

Press release – 09.02.2009

The **Diagonale**, the Festival of Austrian Film, is the central platform for presentation and discussion of Austrian filmmaking. The festival has been taking place in Graz every spring since 1998 and has established itself as a popular meeting place for both the public and the film industry. With its representative selection of films, which is also at the same time characterised by curiosity and openness, the festival offers a unique opportunity to get to know Austrian filmmaking in all its diversity. This encounter with Austrian film in all its manifestations will excite, challenge, entertain, widen horizons. In its engagement with sociopolitical and culturopolitical issues surrounding film it is also a critical assessment. The filmmakers, their work and the opportunity for a lively exchange with the audience and with the Austrian and international industry are as always at the centre of the 2009 Diagonale.

The **2009 Diagonale** will take place from the **17th to the 22nd of March** in Graz and will, over six days, present around **200 films and videos** in around 130 screenings. The festival is accompanied by an extensive **additional programme** with exhibitions, discussions of current political issues surrounding film and culture, workshops, Diagonale's own nightline, various receptions and the opening night itself. And at the Diagonale awards ceremony the most important **Austrian film prizes** will be presented, including the grand prize of € 15,000 endowed by the province of Styria for both the best Austrian feature film and documentary.

The Diagonale's extensive **selected programme** is assembled from around 500 submissions of all genres and lengths: short films and experimental films, as well as video, but also feature films and feature-length documentary works. Many of these films are receiving their world premiere or Austrian premiere in Graz. In addition the **Show Case** is presenting all full-length feature and documentary films on release in Austrian cinemas last year and in this way showing the vibrant diversity of the domestic production and co-production landscape.

Additionally a **Tribute** dedicated to the filmmaker **Mara Mattuschka** marks one of the high points of the festival. It is a presentation and recognition in concentrated form of her multilayered work, starting with her anarchic, wildly comical 16mm films from the 1980s and 1990s in which Mattuschka's alter ego *Mimi Minus* captivates us with great physical exertion and visual presence. It progresses to the latest video works, which were created in collaboration with the dancer and choreographer Chris Haring and in which she found surprising filmic translations for the dance works. Mattuschka's and Haring's latest film *Burning Palace* is being given its premiere during the Diagonale.

Selected **Specials** and **Additional Programmes** as always complement the presentation of current filmmaking. While the historical special programmes enable an engagement with film heritage, international specials give an insight into filmmaking beyond our borders and anchor Austrian production in a European context.

Historical Specials

- **Anna Gmeyner**, in cooperation with Synema /Austrian Film Museum
In a continuation of the extremely successful *FilmExil* series we follow the fortunes of the Austrian author Anna Gmeyner who in the 1930s was banished into exile, first in France and then in England. We present four internationally successful films based on her scripts, including *Du haut en bas* (G. W. Pabst, F 1933).
- **A History of Austrian Animated Film** in cooperation with the Austrian Film Archive and ASIFA Austria
In spring 2009 the Austrian Film Archive will complete a large Austrian animated film research and restoration project in which the history of this genre has been extensively collected for the first time. At the Diagonale we are screening a total of six programmes in which many films can be seen in newly restored versions.
- **Worldviews/ People spin around as if caught in the wind**, in cooperation with the Austrian Film Museum
Questions of archiving, restoration and digitalisation of audiovisual material are raised and discussed by means of two short film programmes with works from the film museum's archive.

International Specials

- **Special Guest Stefan Krohmer**, in cooperation with drehbuchFORUM Vienna.
With films like *Sommer '04 an der Schlei* (G 2006), *Sie haben Knut* (G 2003) and *Ende der Saison* (G 2001) the German filmmaker has created outstanding works ranging between cinema and television. Together with his constant writer Daniel Nocke he will be presenting his films and giving a workshop about his specific way of working, among other themes.

Additionally there are a few **European co-productions** with Austrian involvement that deserve our attention. Selected works exemplifying the trend towards collaborating across borders and the vibrant diversity of the European production and co-production landscape.

Music Video Programme

One of the programmes curated outside competition especially for the festival by SCREENSESSIONS is called, "Your Music on the Big Screen". It takes selected music videos from the monitor to the silver screen and in this way it helps this ever popular genre to get big.

Additional Programmes

The many additional programmes focus with an extremely varied selection of discussion and presentation formats on current issues concerning the Diagonale programme, but also general questions of film aesthetics and culturological issues. In addition the discursive interpretation of films is a corner stone of this process – for example in moderated talks taking place in the cinema after the performance or within film talks which focus these debates and take them further.

- **Co-production Meeting for Documentary Film, Germany – Austria – Switzerland**
The Trilateral Co-production Meeting, which has become well established, will take place in Austria for the first time, with the Diagonale as host for this industry event. One of the main objectives of the Diagonale is the networking of the Austrian industry with its European counterparts. Accordingly the focus of the conference for 2009 is the issue of cross-border distribution.
- **Concept Film**, in co-operation with Medienturm Graz
From 2009 the Diagonale together with the Medienturm art association will be presenting an exhibition at the interface between the visual arts and audiovisual media. Titled *Concept Film* it will show work from selected Austrian film and media artists that extends the discussion between audiovisual media and the element of spatial presentation. In 2009 a dialogue between Dorit Margreiter and Ursula Mayer will unfold which will investigate the complex relationship of film to architectural and spatial concepts.

Diagonale Trailer

Dariusz Kowalski, who for his filmmaking was awarded the bm:ukk talent award for cinema at Diagonale 2008, was commissioned to create the festival trailer. As in recent years there is a joint exhibition with Kunsthaus Graz offering this artist another platform to present his work in a solo exhibition.

Student and Trainee Development Program

Following the success of recent years, special student/trainee performances accompanied by facilitators from the world of film are now a festival fixture, and in 2009 there is a new format. Developed in collaboration with the FILMwerkstatt Graz, the Diagonale FILM class produces films by young people, made with professional guidance from experienced filmmakers over a whole school year.

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