

steirischer herbst '23 in retrospect *Humans and Demons*

The 56th edition of steirischer herbst festival, the 6th under director and chief curator Ekaterina Degot, ended on 15 October. In exhibitions, performances, discussions, cabaret shows, and a club series, *Humans and Demons* left the boundaries between disciplines as well as that between high and popular culture behind to address moral gray zones in today's world based on characters and their stories.

"I am pleased that, with this first edition of my new directorship, we were able to continue where we left off with steirischer herbst '22: with a program that tells new stories about Graz and connects them with current global events. In this way, we have once again managed to be as interesting for the Graz audience as for the international press. I am sure that our commissioned works this year will be remembered—such as Lulu Obermayer's opening performance at Schloßberg, Dana Kavelina's hypnotic animated film, Anton Kats's audio installation, Meg Stuart's films, or Mateja Bučar's moving performance in Annenstraße. I am very happy with this edition and very proud that free admission to our exhibitions and an extensive education program, which we also offer to partner institutions in town, have brought more audiences to the festival. In 2023, steirischer herbst has once again shown that it is a rich festival with many different, fascinating facets. This is the path we want to take into the future."

—Ekaterina Degot

steirischer herbst '23 attracted over **52,000 visits to over 400 events in 59 venues** (including the festivals-within-the-festival ORF musikprotokoll and Out of Joint as well as the Partner Program). Lowering the threshold to contemporary art—with free admission to the four group exhibitions or the extensive and very popular education program—certainly contributed to the success of this year's edition. In twenty-five formats, **herbst education** counted **over 5,000 visits**, almost half of which were accounted for by **more than 170 exhibition tours**. The open artist workshops were also in high demand, as were the by now firmly established *Eat and Greets*, which were expanded for the first time to include ORF musikprotokoll and the Partner Program.

More than 580 participants from 33 countries made this year's festival possible, together with **about 125 local initiatives and partners**. Regardless of location, most of the video works commissioned by steirischer herbst could also be viewed online, and there were live streams of many discussion events. The **Ö1 festival podcast** also

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carried steirischer herbst beyond Graz and Styria. Each broadcast of this cooperation with Ö1 reached **well over 100,000 listeners** this year.

Media response

As in previous years, media interest in the 2023 festival was immense, both on a national and international level:

“Degot maintains her high level seemingly effortlessly in this 56th year of the festival.” *Profil*, Austria

“Once again, steirischer herbst succeeds in reflecting on current political issues in an artistically intelligent and intricate way. A visit to Graz is worth it.” *Monopol*, Germany

“It has consistently been one of Europe’s most experimental, historiographic and politically forward art events.” *Metropolis M*, Netherlands

“The moral judgment—that’s the smart twist at this year’s steirischer herbst—is left to us.” *taz*, Germany

In addition to numerous reviews in national newspapers and art magazines, articles have already appeared or will soon appear in the following international publications, among others: *Apollo* (United Kingdom), *Artforum* (United States), *ArtReview* (United Kingdom), *Artribune* (Italy), *Berlin Art Link* (Germany), *Czas Kultury* (Poland), *DELO* (Slovenia), *Die Welt* (Germany), *e-flux Criticism* (United States), *Frieze* (United Kingdom), *GLEAN magazine* (Belgium), *Haaretz* (Israel), *Kunstforum International* (Germany), *Kultura* (Bulgaria), *Le Quotidien de l’Art* (France), *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty* (Czech Republic), *Radio Slovenija* (Slovenia), *RTVE* (Spain), *The World / Public Radio Exchange* (United States).

Outlook

steirischer is pleased to note that numerous of its commissioned works on to other festivals or cultural institutions after the festival’s end. Already in November, there are, for instance, performances of **Adrienn Hód / HODWORKS’s** *Voice of Power* at the Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest, and **Meg Stuart’s** video *Shelf Life* is shown at the Playground Festival, Leuven.

steirischer herbst ’24 takes place from 19.9. to 13.10.24.

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Thanks

steirischer herbst would like to thank all those who have accompanied the team with their trust and encouragement and contributed to the festival's success.

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Images of the whole festival can be found at: www.steirischerherbst.at/press

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

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