

Press release, 20.10.20

steirischer herbst '20: A Review of *Paranoia TV* 24.9.–18.10.20

steirischer herbst has always stood for artistic freedom and critical reflection. The festival offers a platform for formal and substantive experiments and a sounding board for current events. For this year's edition, the festival fulfilled this role by transforming itself into a fictional media consortium. *Paranoia TV* explored new distribution channels and contexts for artistic works that went beyond the usual exhibition and stage formats in order to give people access to art even in this exceptional year.

The festival website became a streaming service where artist-produced content was released daily. The talk shows, TV series, films, and online games, as well as live talks and panel discussions, could also be accessed via a mobile app—anytime, anywhere. This online program was complemented by rich on-site offerings that included live events, performances, and installations in public space in Graz and Styria. Artworks were even delivered to peoples' homes via their daily newspaper or a food delivery service. Graz itself was additionally put into the spotlight through live broadcasts and a festival news show. "It was this extraordinary year that gave steirischer herbst the opportunity to explore new genres and hybrid forms," concludes Director and Chief Curator of steirischer herbst Ekaterina Degot. "The online format helped us reach a broad audience."

steirischer herbst '20 in figures

With **55 commissioned works by more than 52 artists and collectives**, steirischer herbst once again placed a **focus on new productions**.

Because of *Paranoia TV*'s many different formats, this year's festival could be experienced both locally in Graz and Styria and internationally by a worldwide audience. For the purposes of the following review, **visits to Graz and Styria, online visits, and other ways people accessed and interacted with steirischer herbst '20** are tabulated in groups rather than added up:

28,106 visitors from 118 countries watched *Paranoia TV* content on the app and website (as of 18 October), accessing **the videos 73,288 times**. So far, **visitors have spent a total of 3,418 hours, the equivalent of over 142 days**, in the online *Paranoia TV* universe. Most of these online visitors come from **Austria, Germany, Slovenia, US, UK, France, Switzerland, Brazil, and Russia**.

In addition, **around 13,276 people** have accessed the diverse livestreams and their recordings on Facebook. **A giveaway artwork reached a visitor approximately 26,300 times**, and almost **8,000 visits to *Paranoia TV*'s artistic interventions in Graz**

and Styria were counted. Over the course of the festival, **140,000 customers** frequented the Spar supermarkets in the Kastner & Öhler department store and at the central train station, many of whom felt monitored by *Paranoia TV's* sound installation.

The festival's **Parallel Program**, the **Utopia Conference** at Forum Stadtpark, and the festivals within the festival, **STUBENrein** in Murau and *Out of Joint* at Literaturhaus Graz, as well as the **musikprotokoll** events in Graz, online, and on the Ö1 radio station, have thus far recorded over **20,000 visits**.

In addition, listeners who tuned into the 17-part **Ö1 podcast for steirischer herbst '20**, *Who's Afraid of...* —a collaboration between the festival and Ö1—also helped steirischer herbst '20 reach new audiences. Broadcast weekdays on Ö1 radio, with the podcast available on www.oe1.orf.at, each episode clocked 40,000 listeners, so that by the end of the series it was **heard 680,000 times**.

The Office of Open Questions

As in previous years, the **steirischer herbst education and outreach offerings** were once again in great demand. Under the name “Back Office of Open Questions,” the festival's outreach team invited people to experience and discuss the diverse program through open questions. This year, this of course happened mainly through **online formats**.

A highlight of the outreach activities is the behind-the-scenes look offered to 400 students from Graz's Ortwein School. This event, titled *Art Is My Construction Site*, takes place as an online student seminar on 21 October 2020.

In total, all Office of Open Questions outreach formats **reached 2,766 visitors**.

Outlook

In response to the substantial ongoing interest in *Paranoia TV's* online content, Ekaterina Degot and her team, with the consent of the artists, has decided to extend the running time of the artistic works produced for *Paranoia TV* **on the app and website until 31 December 2020**. This means that nearly all content is available for a grand total of exactly 100 days.

Furthermore, the *Photo Booth* created by Akinbode Akinbiyi, which gave out over **3,000 unique artworks during the festival**, started its journey to Berlin on Monday. **SAVVY Contemporary** takes over this work commissioned and produced by steirischer herbst with an opening in Berlin by the end of October.

“The idea germinated in discussions and conversations between the curators David Riff and Christoph Platz and me in the charged months leading up to the opening of this year's steirischer herbst. Always in the background, the suffocating angst of the pandemic, the paranoia we all ingested into our very innermost selves. The *Photo Booth* is a vibrant push back at the paranoia, a collaborative gesture of artist and participant, the selfie individual, to reassert themselves, singing out loud their joy, their willingness to live through.”

—Akinbode Akinbiyi

“It is an honor for SAVVY Contemporary to receive this important work by Akinbode Akinbiyi, commissioned by this year's edition of steirischer herbst. Not only because Akinbode Akinbiyi is one of the world's most important photographers, but also because he is a dear friend and supporter of SAVVY Contemporary. In situating this work *Photo Booth* at SAVVY Contemporary, we intend to connect with the critical issues deliberated upon by *Paranoia TV*. These are issues of our time and it's crucial to find spaces and forms to cogitate upon them.”

—Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung,
Founder and Artistic Director
of SAVVY Contemporary

Another form of afterlife will thankfully be granted to the festival's **deepfake Freud**. He will stay in Graz and relocate his consulting sessions to **Haus der Architektur**, where he will be featured in their current exhibition *CountryLife: Recent Strategies for Tomorrow's Rural Living* until January 2021.

“The HDA is looking forward to hosting ‘Siggi,’ the virtual Sigmund Freud, who, after his talks with visitors at steirischer herbst, will now move to our current exhibition *CountryLife*. We are confident that his clever observations and inspiring comments will greatly enrich the discussion with our visitors on the subject of country living and life in general.”

—Beate Engelhorn,
Managing and Artistic Director of HDA

“Through the many conversations with our visitors, our deepfake Freud was able to make enormous strides in terms of eloquence and quick-wittedness. We are delighted about his new home at the HDA and are already excited to see what theories and observations on life ‘Siggi’ will surprise his audience with there.”

—Ekaterina Degot,
Director and Chief Curator of steirischer herbst

As in previous years, a **publication** dealing in greater depth with the themes of the 53rd steirischer herbst festival is scheduled for release early next year. The book will bring together **texts by philosophers, historians, writers, and artists** who were involved in this year's discourse program, *Ideas*.

steirischer herbst '21 will take place from **23 September to 17 October**.

About steirischer herbst

Since its founding half a century ago, in 1968, the festival has provided a platform for new productions in a variety of forms that provoke and inform public debate across all disciplines and media. steirischer herbst continually reinvents itself in an effort to redefine the conceptual basis for what culture can mean for contemporary society in Graz and Styria.

Press photos from the entire festival period are available in the [press section of our website](#). If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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