

## steirischer herbst '24: Review

For three and a half weeks, steirischer herbst '24 used art and humor to prompt discussions and raise questions about nations, identity, and origins. The 57th edition ends on Sunday, 13 October. In exhibitions, performances, debates, and other events, *Horror Patriae*, the seventh festival under director and chief curator Ekaterina Degot, playfully shed light on fatherland narratives as well as the horrors that (re)emerge from these fictions.

**At about four hundred events in forty-three locations**, steirischer herbst '24 counted **46,000 visits** (including the ORF musikprotokoll, Out of Joint, and the Partner Program). **Thirty-four artworks** were newly commissioned for *Horror Patriae*, **fourteen for ORF musikprotokoll**. The central exhibition at Neue Galerie Graz remains open after the official end of the festival (until 16.2.25).

In addition to around **96 percent capacity utilization** for events with tickets and limited seating (*Horror Patriae* and ORF musikprotokoll), the further increase of low-threshold offers certainly also contributed to the success of this year's edition: **more than half of the events had free admission**. The **herbst education's** extensive program has so far reached over **3000 visits** in **twenty-nine formats**. This year, the interactive guided tours *Untypisch* (Untypical) and the curator tours of the exhibition *Horror Patriae* at Neue Galerie Graz proved particularly popular. The highlights also included so-called *Eat and Greets*—dinners with visitors, artists, and curators that revealed exciting background information and artistic processes and, as in the previous year, were extended to the ORF musikprotokoll and Partner Program. After the festival, the education program—including collaborations with Schauspielhaus Graz, Schauspielhaus Wien, and *manuskripte* on the topic of political derailments—continues with tours and workshops.

More than **850 participants from 36 countries** collaborated with around **100 local partners and initiatives** on this edition of the festival. These include sixty children from Volksschule Graz–St. Peter, who sang adults to sleep in Ari Benjamin Meyer's performance, a sixteen-piece gamelan orchestra from the University of Performing Arts Graz, and thirty-five performers—from amateurs to professionals—who take the audience on a hike through the Kastner & Öhler fashion store with renowned theater-maker Thomas Verstraeten on 11 and 12 October.

Regardless of location, the video works commissioned by steirischer herbst could also be viewed online during the festival period. The **cooperation with Ö1** equally carried steirischer herbst beyond Graz and Styria, reaching well over **120,000 listeners per program** this year.

With a **total budget** of around EUR 4.4 million for 2024, the festival's **value creation** for the city of Graz was around 56 percent, for Styria around 70 percent, and for Austria around 85 percent of the budget.

The 57th edition of steirischer herbst met with lively **interest from the press** and, in addition to local and national coverage, once again brought numerous international journalists to Graz, including from the largest Spanish daily *El País*, *FAZ* (Germany), *Delo* (Slovenia), *taz* (Germany), Deutschlandfunk, Nachtkritik (Germany), *Kommersant* (Russia), *Schweizer Wochenzeitung*, as well as art magazines such as *ArtReview* (United Kingdom), *Monopol* (Germany), *e-flux Criticism* (USA), *Mousse* (Italy), *Spike* (Austria), *GLEAN* (Belgium), *Afterall* (United Kingdom), *Artpress* (France), *Camera Austria*, *Le Courier de l'Art* (France), *Kontur* (Slovakia/Hungary), *Treca* (Croatia), *Parnass* (Austria), and *Kunstforum International* (Germany).

## Outlook

Before the festival ends on Sunday, there are still four premieres:

Tonight at 20:00, **Thomas Verstraeten's** immersive performance *Wanderlust Warenhaus* premieres at Kastner & Öhler. Additional dates: tonight at 21:30 and tomorrow at 19:00.

At the same time, the final two herbst cabarets take place. Today and tomorrow at 20:00, **Annina Machaz** and **Alex Franz Zehetbauer** invite to an uncanny Switzerland and an audience with the jester, respectively.

On Sunday, the festival's closing day, **Felix Hafner and ensemble** take you to a *Volkliedabend in Addis Abeba* (An Evening of Folk Songs in Addis Ababa), which the later famous architect and resistance fighter Herbert Eichholzer co-organized in 1925.

Next to these premieres, **Thorsten Mense** and **Hans-Peter Weingand** meet for a final verbal duel in the context of the herbst deathmatches on Saturday at 17:00. The question debated this time is: *Ist das Lokale immer reaktionär?* (Is the Local Always Reactionary?) The audience votes for the best argument and thus crowns the winner.

On the final day, there is also a tour with senior curator Pieter Vermeertel of the exhibition *Horror Patriae* shedding light on how a mix of historical and contemporary works can provide answers to hot topics.

Moreover, the exhibition *Kunst Heimat Kunst Revisited* at **Forum Stadtpark** can be seen until 13.10. Unlike the exhibition at Neue Galerie Graz, which remains open through 16.2.25, it closes with the festival end.

In the Partner Program, there are still performances by **Xava Kasimir Mikosch** at Volkshaus and **Thomas Köck** at Schauspielhaus Graz. In Studenzen, **Gerald Straub's** *Corridos Estiria* can be experienced one last time at the B68 traffic circle on Saturday. And, of course, many exhibitions are open beyond the end of the festival: **Camera Austria** shows *(In)verso. Between the Lens and the Archive* by **Ana de Almeida & Huda Takriti** until 17.11. **esc medien kunst labor** continues to ask *WHO IS PLAYING WITH US?* until 8.11., exploring the potential of aesthetics and playfulness as counterbalance to instrumental reason. **Josef Dabernig's** *Lacrimosa* can be seen at **Grazer Kunstverein** until 17.11., while **Schaumbad – Freies Atelierhaus Graz** examines the “second cities” Brno and Graz: *Druhá města / Andere Städte* is on until 26.10. At the **QL-Galerie**, artist duo **zweintopf** deals with the poetics of the trivial under the title *Intention – Irrsinn – Ismus* until 31.10. Visitors have somewhat more time to see the exhibition *AUSLÖSCHUNG (ERASURE)* by **Zlatko Kopljär** at **KULTUMUSEUM**, which closes on 11.1.25, and *Bioclimatic Actions!* at **HDA – Haus der Architektur**, open until 9.1.25.

The **open call for the steirischen herbst '25 Partner Program** is already published next week.

Even after the official festival end, herbst education continues its expert talks delving deeper into various aspects of the exhibition *Horror Patriae*: on 23.10. with **Clemens Ruthner** (*Kaiserlich, königlich, kolonial und k. o.*), on 6.11. with **Herwig G. Höller** (*Haiding und andere Echos des Dritten Reichs*), and on 20.11. with **David Kranzelbinder** („Grenzland“ *Borderlines*), always at 17:00. In February, there is a closing event for *Horror Patriae*, where the **catalogue** is also presented.

We are also pleased that numerous works commissioned by steirischer herbst travel on to other festivals or institutions. **La Fleur's** opening performance *The Phantom of the Operetta*, for example, will be shown at Pumpenhaus Münster; Forum Freies Theater Düsseldorf; Kampnagel, Hamburg; and Theater Bremen. **Roe Rosen's** *Gaza War Tattoos* are shown in Utrecht at the end of October, then in Hanover, and finally in Tel Aviv at the end of November (together with *Lucy is Sick* [2020], also commissioned by steirischer herbst). At the end of December, **László Göndör** will bring his cabaret *I Incest* to the Stereo Cultural Center in Budapest. **Assaf Gruber's** film *Miraculous Accident* is shown in programs at HKW in Berlin, Bozar in Brussels, and at various film festivals next year.

**steirischer herbst '25 takes place from 18 September to 12 October 2025.**

Press photos from the entire festival are available in the press section of our website. If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact us at any time: steirischer herbst Press Office, [press@steirischerherbst.at](mailto:press@steirischerherbst.at), t +43 316 823 007 65