establish representativeness for the professional group of screenwriters in Austria, which would mean that we can call for negotiations, for example, on fees or contract terms with broadcasters, etc. So far, this has only ever been possible by good will. In order to maintain representativeness, we have to prove to the supervisory authority of the collecting societies that we also have the support of a large part of the professional group, and have already done so. This includes the recruitment of new members, the evaluation of our members participation in scripts filmed for TV and cinema, and an intensive exchange of information with the Literar Mechana, our collecting society.

### **Initiative copyright contract law**

For years now we have been involved in discussions and meetings that deal intensively with the implementation of the new copyright law.

In working groups with collecting societies and colleagues from film, music, literature and other creative people, positions are worked out and presented to the politically responsible. The main concerns at the moment are online usage, in particular the de minimis limits for the liability of online platforms, the definition of organizations that can be represented and the options for appearing in public.

## **Thomas Pluch Prize 2024**

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 Austrian film industry.

The winners are:

- Thomas Pluch prize for best screenplay of a full-length feature film or a feature-length TV movie:

- **Marie Kreutzer for *Corsage***

- Thomas Pluch Special Jury Award

For a screenplay for particularly outstanding aspects, the jury is free to define the category:

- **Tizza Covi for *Vera***

- Thomas Pluch prize for best short and medium-length film

- **Kálmán Nagy for *Das andere Ende der Straße***

Members of the international jury: Lillian Birnbaum (producer, FR/AT), Barbara Fränzen (filmexpert, AT), Lars Hubrich (author, DE).

Members of the national jury: Robert Buchschwenter (author, scriptconsultant), Catalina Molina (author, director) Judith Zdesar (author, scriptconsultant, director)

## **Screenwriters Everywhere**

Global Day of Solidarity also in Vienna

On June 14, 2023, the Vienna Screenwriters Forum and the Austrian Screenwriters Association joined countless television and film writers around the world to demonstrate for more rights and fair pay for screenwriters.

This struggle for fair pay and protection from global streaming companies affects us in Austria as well. Our members therefore stood in front of the Universal Studios Austria office in Vienna and showed solidarity! With slogans and speeches we attracted the attention of passers-by, an American screenwriter reported directly from the strikes in the USA and thanked us for this solidarity rally. The strike in the U.S. and the solidarity event were widely reported in the Austrian media.

# drehbuchFORUM Wien

## screenwriters forum Vienna

### **Let's talk about scripts**

#### **Panel - Discussions**

Let's talk about scripts is our main program to call attention to the work of 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 panellists. The popularity among the public is increasing every year, at the last 8 events this year we had about 500 participants who joined us in lively discussions.

Before the talk, we usually show the film to be discussed in a cinema setting, and after the event there is still an opportunity to chat informally.

### **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 the program was founded, about 1440 exposes have been submitted 183 of these were funded. Most of the script development projects are now available as screenplays and are on their way to be adapted for the screen, 9 have been already being filmed, 5 are currently made into films.

Since 2013 we have extended our script development program scriptLAB also to documentaries. With that we take into account the frequent blending of the boundaries between fiction film and documentary and the need for script development of documentary films. More than 290 projects have been submitted, 41 were selected for the program, 7 are in preparation for being filmed, 3 are currently be made into films, and two have already had 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 scripts. 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.

## **IF SHE CAN SEE IT, SHE CAN BE IT**

### **Figures of women beyond clichés – screenwriters competition**

The two-stage competition for screenplays takes place for the seventh time in 2023, this time it focused on the genre of comedy. 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 four 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 exposes are being selected by a jury to be worked into treatments. In the second step one of these five treatments will awarded to be expanded into a feature length screenplay.

Additionally, we invited 16 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.

### **Keynote Anna Czarska**

As part of our awards ceremony in May 2023, non-binary screenwriter, director, producer and actress Anna Czarska gave a very insightful keynote entitled "Being 'Mildly Different' while working in Film" and spoke from her own experience as an autistic person about how neurodiversity can enrich the film industry.

## **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.

## **Subway construction site / Wiener Linien**

January 2023

The extension of the U2 and the reconstruction and new construction of the U5 are together the most important future project for the Wiener Linien and the largest infrastructure project in the city. We had the rare opportunity to visit this complex construction site and were thus able to offer screenwriters an opportunity for research that generally focuses on construction projects and urban infrastructure.

First, we were given an overview of the construction measures, such as the construction of the manholes, the individual construction procedures and the safety measures that are necessary for the sewer system, the energy supply or the adjacent properties.

Then we descended into the subway via the disused Rathausplatz subway station. A certified technician and the foreman led us through the construction site, gave us information about the demanding logistics of this construction phase and the challenges of tunnel construction in a dense urban area.

In May this year we started the series on the topic of science in cooperation with the Magistrate's Office of the City of Vienna, Department of Science, Research and Business Location.

### **Institute of Meteorology and Geophysics**

May 2023

First visit was with Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Andreas Stohl from the University of Vienna, head of the Institute of Meteorology and Geophysics, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Geography and Astronomy. His research areas include transport processes in the atmosphere and development of transport models, ozone formation, air exchange between stratosphere and troposphere, and intercontinental pollutant transport.

In the last 12 years, Stohl has become increasingly interested in pollution and climate in the polar regions, on which he has published several widely cited papers. To this end, he has developed and applied tools for inverse estimation of emission sources. He is also extensively involved in climate research and has recently coordinated an EU project on this. His current research area is the interpretation of ice core data from global glaciers using atmospheric transport models.

### **Institute for Microbiology**

June 2023

At the end of May, we visited another exciting research institution, the Institute for Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology at Boku Vienna. The IMMB researches the genetics, cell biology and metabolism of microorganisms of importance to industry and the environment. The institute has already achieved important results in the artificial production of insulin from lactic acid, in the generation of antigens needed for corona tests in the course of the Covid pandemic, and in the use of micro fungi from desert areas to protect human skin against aging and cancer.

Another research project deals with septic shock, which kills 11 million people worldwide every year. This work not only succeeded in containing the infection underlying septic shock, but also in preventing an excessive reaction of the immune system.

### **Institute for Conservation and Restoration**

November 2023

The preservation of cultural assets is one of the most important tasks of a value-based society, being closely linked to the concepts of historical awareness, identity creation and education. Cinema is also part of this heritage and must be protected from decay (even if not at this institute). In terms of content, however, film only touches directly on this topic in exceptional cases, but scripts about art theft or forgery, artists or historical material are closely linked to it. The Institute for Conservation and Restoration at the University of Applied Arts Vienna is considered one of the most internationally renowned competence centers for conservation and restoration issues and the preservation of art and cultural assets. The four areas of specialization offered in the field of study are the conservation and restoration of paintings, objects, textiles and stone. The Conservation-Restoration diploma program is project-based and practice-oriented. The involvement with the world's cultural heritage is also ensured by the UNESCO Chair for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage.

### **Table Reading for Dialogues**

Due to the very positive feedback over the past years, we organized table reading for dialogues twice in 2023. This model of supporting writers and actors in dialogue writing, which has proven very successful in the Writers Guild of Great Britain, is intended to provide support with the development of individual screenplay scenes in the script phase. The skill 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 read and discuss the screenplay scenes. In a moderated conversation, the impressions are shared with the actors and the other authors, possible solutions are being discussed.

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

### **Viennale**

In cooperation with Viennale IFF we had two exciting collaborations in October - a masterclass with French screenwriter, writer and director Catherine Breillat (on the occasion of her latest film *L'été dernier*, showing at the festival in Vienna) about screenwriting and her visions for cinema. And a further masterclass with Romanian screenwriter and director Radu Jude on his work on the hybrid film *NU AȘTEPTA PREA MULT DE LA SFÂRȘITUL LUMII* about the special form of screenwriting in its "Bucharest architectural style."