

Press Release

12 June 2019

steirischer herbst '19: *Grand Hotel Abyss*

19.9.–13.10.19

Opening Days: 19.9.–22.9.19

steirischer herbst is very happy to announce the artists who will contribute to its 52nd edition, titled *Grand Hotel Abyss*—a striking metaphor used by philosopher Georg Lukács in the 1930s to describe the European intellectual and cultural scene in the face of approaching fascism. This year, the festival takes the combination of holiday pleasure and political crisis as a point of departure for a meditation on hedonism in troubled times. This could not come at a more appropriate time, given Austria's recent political woes.

Lukács's image rhymes with the self-presentation of Graz and the surrounding region of Styria as a culinary and aesthetic pleasure zone, one of many bubbles of gastronomy, wellness, and organic comfort arising in times of heightened inequality, where praise of heirloom products might have creepy crypto-nationalist undertones.

As the core program of steirischer herbst '19, *Grand Hotel Abyss* consists almost entirely of newly commissioned works by more than forty international artists. These contributions take the form of installations, performances, and discursive projects. The core program is accompanied by a rich and varied Parallel Program by local cultural institutions, including **Alte Galerie in Schloss Eggenberg, BRUSEUM/Neue Galerie, esc medien kunst labor, Haus der Architektur, Kunsthaus Graz, kunstraum_8020, Pavelhaus, prenninger gespräche, < rotor > Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Schaumbad – Freies Atelierhaus Graz, the smallest gallery – place for photography**. As always, **musikprotokoll**, a festival platform dedicated to contemporary and experimental music conceived and organized by ORF Radio Österreich 1 and Radio Steiermark, completes this year's edition of steirischer herbst.

A Spectacular Opening Night

The festival blasts off on 19 September with an evening-long extravaganza, traversing culinary-aesthetic delights—and their darker sides—with contributions by **Alexander Brener and Barbara Schurz, Cibelle Cavalli Bastos, Das Planetenparty Prinzip, Elmgreen & Dragset, Jule Flierl, Jakob Lena Knebl and Markus Pires Mata, Erna Ómarsdóttir & Valdimar Jóhannsson, Manuel Pelmuş, Gernot Wieland, and Zorka Wollny**. The picturesque courtyard of the Grazer Landhaus and the opulent interior of Congress Graz will serve as elegant backdrops for the opening extravaganza, which will surely be a night to remember.

During the Festival

From 19 September to 13 October *Grand Hotel Abyss* will unfold across the city of Graz and the region of Styria as a four-weeklong, densely woven curatorial narrative with artworks, installations, and film productions by Turner Prize nominee **Oscar Murillo**, **Jasmina Cibic**, **Jeremy Deller**, **Ian Hamilton Finlay**, **Giorgi Gago Gagoshidze**, **Riccardo Giacconi**, **Grupa Ee**, **Daniel Mann** and **Eitan Efrat**, **Michael Portnoy**, **Andreas Siekmann**, **Nedko Solakov**, and **Artur Żmijewski**. New performances, both site-specific and for the stage, will be presented by **Ariel Efraim Ashbel and friends**, **Keti Chukhrov / Guram Matskhonashvili**, **Bojan Djordjevic / Goran Ferčec**, **Boris Ondreička**, **Blanka Rádóczy / Vladimir Sorokin**, **Hanna Rohn**, **Andrei Stadnikov with Vanya Bowden**, **Shifra Kazhdan and Dmitry Vlasik**, **Theater im Bahnhof**, and **Michiel Vandevelde**. A schedule for the full program will be available on our website in mid-August.

We are also happy to announce our collaboration with **Literaturhaus Graz**. Ekaterina Degot and David Riff conceived an installation for Literaturhaus, which marks the first time that it is used as an exhibition venue by steirischer herbst. Titled *The Life and Adventures of GL*, the installation takes an artistic-curatorial look at the fictions and myths around **Georg Lukács**, the philosopher and literary theoretician who coined the metaphor of the *Grand Hotel Abyss*. Another great partnership that we are excited to share is with **Schauspielhaus Graz**. Together, we invited director **Blanka Rádóczy** to develop a staging of the latest (only recently translated) novel by **Vladimir Sorokin**, in which books are used to fuel barbecue grills for lavish meals consumed by the rich and powerful.

Graz and Beyond

The artworks and performances of *Grand Hotel Abyss* will be on view at various venues throughout Graz, but we are pleased to announce that several projects of this year's core program also take visitors outside of the city's borders to the *Genussregion* (pleasure zone) that is Styria. A special work by **Jaśmina Wójcik** will be developed for the municipality of Puch bei Weiz. In addition to this, we are happy to embark on a close collaboration with **STUBENrein**, a festival with a discursive discussion program situated in the site-specific surroundings of Murau. STUBENrein will be our partner for the very first time, hosting steirischer herbst's education program **Office of Open Questions** in various locations throughout Styria. Furthermore, an artistic performance together with a discussion will take place in Köflach as part of the project *Counterpositions*, developed together with the publishing house **CLIO** and the **Institute for Art in Public Space Styria**. *Counterpositions*, a cluster of performative as well as installative interventions around political monuments, includes projects by **Eduard Freudmann**, **Thomas Geiger**, **Marlene Haring**, and **Elizabeth Ward**.

Festival Pass

Visitors can now purchase the Festival Pass for steirischer herbst '19, which gives admission to all events and exhibitions of the core program *Grand Hotel Abyss* and allows repeated visits, enabling visitors to engage with the program in greater depth. It also offers reduced admission to musikprotokoll events and the Parallel Program of steirischer herbst '19.

Price: 29/23 Euro (valid from 19.9.–13.10.19)

Available at www.steirischerherbst.at/tickets and at all Ö-Ticket selling points.

Accreditation

Members of the press and professional visitors can now apply for accreditation online. If you should require assistance, do not hesitate to contact us at the following addresses:

Press contact: press@steirischerherbst.at

Professional visitors contact: pro@steirischerherbst.at

Participating Artists *Grand Hotel Abyss*

Ariel Efraim Ashbel and friends, Alexander Brener and Barbara Schurz, Cibelle Cavalli Bastos, Das Planetenparty Prinzip, Jasmina Cibic, Ketí Chukhrov / Guram Matskhonashvili, *Counterpositions* (Eduard Freudmann, Thomas Geiger, Marlene Haring, Elizabeth Ward), Jeremy Deller, Bojan Djordjević / Goran Ferčec, Elmgreen & Dragset, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Jule Flierl, Giorgi Gago Gagoshidze, Riccardo Giacconi, Grupa Ee, Jakob Lena Knebl and Markus Pires Mata, *The Life and Adventures of GL*, Daniel Mann and Eitan Efrat, Oscar Murillo, Erna Ómarsdóttir & Valdimar Jóhannsson, Boris Ondreička, Manuel Pelmuş, Michael Portnoy, Blanka Rádóczy / Vladimir Sorokin, Hanna Rohn, Andreas Siekmann, Nedko Solakov, Andrei Stadnikov with Vanya Bowden, Shifra Kazhdan and Dmitry Vlasik, Theater im Bahnhof, Michiel Vandevelde, Gernot Wieland, Jaśmina Wójcik, Zorka Wollny, Artur Żmijewski

About steirischer herbst

Director and Chief Curator: Ekaterina Degot

Concept: Ekaterina Degot and David Riff

Curatorial Team: Mirela Baciak, Ekaterina Degot, Henriette Gallus, Dominik Müller, Christoph Platz, and David Riff

Every autumn since its founding half a century ago in 1968, the festival 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, steirischer herbst 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, and the surrounding region of Styria.

A more detailed program preview can be found online on our website. The full program schedule will be released mid-August.

Press images and other press materials will be available online at www.steirischerherbst.at. Please contact us for interviews with the artists or curatorial team members.

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