

steirischer herbst '21

The Way Out

9.9.–10.10.21

The program for steirischer herbst '21 is online and advance ticket sales have begun.

From 9.9. to 10.10. steirischer herbst is looking for *The Way Out* not only by going outdoors. The festival is also exploring metaphorical exits this year, in the context of the ongoing crisis and the pandemic, as well as for art, which is once again searching for its place in society.

For the historical European avant-garde, it was crucial to break out of art institutions and tear down the barrier between art and life. As a festival that descends from the historical avant-garde, steirischer herbst has often ventured into the outdoors, the real, the everyday, and the popular. Following this tradition, thirty-five artists and collectives are asking festival visitors to experience art outside the institutional bubble over a period of five weeks this year—be it in the form of street interventions, local workshops, personal letters, collective cooking, or installations and performances in public space.

“We are focusing on simple access conditions that enable chance encounters with art and culture, for instance while strolling through the park, on the way to the station, while shopping in Herrengasse, or in many other public spaces that *The Way Out* lets you experience as art spaces,” says director and chief curator Ekaterina Degot. “All projects are site-specific and were developed specifically for steirischer herbst. I invite you to experience an adventure of the everyday together with the artists. This might just be *The Way Out* not just for all of us literally, but also, as a metaphor, for art that is looking for its place in society.”

Among the artists and collectives of the 54th festival edition are:

Yael Bartana; Uriel Barthélémi with Sophie Bernardo and Salomon Baneck-Asaro; Sophia Brous with Faye Driscoll, Samara Hersch and Lara Thoms; Žiga Divjak; G.R.A.M.; Emil Gruber; Felix Hafner and ensemble; Thomas Hirschhorn; Hiwa K; Dejan Kaludjerović in collaboration with Marija Balubdžić, Bojan Djordjev, and Tanja Šljivar; Flo Kasearu; Paul B. Preciado; Die Rabtaldirndln; Reverend Billy and The Church of Stop Shopping; Peter Schloss with Grupa Ee; Tino Sehgal; Marinella Senatore; Hito Steyerl and Mark Waschke; Theater im Bahnhof.

Situation Reports:

Lars Cuzner; Nicholas Grafia & Mikołaj Sobczak; Heimo Halbrainer and Joachim Hainzl (CLIO); Pia Hierzegger; Stefanie Sargnagel.

Posters:

Nilbar Güreş; Hans Haacke; Horst Gerhard Haberl; Li Ran; Boris Mikhailov; Amanullah Mojadidi; Dana Sherwood; Mounira Al Solh; Piotr Szyhalski; Rosemarie Trockel.

Festival opening

The opening of steirischer herbst '21 takes place in three acts on Thursday, 9 September, from 17:00 onward. The first stop is at Europaplatz, the square in front of the central station, a literal entry and exit point. **Marinella Senatore's** light installation turns it into a gate through which you enter the festival and its themes. The artist reinterprets the traditional *luminarie's* baroque lightbulb ornaments and combines them with poetic and political slogans and quotes.

In this context, director and chief curator Ekaterina Degot hold her **opening speech** following greetings by vice-chancellor **Werner Kogler**, governor **Hermann Schützenhöfer**, minister for culture, Europe, sports, and human resources **Christopher Drexler**, mayor **Siegfried Nagl**, and city councillor **Günter Riegler**. **Dejan Kaludjerović** presents his new production in a concertante teaser. For years he has been asking children all over the world—this summer in Graz and Styria—about the state of the world. For steirischer herbst, he has, together with **Marija Balubdžić**, **Bojan Djordjev**, and **Tanja Šljivar**, devised an opera out of their answers that premieres on the opening weekend.

From 18:00 onward, **Flo Kasearu** deals with questions of security and order in public space in her new intervention and performance in Volksgarten. At once ephemeral and poetic, twelve performers spread creative chaos, blending absurdity with reality and questioning repressive structures.

On Hauptplatz, Graz's main square, an open-air dance and music performance awaits the audience at 20:30. Percussionist and composer **Uriel Barthélémi** has joined forces with bassoonist **Sophie Bernado** and hip-hop dancer **Salomon Baneck-Asaro** to explore colonialism and forced modernization through movement and sound and establish new connections across all boundaries.

Situations

In line with the theme *The Way Out*, **Tino Sehgal** ventures into public space and together with his collaborators takes over two Graz parks, Augarten and Stadtpark, from sunrise to sunset for the first four days of the festival. Forty interpreters mingle with park visitors in this work Sehgal refers to as a "constructed situation," blurring the boundary between art and reality, public and private.

Installations and interventions

Only a few hundred meters away from **Marinella Senatore's** installation a new work by **Thomas Hirschhorn** pays tribute to the life and thought of philosopher Simone Weil with a spontaneous people's memorial. Based on one of Graz's many public artworks, the installations gives new meaning to the rather decorative sculpture. On 3 October, an open lecture performance by **Martina Bengert**, **Tom Sojer**, and **Max Walther** takes place next to the memorial, offering an introduction to Weil's work.

Together with **Grupa Ee**, **Peter Schloss** has created an all-over-painting in the Visitor and Press Center, located in a former drugstore at Murgasse 6 this year. Through

layering patterns derived from warning tape and other urban barriers, Schloss creates an optical illusion reminiscent of the famous Café Wall Illusion, first described in 1898.

Paul B. Preciado sends a love letter to the whole population of Graz. The isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic makes it harder and harder to imagine chance encounters where you unexpectedly fall in love. Yet, with Preciado's contribution to the festival, love is delivered directly to one's home.

Performances

This year, steirischer herbst has a clear focus on performative and participative projects in public space. In addition to the already mentioned works by **Dejan Kaludjerović** (in collaboration with **Marija Balubdžić**, **Bojan Djordjev**, and **Tanja Šljivar**), **Flo Kasearu** and **Uriel Barthélémi** (with **Sophie Bernardo** and **Salomon Baneck-Asaro**), many other productions premiere during the festival.

With the pandemic and its lockdowns, video calls with relatives became a ubiquitous means of sharing everyday moments. On the opening weekend as well as on all other weekends of the festival, **Hiwa K** invites migrants living Graz to cook their favorite dishes with friends or relatives abroad, all the while discussing food and its hidden political dimensions, traditions, and family.

On 11 September, the Graz collective **G.R.A.M.** presents a symbolic machine ballet and a memento mori of the neoliberal world order with radishes and tube men in front of Kunsthaus Graz.

On the second festival weekend, **Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping** are preaching against consumerism and the destruction of the planet. They are a spectacle unto themselves: flamboyant, loud, American. You *will* see them as they move through the city center.

Also on the second festival weekend, **Sophia Brous** (with **Faye Driscoll**, **Samara Hersch**, and **Lara Thoms**) turns the city into a stage and its inhabitants into actors and extras. Using innovative city-wide sound design, electroacoustic orchestration, live vocal performance, choreography, and adaptable scenic design, the work examines what is seen and unseen in public space.

Together with people of different generations from three Styrian towns, **Felix Hafner**, winner of the Austrian theatre award Nestroy, has developed a piece on rural protest culture. The theatrical rallies premiere on three Sundays in public spaces in Deutschlandsberg, Maria Lankowitz, and Weiz and are coproduced by **Steirische Kulturinitiative** and steirischer herbst.

Three new stage performances are shown at Orpheum and also on the festival website:

Wearing knight's armor and playing computer games, *Tatort* actor **Mark Waschke** and media artist **Hito Steyerl** trace and explore feudal conditions in the theater and in the digital world. In the spirit of audience empowerment, the production on the second festival weekend is presented not only as an on-site performance in an auditorium, but also as a live, unedited multi-angle stream that viewers can mix interactively in a specially developed, easy-to-use online player.

For the third festival week, **Žiga Divjak** has developed a new piece dealing with climate change that will move to Ljubljana's **Mladinsko Theater** following its premiere at steirischer herbst. Inspired by the theories of renowned economist Andreas Malm and anthropologist Jason Hickel's reflections on post-growth economics, six actors from Slovenia and Austria stage a public conversation in which they explore the economic reasons for the impending ecological catastrophe.

In the fourth festival week, the ghosts and uncomfortable imaginaries of Austrian-Jewish history come to life in **Yael Bartana's** stage performance. Audiences are invited to take part in a séance, in which Bartana, working with actress **Susanne Sachsse**, evokes the spirit of famed clairvoyant Erik Jan Hanussen, a contradictory and controversial figure from the history of fascism. Visitors are invited to dress in the style of the 1920s and 1930s for the séance.

For *The Way Out's* finale, **Theater im Bahnhof** stages a flea market and performance inspired by the German-language entertainment show *Bares für Rares* (Cash for Rarities), shifting the focus from the material to the sentimental value of things. Both the objects and their stories are collected at a flea market in Helmut List Halle held on the festival's last weekend and punctuated by narrative and theatrical interventions. The weekend culminates in a gala presenting a somewhat direct parody of the TV format.

Situation Reports

Taking its cue from 2020's *Paranoia TV News*, this year steirischer herbst broadcasts a new TV show that is even more firmly in the hands of artists. Select correspondents roam the streets of Graz every day for a week and mingle with the locals—with a camera crew in tow. The results are streamed on the steirischer herbst website for the duration of the festival.

In the first week, artist **Lars "Jesus" Cuzner**, appearing as an erstwhile messiah, hits the streets and squares of Graz to finally come clean after a life as a con man.

During the second week of the festival, **Stefanie Sargnagel** reports from the Styrian folk festival Aufsteirern and its exuberant expression of local patriotism.

Moderator and actress **Pia Hierzegger** pays a visit to Graz's local elections, illuminating Graz's political mechanisms by talking to election officials and doing exit polls of her own.

During the fourth week of the festival, artist duo **Nicholas Grafia** and **Mikołaj Sobczak** take their collaborative performance practice to Graz's public spaces. Interested in the strange, mysterious, and unsettling aspects of modern life, they also respond to local contexts in Graz such as the event EuroSkills 2021.

During the final week of the festival, **Heimo Halbrainer** and **Joachim Hainzl** of **CLIO** explore the darker side of picturesque Graz's history, shining a light on the lasting impact of the Nazi era and its aftermath.

Posters

Posters by artists have always been one of the strong points of steirischer herbst. In the 1970s, some of them even made headlines and created a local scandal. This year, ten artists were asked to work with the slogan *The Way Out*. What we see are not always posters in the strict sense, but fragments of the artists' rich imagination, fluctuating freely between scenes of pure fantasy, split-second life impressions, and direct political statements.

The works by **Nilbar Güreş**, **Hans Haacke**, **Horst Gerhard Haberl**, **Li Ran**, **Boris Mikhailov**, **Amanullah Mojadidi**, **Dana Sherwood**, **Mounira Al Solh**, **Piotr Szyhalski**, and **Rosemarie Trockel** are exhibited all across the city of Graz and in the Visitor and Press Center in Murgasse 6. They are also available for sale, individually or as a numbered edition of screen prints, directly at the Visitor and Press Center or via the festival's webshop (www.steirischerherbst.at/en/shop).

Discursive Program

The Way Out of... is a series of online talks in which major thinkers look beyond the impasses and multiple crises facing us today.

In „The Way Out of Digital Capitalism“ on 15.9., **Evgeny Morozov** talks about the potential of digital infrastructures to enhance democratic agency, encourage autonomy, and facilitate individual and collective development.

In her talk “The Way Out of Bad Sex” on 22.9., writer **Katherine Angel** discusses the subtle and difficult moments of desire in the age of consent without simplifying or confirming all the old stereotypes.

In “The Way Out of Offshore” on 29.9., **Quinn Slobodian** critically examines populists, who promise insulation from global supply chains and a return of strong nation states.

In “The Way Out of the Climate Crisis” on 8.10., sociologist, climate researcher, and author **Jason W. Moore** offers proposals on how the climate movement and general populations can use the present emergency as a venue for collective action.

In her talk “Ways Out of the Care Crisis” on 10.10., **Emma Dowling** looks at the continued off-loading of the cost of care onto the shoulders of underpaid and unpaid social strata and the short-term fixes to the care crisis.

steirischer herbst roundtables

The future of curating and the new public ecology of exhibition-making are discussed at two roundtables on September 10 at Forum Stadtpark. From 10:00–12:30, at ***Competing with Public Space***, **Flo Kasearu**, **Tino Sehgal**, and **Mounira Al Solh** discuss how art projects can engage with audiences in public space with **Ekaterina Degot** and **Christoph Platz**. From 15:00–17:30, **Christoph Gurk**, **Matteo Lucchetti**, **Aneta Rostkowska**, and **Sabina Sabolović (WHW)** talk to **Ekaterina Degot** and **David Riff** about ***New Ecologies of Exhibition-Making*** and what contemporary art can learn from the latest lockdowns.

Conference for Practical Criticism

The fourth edition of the Conference for Practical Criticism will not just examine the usefulness of the notion of transformation and its corresponding strategies but will also discuss with local actors and activists how they may apply to core areas of any society, notably the economy and economic planning, mobility, and labor. Among the speakers at this conference, organized in collaboration with **Forum Stadtpark**, are **Jan Philipp Dapprich**, **Emma Dowling**, **Andrea*s Exner**, **Petra Schaper-Rinkel**, **Simon Sutterlütti**, **Winfried Wolf**, and many more.

Visitor and Press Center

steirischer herbst traditionally offers a Visitor and Press Center that temporarily occupies a space in town. It gives guests a place to meet and have coffee, but also serves as an artwork in its own right. This year, a former drugstore in Murgasse 6 was transformed into this place.

From 2.9. to 10.10. the Visitor and Press Center will be open between 10:00 and 18:00 for visitors wishing to purchase tickets and receive information about the various programs of steirischer herbst, to book a tour or talk to the education team, or to simply enjoy the installation by **Peter Schloss** with **Grupa Ee** that extends across the whole interior with an excellent cup of coffee by the local roasters **BUNA**. In addition, the **ten artists' posters** commissioned for this edition of the festival are exhibited at the Visitor and Press Center and can be purchased there individually or as screen prints in a numbered edition.

herbst Education

Each edition of steirischer herbst is the result of a year-long critical examination of sociopolitical issues. Relevant to everyone, steirischer herbst is a meeting zone for makers, visitors, experts, and communities from all areas. This year, many routes lead to *The Way Out* and the festival's education team knows all of them. The title not only refers to our current situation marked by crises and the pandemic, but also stands for freedom and openness. Workshops, tours, and information about steirischer herbst '21 await visitors under the open sky and in an open atmosphere. Formats for visitors of all ages convey the basic content of this year's productions in tours, workshops, and excursions, or through individual teaching materials, and offer the ideal introduction to the festival. Discussions with curators and artists provide deeper insights.

Ö1 Festival Podcast

steirischer herbst is accompanied by its own festival podcast, called *The Way Out*. Curated and presented by Ö1, it extends an open invitation to all to critically engage with the festival's artworks, their discourses, and the participating artists. The goal is to build bridges between places, positions, and debates, to define points of entry, create networks, and juxtapose contrasting perspectives. Tune in on the radio or at oe1.ORF.at every Sunday from 5.9.–3.10. at 22:05 and Monday from 6.9.–4.10. at 21:55.

herbstbar at Gatto im Museum

This year, herbstbar finds a temporary home in the recently opened Gatto im Museum—a secret spot amid old walls next to the Folk Life Museum. The festival's traditional sanctuary once again offers the best drinks and the opportunity to get together under old trees and the open sky.

Festivals within the festival

Three festivals within the festival expand and extend the program of *The Way Out*.

STUBENrein, which was originally designed for small spaces, already left the “living room” interior spaces last year and moved outdoors (or into virtual spaces). Now a wasteland lies before us—one which we do not want to cultivate, but instead would like to explore: What do we notice? What influences our actions? Are we observers, actors or witnesses to history ...? And do we always have to “perform”?

Program developers 2021: **Andreas Staudinger, Uli Vonbank-Schedler, Gunilla Plank**

How did we learn to deal with the state of emergency? What did we read? What was written? What shall we do now? Alongside much-needed personal conversation, this year's literary festival within steirischer herbst, **Out of Joint**, brings forward elements of a “new Decameron.” Authors were invited to submit texts that were deemed the right ones at a time like this—texts that may be enjoyable or useful to us. What have we learned from the pandemic? Must we change our lives? Or forget as soon as possible what came to pass? This is the thought addressed at the end during the literature show *Roboter mit Senf*.

Participants: **Austrofred, Marica Bodrožić, Elisabeth Bronfen, Max Czollek and Georg Seeßlen, Günter Eichberger, Ulrike Haidacher, Ivan Ivanji, Michael Köhlmeier and Konrad Paul Liessmann, Das Planetenparty Prinzip, Doron Rabinovici, Stephan Roiss, Denis Scheck, Franz Solar, Marlene Streeruwitz and Andrea Scrima, as well as Astrid Wintersberger.**

Hosts: **Cornelius Hell, Lisz Hirn, Wolfgang Huber-Lang, Klaus Kastberger, Wolfgang Paterno, Daniela Strigl, and David J. Wimmer.**

Now in its 54th edition, the ORF **musikprotokoll** once again transforms and expands the experience of music with its program *nomadic sounds*. The festival is both a stage and a laboratory for a new generation of musicians and composers whose work comes together and derives its aesthetic strategies through the understanding of open genre boundaries. In over thirty world and Austrian premieres, composers and performers embark on the nomadic search for an in-between. This new music will be

interpreted by top Austrian and international ensembles, many of which are appearing here for the first time this year. The musikprotokoll program will be framed by onsite lectures and discussions, documented in multiple Ö1 radio broadcasts, and transmitted via special dynamic audiovisual streaming.

Parallel Program

As in previous years, steirischer herbst '21 also features a rich and varied Parallel Program hosted by local cultural institutions and partners, including **accomplices – Verein zur Erkundung multimedialer Ausdrucksformen, Annenstrasse 53,, BRUSEUM / Neue Galerie Graz, CLIO Verein für Geschichts- und Bildungsarbeit / Grätzelinitiative Margaretenbad, esc medien kunst labor, Follow the Rabbit, Forum Stadtpark, Grazer Kunstverein, HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark, HDA – Haus der Architektur, KULTUM. Zentrum für Gegenwart, Kunst und Religion in Graz, Dejan Marković, Das Planetenparty Prinzip, Karin Reinprecht und Marcus Neustetter, Schaumbad – Freies Atelierhaus Graz, and Theater am Lend with uniT.** Details on the individual programs are available online. The annual Parallel Program tour will take place this year on 25.9. from 10:45–19:00.

Accreditation

Press and professionals can now accredit themselves online for the opening days program as well as the performances and premieres during the festival: www.steirischerherbst.at/accreditation.

Please note that capacity varies according to venue and is limited due to the sanitary measures implemented to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Capacities are limited.

Tickets

Single tickets for performances can be purchased on our website, at the Visitor and Press Center, or directly at each venue's box office. Due to the current situation, the purchaser must provide contact details when purchasing tickets. We kindly request that tickets be purchased in advance and cashless if possible to avoid crowds at the box office.

Single tickets for performances: 16/12 euros

NEW: 1+1 offer

If you purchase one ticket, you can attend a second event for free. This offer is only valid for ticket purchases made at the Visitor and Press center.

About steirischer herbst

Every autumn since its founding in 1968, steirischer herbst has provided a platform for new productions, provoking and shaping public debates in a variety of forms across disciplines and media. Reinventing itself many times over, the festival has always redefined the terms of the conversation about what culture might mean in a changing contemporaneity, as seen in Graz, Austria's second most populous city.

This edition of steirischer herbst is created by all participating artists, partners, thinkers, and philosophers, as well as **Ekaterina Degot**, Director and Chief Curator, **Henriette Gallus**, Deputy Director, **Christoph Platz**, Head of Curatorial Affairs, **David Riff**, Senior Curator, **Dominik Müller**, Curator, **Mirela Baciak**, Curator, and steirischer herbst team.

The full program is available on www.steirischerherbst.at.

For images, please visit www.steirischerherbst.at/press.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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