

steirischer herbst '22 – Summary

At the interface of documentary reality and artistic reflection, *A War in the Distance*, the 55th edition of steirischer herbst, ends on Sunday, 16 October. For three weeks, in exhibitions, performances, discussions, and other events, the fifth steirischer herbst under director and chief curator Ekaterina Degot shed light on the current political reality of a war in Europe and linked it to past conflicts in our immediate vicinity prone to be repressed.

This year, steirischer herbst recorded **about 43,000 visits at over 270 events** (including the festivals-within-the-festival Out of Joint and musikprotokoll as well as the Parallel Program). The central exhibition *A War in the Distance* at Neue Galerie Graz, and some additional projects continue after the official end of the festival.

More than 500 participants from all over the world—ranging from amateur actors with military experience to well-known international figures such as dancer and choreographer Boris Charmatz—met **more than seventy local partners and initiatives at forty-one different locations in Graz and Styria**. The focus on projects beyond Graz was strengthened again this year. The program extended from Mürztal in the north to Bad Radkersburg in the south and from Pölstal in the west to Hartberg in the east of Styria.

Regardless of location, a series of artist talks and the discursive program Ideas could be followed as **live streams**, gathering together internationally renowned experts to discuss the consequences of war.

The **Ö1 festival podcast** also carried steirischer herbst beyond Graz and Styria and reached an audience of **more than 100,000 listeners per episode** this year. Conceived by Ulrike Leitner and Anna Soucek, the seven shows were heard by more than 700,000 people between 19.9. and 10.10. The twenty-minute episodes combine talks on a society between freedom and front, on the threatening proximity of military conflicts, and on active repression tendencies among us. All episodes of the podcast can be listened to at oe1.orf.at/steirischerherbst or www.steirischerherbst.at/de/podcast.

On www.steirischerherbst.at, a **selection of films** shown at Neue Galerie Graz as a prologue to the festival in July were also put online for the duration of the festival. In addition, two commissions from the current exhibition could be streamed.

Visitor survey

As in previous years, the structure, program, education formats, and the visitor service of the festival were evaluated through a visitor survey based on a questionnaire (random samples collected during visits). Preliminary results show that more than 93 percent of people questioned indicated that they would visit steirischer herbst again after this year's edition. More than 96 percent said they would recommend steirischer herbst to others. While 47.5 percent of those asked visit steirischer herbst regularly, more than 40 percent indicated that they had visited the festival for the first time this year or that they had visited it rather infrequently in the past. This edition has thus again successfully extended the festival's audience. 80 percent of survey participants came from Austria, followed by guests from Germany, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Switzerland. This indicates that the international audience has increased compared to past years. The creation of the questionnaire and the visitor survey were professionally supervised by FH-Prof. Dr. Astrid Oberzaucher from the CAMPUS 02 Fachhochschule der Wirtschaft Graz.

herbst Education

At the end of the festival, herbst Education is merely presenting interim results, especially since steirischer herbst has switched to a year-round education offer since the beginning of this year. By 14.10., **twenty-six education formats** have reached **over 2,000 visitors**, considerably more than in the previous year.

Guided tours through the exhibition at Neue Galerie Graz and various combined tours through Graz to Parallel Program partners were especially popular. Among the atmospheric highlights were the dinners with visitors, artists, and curators—the so-called *Eat and Greets*—as well as the workshop with Giacomo Veronesi during an open rehearsal with the performers of *A Safe Space for Male Bodies* (2022).

The year-round, award-winning formats will continue after the festival. Among them are the *Schul-herbst-Tage*, which were held for the first time in summer 2022 and have already been booked for two more dates in 2023.

Another focus of herbst Education is a project on remembrance culture in cooperation with OeAD based on a digital map with places of persecution and resistance to Nazism—the Digitale Erinnerungslandschaft (DERLA; digital remembrance map). Methods and examples of remembrance are discussed with selected projects from the festival archive to develop new approaches and projects based on the DERLA map. The project aims to create a multimedia guide for teachers that allows for an individual engagement with remembrance and places of memory.

International press

Nationally and internationally, steirischer herbst '22 has been well received so far. Today's review in French daily *Le Monde* praised the "always original, dense, and ambitious festival" as one of the "big meeting places of contemporary art in Austria" (14.10.22). The *taz* noted in approval: "That Ukrainian artists exhibit together with Russian ones can no longer be taken for granted. Ekaterina Degot has accomplished this for the 55th edition of steirischer herbst" (30.9.22). Apart from the quality of the program, many articles also highlighted the festival's approach: "Despite the serious topic, *A War in the Distance* is fun—thanks to the clever interweaving of various narratives between fact and fiction and the sometimes peculiar discoveries," wrote *Monopol*, for instance (27.9.22).

Additional reviews and articles appeared, among others, in: *an-Nahar* (Lebanon), *Arts of the Working Class* (Germany), *ArtsHebdoMédias* (France), *Contemporary Lynx* (UK), *Delo* (Slovenia), *Deutschlandfunk* (Germany), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany), *Kunstforum* (Germany), *Le Quotidien de l'Art* (France), *Müürileht* (Estonia), *Politiken* (Denmark), *Rekto Verso* (Belgium), and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany).

Outlook

Before the festival officially ends on Sunday, another two premieres take place:

Tonight at 19:00, the new solo show by **Boris Nikitin** opens at Helmut List Halle. In **Magda Toffler: Versuch über das Schweigen** (Magda Toffler: Essay on Silence), the Swiss author and theater director addresses his own hitherto hidden family history and tells of silence and its meaning for the past and the present. Following the premiere, herbst Education is organizing a talk with Boris Nikitin and Barbara Stelzl-Marx, researcher on the consequences of war. Further performances are on 15.10. and 16.10. at 19:00

On Saturday, 15.10., Forum Stadtpark hosts the last **herbst Cabaret** of this festival, promising an experimental spoken-word show, conceived by multimedia artist **Verena Dengler**. Before, at 15:00, **Ekaterina Degot offers an exhibition tour** through *A War in the Distance* at Neue Galerie Graz is offered, during which the director speaks about methods, means, and lucky coincidences while curating.

Until 16.10., one also still has the possibility to visit the exhibition **Harun Farocki against War** at Forum Stadtpark. In contrast to the exhibition at Neue Galerie Graz, which runs through 12.2.23, this show closes with the festival.

The rooms of *A War in the Distance* will host another performance in December. In ***Emancipation of Wonder***, Navaridas & Deutinger create tours through Neue Galerie Graz on five afternoons based on the impressions of children and the unique poetics of childlike vision (1.12., 2.12., 3.12., 8.12., 9.12. at 17:00).

In addition, two publications about steirischer herbst '22 are set to be published in the first quarter of 2023: a **reader** taking up and deepening the festival's themes in a series of essays and texts, and a comprehensive **catalogue** about the exhibition and all other projects of *A War in the Distance*.

In the Parallel Program, too, many exhibitions stay open after the festival ends: the solo show ***Animals Spirits*** by Hito Steyerl at Kunsthaus Graz as well as the group exhibition ***Systems of Belief*** at HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark can be seen until 8.1. The individual exhibitions of the project ***Kunst der Verführung*** can be visited until 30.10. (*Veil and Promise*, HDA—Haus der Architektur), 4.12. (*100 Exciting Posters*, in public space), 23.12. (*The Next Poster*, designforum Steiermark), 8.1. (*Faking the Real*, Kunsthaus Graz), 14.1. (*DE PROPAGANDA FIDE*, KULTUM. Zentrum für Gegenwart, Kunst und Religion in Graz), and 10.4. (*Graz Poster 1920–1955*, Graz Museum). At the esc medien kunst labor, ***MY BODY : MY MACHINE*** runs through 18.11. and Grazer Kunstverein stays open for ***RHYTHM, CITIZEN*** until 11.12.

steirischer herbst '23 takes place from 21 September to 15 October 2023.

Press photos are available on our website.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact us at any time:
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