## | D | 24 | | Program | | preview |



| D | iagonale Festival of Austrian Film April 4–9, 2024 Graz www.diagonale.at

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#### Downloads, images, and graphic material at:

#### www.diagonale.at/presse

#### Upcoming press talks on Diagonale '24

Program presentation in Graz Wednesday, March 20, 2024 | 10:30 a.m. Steiermärkische Sparkasse | Schloßbergsaal Sparkassenplatz 4, 8010 Graz | (press embargo until March 21, 11 a.m.)

Program presentation in Vienna Thursday, March 21, 2024 | 9:30 a.m. Metro Kinokulturhaus Johannesgasse 4, 1010 Wien



Diagonale #denktweiter Canon The press kits for the preview were printed on Top Colour Zero carbonneutral paper (EU Ecolabel). Cover: Picture/Montage © Sebastian Reiser / Beton

## | Diagonale | 24 |

Dear Editors,

Once a year, Graz becomes the country's film capital – it's the place to experience the diversity of Austrian filmmaking across all genres and aesthetic styles. The Austrian Film Festival will take place for the 27th time in Graz from April 4 to 9, 2024, and for the first time under the direction of Dominik Kamalzadeh and Claudia Slanar.

The change of artistic director also comes with a few innovations: Diagonale '24 will start on a Thursday, so as to rearrange the festival's order of events in a productive way. As part of this next edition of the Diagonale, Austria's most highly endowed film prizes will also be awarded by international juries, thus recognizing the many achievements associated with the production of a film.

In addition to the film competition at the heart of the festival, the new *Position* festival program offers a comprehensive look at outstanding filmmakers in the context of exhibitions. The Diagonale's special programs on film history are appropriately entitled *Film History* and, by looking into the past, also make it possible to draw conclusions about the Austrian present. The *new Forum event series* will be held in the Heimatsaal of the Volkskundemuseum (Folk Life Museum) at the Paulustor , providing the perfect setting for conversation as well as discussion events.

"As we see it, a film festival can only thrive and grow if it enables what Lévi-Strauss called 'wild thinking'. The aim is to question and enrich our own points of view with and through films – and this also means by thinking outside the box and including international positions, while not losing sight of the social dynamics in Austria and not removing debates from comfort zones. Exchange and debate are particularly important to us; we want to strengthen both, as physical events provide the best conditions for this." —Dominik Kamalzadeh & Claudia Slanar, Artistic Directors

With this press release, the Diagonale also announces the **opening film** and the **winner of the Grand Diagonale Acting Prize 2024** for services to Austrian film culture.

The complete program will be available online starting March 21, 2024 at 1 p.m., and ticket sales will begin on March 22.

We look forward to your reporting and your support! If you have any interview requests or need further information, we will of course be happy to assist you.

Your Diagonale press office

Saskia Pramstaller Katharina Fennesz Clara Gruber Kathi Wiesler (on maternity leave)

## Diagonale Opening



Diagonale 2024 Opening

**Thursday, April 4, 2024** 7.30 p.m. Helmut List Halle, Graz

#### Opening sponsor: AVL Cultural Foundation

Certified as a Green Event according to the criteria of the Austrian Ecolabel.

#### Once a year: Austria's largest movie theatre

The opening of the 27th Diagonale in Graz will take place on April 4, 2024 in the Helmut List Halle, which will once again be transformed into Austria's largest movie theatre for this special evening, with over 1,100 seats.

## Opening film: Favoriten by Ruth Beckermann

Diagonale is pleased to announce that the Festival of Austrian Film will open with the **Austrian premiere** of Ruth Beckermann's documentary *Favoriten* in the presence of the filmmaker along with some of the protagonists and members of the team!

#### Grand Diagonale Acting Prize 2024 for Lukas Miko

As part of the festival opening, for the 17th time the Diagonale is awarding the Grand Diagonale Acting Prize for services to Austrian film culture. This year's award goes to the **extraordinary character actor** Lukas Miko. The actor-director will accept the award, presented by WIENER TIMES, in person in Graz on the opening evening.

## | Opening Film |



Favoriten © Ruth Beckermann Filmproduktion

Documentary AT 2024, 118 min

Book: Ruth Beckermann, Elisabeth Menasse Picture: Johannes Hammel Sound: Andreas Hamza Editing: Dieter Pichler Expert advice: Heidi Schrodt Production: Ruth Beckermann Filmproduktion

With: Ilkay Idiskut and the children of her class

World premiere: Berlinale 2024 *Encounters* 

Distribution Austria: Filmladen

Presse contact: vielseitig III Valerie Besl valerie.besl@vielseitig.co.at

#### Favoriten by Ruth Beckermann

German is not the first language of over 60 percent of all students in Vienna's primary schools; in some schools the figure reaches 100 percent. At the same time, there is a shortage of teachers and support staff.

"Beid, Hafsa, Melissa, Manessa, Mohammad ... 25 children and their teacher. We wanted to find out who they are; we wanted to get to know their abilities and strategies, their joys, fears and hardships," says director Ruth Beckermann. The film takes the audience to Favoriten, Vienna's 10th district, to one of the city's largest primary schools. Beckermann and her camera accompany a class and their teacher for three years: from the first awkward attempts at writing and learning the little multiplication tables through Mardi Gras parties to schoolwork and parentteacher conferences, we gain an insight into a remarkable small community, the likes of which probably exist in all major cities in Europe, and also into the children's daily academic and interpersonal challenges.

Beckermann presents a loving portrait of a class and its dedicated teacher. It also stands as a relevant contemporary document, once again demonstrating that all children must have the right to the best possible education, regardless of their financial situation or background.



Ruth Beckermann © Diagonale/Alexi Pelekanos

Previous films at the Diagonale (Selection):

2023 Mutzenbacher

2018 Auf amol a Streik The Waldheim Waltz

2016 The Dreamed Ones Die papierene Brücke

2014 Those Who Go Those Who Stay

2012 American Passages Jackson/Marker 4am

2007 Zorro's Bar Mizwa

#### Not a matter of the head, but of the heart!

"A documentary filmmaker who tirelessly plays with form, a curious cosmopolitan, and a committed intellectual in words and images who warns against forgetting history: Ruth Beckermann is also a great figure in Austrian film because of the way that she continually takes new directions in her work. The fact that we can open our first Diagonale with one of her films is actually a dream come true. It's a film that takes place in the present: a present with tendencies that threaten democracy, including in our own country.

*Favoriten*, the title of the film, refers to Vienna's 10th district, which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. However, the title can also be understood literally, as 'Favorites': the film focuses on 25 children and their shepherdess, the teacher Ilkay Idiskut, who leads her elementary school class with patience, tact, and passion, who with her commitment tries to compensate for what is structurally lacking. None of her children have German as their first language. Education and integration become a subject of vivid visual demonstration: the classroom is shown to be the focal point of a society of subtle differences and at the same time as the place of a possible utopia. It is an arena in which attitudes, cultural influences, and feelings are tested and can also be set in motion.

*Favoriten* gives a face to people who are abused as a source of cheap political capital. With this film, shot over a period of three years, Ruth Beckermann has once again penetrated to a documentary core: committed to the observational method of direct cinema, she films with the sensitivity of a humanist who does not fail to catch meaningful moments and close-knit relationships. As political as this film is, it has an immediate effect on us: *Favoriten* is not a matter of the head, but rather of the he-art. We are truly excited about being able to share this film with Diagonale audiences!" Dominik Kamalzadeh & Claudia Slanar | Artistic Directors

#### Biography Ruth Beckermann

Ruth Beckermann was born in Vienna. After studying journalism and art history, and additional studies in Tel Aviv and New York, she received her doctorate in philosophy from the University of Vienna in 1977. She worked as a journalist for various magazines in Austria and Switzerland. In 1978, Beckermann and two colleagues founded the Filmladen film distribution company, where she worked for seven years. Her first films and books were produced during this time. She has been working as a freelance author and filmmaker since 1985. Her film Those Who Go Those Who Stay received the Grand Diagonale Prize for Best Documentary Film at the Diagonale in Graz in 2014. Two years later, The Dreamed Ones was also awarded Best Feature Film at the Diagonale. In 2018, Ruth Beckermann completed The Waldheim Waltz; awards for that film included the Glashütte Original Documentary Film Prize at the Berlinale. In 2019, Ruth Beckermann realized the installation Joyful Joyce for the Salzburg Festival. In 2022, her film Mutzenbacher was shown in the Encounters competition at the Berlinale and won the award for Best Film.

## Grand Diagonale Acting Prize



#### Acting jury 2024:

**Ute Baumhackl** (Chief Reporter Culture & Society, Kleine Zeitung)

Zeynep Buyraç (Actress)

Christian Konrad (Head of Dep. Film, ORF)

Marion Mitterhammer (Actress)

Goran Rebić (Director & Writer)

## Grand Diagonale Acting Prize 2024 for Lukas Miko

As part of the festival opening, on April 4, 2024 the Diagonale will award the Grand Diagonale Acting Prize for services to Austrian film culture for the 17th time. This year the award goes to the extraordinary character actor Lukas Miko. The actor, author and filmmaker will accept the award, presented by WIENER TIMES, in person in Graz on the opening evening. We at Diagonale express our warmest congratulations!

#### The Prize: An Artistic Commodity

In the area of encounter between design, craftsmanship, art and decor, the WIENER TIMES label, which comprises Susanne Schneider and Johannes Schweiger, produces objects of everyday. use The products actively question and push the boundaries between abstraction and function.

Made possible by: legero united – the shoemakers | Initiator of con-tempus.eu.



Persona Non Grata © Filmladen



The Best of All Worlds © Polyfilm

#### Filmography (Selection):

#### 2024

Persona Non Grata (R: Antonin Svoboda)

#### 2023

Stella: A Life (R: Kilian Riedhof)

#### 2021

Chess Story (Philipp Stölzl)

#### 2018

Angelo (R: Markus Schleinzer)

2017 Mademoiselle Paradis (R: Barbara Albert)

2010 Spain (R: Anja Salomonowitz)

1997: Comedian Harmonists (R: Joseph Vilsmaier)

1994: 71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance (R: Michael Haneke)

#### Jury Statement

"It is impossible to imagine screens in Austria without his presence. The characters he embodies gain in color and depth thanks to his acting. For many years, Lukas Miko has been one of the great standbys of Austrian film as an artist who always puts himself at the service of the work with confident dedication. His outstanding performances range from the student Max in Michael Haneke's *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance* (1994) to the drug addict in Adrian Goiginger's *The Best of All Worlds* (2017), the overwhelmed asylum director in David Clay Diaz's *Me, We* (2021) to the journalist who uncovers an assault scandal in the Austrian Ski Association in Antonin Svoboda's *Persona Non Grata*.

**Miko is always incisive, always profound**. And he is also the rare case of a quick-change artist who acts without vanity – this can also be seen in his roles in the films *The Night of 1000 Hours, Mademoiselle Paradis, Angelo, Chess Story* and *Stella: A Life*.

The fact that he, like many extraordinary character actors, leaves lasting impressions not only with leading and title roles, but also always for his intelligent, multidimensional acting, his sharply drawn characters, and his ensemble awareness, was just one more reason for the acting jury to unanimously select him for the Grand Diagonale Acting Prize for 2024."

#### Biography Lukas Miko

Lukas Miko (born April 4, 1971) is an award-winning actor, screenwriter, and director. Born in Vienna, he trained as an actor at the renowned Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris.

Miko then played in the ensembles of the Residenztheater in Munich and the Burgtheater in Vienna, among others, and worked as a freelance stage actor in various productions. In addition to his stage work, Miko is one of Austria's most prominent film and television actors. He was awarded the 2018 Austrian Film Prize for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of the heroin-addicted stepfather in Adrian Goiginger's *The Best of All Worlds*. At the award ceremony, Miko gave a highly acclaimed speech in which he, as one of the initiators of *#KlappeAuf*, spoke out against incitement of xenophobia and populism , and in favor of solidarity. Miko received the Diagonale Acting Prize in 2021 for his role in *Me*, *We*. Behind the camera, Miko also works as a screenwriter and filmmaker. He filmed his first screenplay in 2006 under the title *The Frozen Sea*, and the 30-minute film was awarded the Golden Lola for the best German short film in 2007, among other prizes.

Lukas Miko is represented at the upcoming Diagonale by two films, firstly as a journalist in *Persona Non Grata* by Antonin Svoboda in the Annual Review, and secondly in the short film *Er so sie so* by Benjamin Heisenberg.



Margarethe Tiesel - Diagonale '23



Branko Samarovski & Constantin Luser - Diagonale '22



Christine Ostermayer - Diagonale '21



Ashley Hans Scheirl - Diagonale '19 all pictures © Diagonale/ Sebastian Reiser

#### Previous award winners

Since 2008, the Grand Diagonale Acting Prize has been awarded annually for services to Austrian film culture. Each year the prize is designed anew by another Austrian artist.

2023 Margarethe Tiesel Prize by Xenia Hausner

2021 **Christine Ostermayer** Prize by Verena Dengler

2019 Birgit Minichmayr Prize by Ashley Hans Scheirl

2017 Johannes Krisch Prize by Stefanie Moshammer

2015 Tobias Moretti Prize by Heimo Zobernig

2013 Maria Hofstätter Prize by Herbert Brandl

2011 Senta Berger Prize by Peter Kogler

2009 **Josef Hader** Prize by Elke Krystufek 2022 **Branko Samarovski** Prize by Constantin Luser

2020 **Ursula Strauss** Prize by Daniel Spoerri

2018 Ingrid Burkhard Prize by Toni Schmale

2016 **Erni Mangold** Prize by Anna Paul

2014 **Georg Friedrich** Prize by Eva Schlegel

2012 Johannes Silberschneider Prize by Elfie Semotan

2010 Klaus Maria Brandauer Prize by Brigitte Kowanz

2008 **Karl Markovics** Prize by Erwin Wurm

## | Film History | | The First Shift |



In cooperation with the ORF-Archiv.

#### Film historical special: The First Shift -60 Years of Labor Migration as Seen from the Countries of Origin

The Festival of Austrian Film has always been a place of new discoveries and rediscoveries, whether through the competition films and the annual review, or special features on film history. With the addition of the new Film History series, the upcoming edition offers two programs in which a close look at the past makes it possible to draw conclusions about Austria's present.

The Diagonale is pleased to announce the first program in its Film History series, along with some of the films that have already been confirmed. Under the title *The First Shift – 60 Years of Labor Migration as Seen from the Countries of Origin*, the festival is devoting eight programs to the still highly political issue of labor migration. However, this is being done predominantly from a reversed perspective: the focus is not on the view from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland of the migrant workers who have come to us, but rather mostly the positions of filmmakers from the home countries. It has been 60 years since the first "guest workers" arrived here, returned, and then came back. What was originally intended to be temporary work developed into a permanent situation. However, the hardships experienced in the new environment were hushed up at the political level, and many problems persist to this day.



Kara Kafa © Korhan Yurtsever



Halo, München © Zagreb Film



Gastarbeiter Trumbetaš © Zagreb Film

#### A change of perspectives

The First Shift offers a change of perspective on a seemingly "familiar" environment, with a selection of films such as these: *Halo, München / Hello Munich* (1967) and *Specijalni vlakovi / The Special Trains* (1971), both by Krsto Papić, are about setting off for Germany and Austria and returning home, as well as the resulting contradictory life situations in both places. *Kara Kafa / Black Head* (1979) by Korhan Yurtsever describes the ordeal and its effects in the fabric of an immigrant family. The new life in Germany offers theoretically unlimited possibilities, but these also entail unexpected pitfalls – as, for example, when the mother of the family begins to get involved in the women's movement. The film was banned by the Turkish censorship authority at the time and all copies were confiscated. Only recently did the original negatives surface, on the basis of which *Kara Kafa* could be restored.

Inventur – Metzstraße 11 (1975) by Želimir Žilnik was shot in the stairwell of a Munich apartment building. Žilnik, who himself went to Germany as a worker at that time, transforms this place of passage into the site of brief but meaningful encounters. In front of the camera, the residents of the house talk about their origins as well as their wishes, hopes, and worries.

Analphabeten in zwei Sprachen / Illiterates in Two Languages (1975) by the German-Iranian filmmaker Mehrangis Montazami-Dabui, like most of the films in the program, is still alarmingly relevant: the short documentary sheds light on the problems that children from a migrant background have in school, which in turn are also closely linked to the difficulties in finding their way between two cultures and finding their place. In *Wo sein Wäsche / Where Is Laundry* (1975) by Dieter Berner, which was created as part of the ORF series Stories from Austria, a Yugoslavian couple learns the sometimes Kafkaesque ways of Austrian bureaucracy: Ms. Stankovic has given birth to her child at home without medical assistance, and now none of the official documents exist that are needed to get the urgently needed baby laundry pack. In the narrow-minded officials' offices, the baby alone is not sufficient proof that it actually exists – and needs clean diapers.



*Liebe, D-Mark und Tod* © Stadtkino Filmverleih



Wo sein Wäsche © ORF-Archiv



Sonderzüge © Zagreb Film



Analphabeten in zwei Sprachen Quelle: Deutsche Kinemathek

#### Overview of the films

The program *The First Shift* is curated by Petra Popovic, Dominik Kamalzadeh, and Claudia Slanar in cooperation with the ORF and Jurij Meden (of the Austrian Film Museum). Diagonale would like to thank Faime Alpagu, Fatih Aydoğdu, and Can Sungu for their support. The 18 films will be divided into eight programmes.

Abschied Želimir Žilnik BRD 1975, 9 min

Analphabeten in zwei Sprachen Mehrangis Montazami-Dabui BRD 1975, 36 min

Der blinde Hirte Awad El Kish AT 1978, 42 min

Flight of a Death Bird / Let mrtve ptice Živojin Pavlović YU 1973, 88 min

**Gastarbeiter Trumbetaš** Bogdan Žižić BRD 1977, 17 min

**Gekommen bin ich der Arbeit** wegen Goran Rebić AT 1987, 23 min

Halo Munchen / Hallo, München Krsto Papić YU 1968, 13 min

**Inventur - Metzstraße 11** Želimir Žilnik BRD 1975, 9 min

**Jesenice - Stutgart itd.** Miroslav Mikuljan YU 1971, 6 min **Kara Kafa** Korhan Yurtsever TR 1979, 82 min

Kontakt: Gastarbeiter in Österreich ORF, AT 1971, 35 min

Liebe, D-Mark und Tod Cem Kaya DE 2022, 98 min

Ne Naginji se van / Nicht hinauslehnen Bogdan Žižić YU 1977, 101 min

**Otobüs / Der Bus** Bay Okan (aka Tunç Okan) TR 1979, 82 min

**Specijalni vlakovi / Sonderzüge** Krsto Papić YU 1972, 15 min

**Unter Denkmalschutz** Želimir Žilnik BRD 1975, 11 min

Wo sein Wäsche - Geschichten aus Österreich Dieter Berner, AT 1975, 35 min

Za poslom / Der Arbeit nach Mirslav Mikuljan YU 1971, 10 min

## | Position | | Lisl Ponger |



| Exhibition | *Storylines* at Schaumbad Freies Atelierhaus Graz

Puchstraße 41 8020 Graz

Duration: April 3 to 19, 2024

Opening: April 2 | 6 p.m

Artist Brunch: April 7 | 11 a.m.

The Diagonale would like to thank the project sponsor *Gaulhofer -Fenster zum Wohnfühlen* 

Thanks to: Österreichisches Filmmuseum Galerie Charim

#### Comprehensive Retrospective and Exhibition

The new festival program *Position* offers a comprehensive look at outstanding filmmakers within the framework of retrospectives - at the upcoming Diagonale, the first *Position* is dedicated to the work of filmmaker and photographer Lisl Ponger, born in 1947, in three programes. Ponger will also receive carte blanche for a film program.

Lisl Ponger's works embrace the world while at the same time taking into account the limits of the medium. With her montage she playfully uncovers culturally established ways of seeing and layers of meaning in images. Ponger questions the power of illusion in film, thereby arriving at an aesthetic that cannot be separated from a critique of ideology: exoticism, historiography, tourism, and migration are recurring themes. Even in early, formalistic Super 8 works Ponger activates curiosity with visual puzzles. *Passages* (1996), *déjà-vu* (1999) and *Phantom Foreign Vienna* (1991–2004) as well as *Imago Mundi* are films in which Ponger pursues her anthropological desire for the "strange and beautiful" with postcolonial sensitivity. She dissects the order of images and assembles their parts into an independent universe.

Lisl Ponger will be showing her latest work in an installation specially designed for the Schaumbad. The point of departure is colonial entanglements and global catastrophes, which she confronts in her photo prints and short videos with models of community, forms of protest, and aesthetics of camouflage and deception. The "colorful confusion" of the meticulously staged works revolves around the figure of the "trickster": mythological creature, shape-shifter, mediator, and one who transgresses boundaries .



Phantom Fremdes Wien



déjà-vu



Passagen



*lmago Mundi* all Stills © sixpackfilm

#### Overview of the films

With its new *Position* series, the Festival of Austrian Film is dedicating a comprehensive overview of the work of filmmaker and artist Lisl Ponger, to feature 19 films.

**Container – Contained** 1985, 5 min

**déjà-vu** 1999, 23 min

Ernst Schmidt Jr. in der Pinguin Bar in Kapfenberg 1981, 5 min

Film - An Exercise in Illusion I 1980, 3 min

The Four Corners of the World 1981, 15 min

If the Lumière Brothers ... (Mozart Minute 01) 2006, 1 min

Imago Mundi 2007, 37 min

La vida es un carnaval 2023, 8 min

Lichtblitze 1981, 5 min

Passagen 1996, 12 min Panorama 1998, 2 min

Phantom Fremdes Wien 2004, 27 min

Semiotic Ghosts 1991, 15 min

The Sound of Space 1986, 9 min

Souvenirs 1982, 12 min

Space Equals Time – Far Freaking Out 1979, 10 min

Tendencies to Exist 1984, 17 min

To Whom it May Concern 2022, 7 min

Unless you are a trickster 2023, 7 min

## Forum



| **Diagonale** | **Forum** | at the Heimatsaal at Volkskundemuseum Paulustor

Paulustorgasse 13a 8010 Graz

#### **New Festival Location**

This year the Heimatsaal of the Volkskundemuseum (Folk Life Museum) is being introduced by Diagonale as a new festival location and home to its new *Forum* series of events. It includes public discussions and the Diagonale Film Meeting, as well as the award ceremonies for the Franz Grabner Prize, the Carl Mayer Screenplay Competition, and the Thomas Pluch Screenplay Prize.

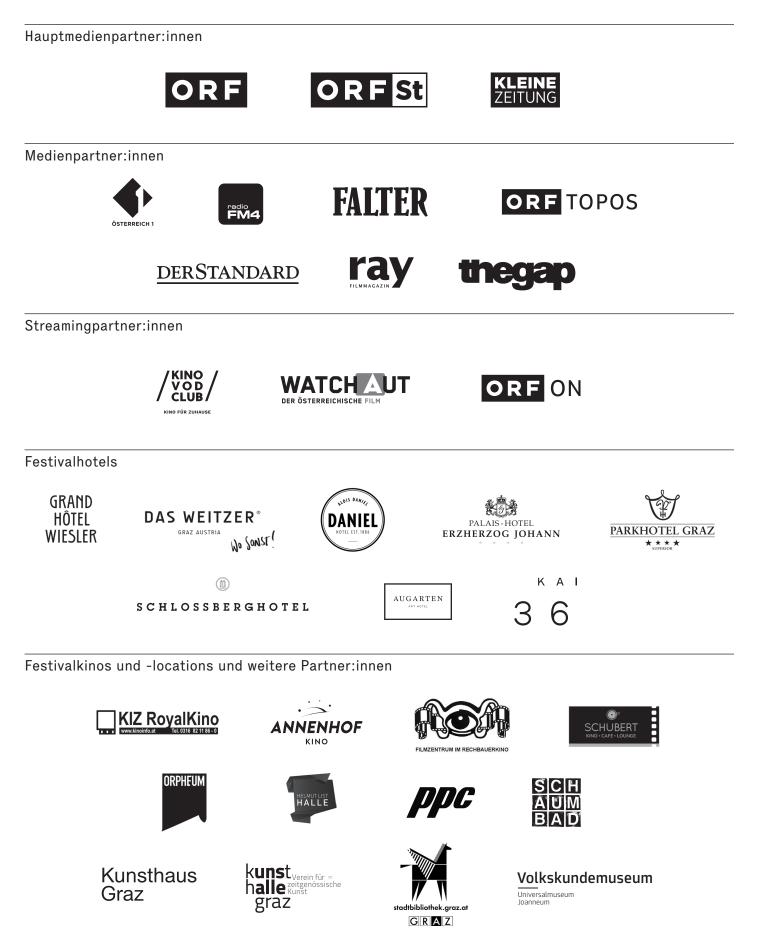
"With the Heimatsaal in the Volskundemuseum – within walking distance of the cinemas – we have found an ideal center for the new discussion and debate events that we are introducing to the festival district as the Diagonale *Forum*. And that's not all: it will also serve as a get-together place to meet people one-on-one – and in good weather, out on the terrace and in the garden. Our concept of the Diagonale combines the idea of a meeting place with the attraction of cinema: dialogue and sensory excitement come together here."

Dominik Kamalzadeh & Claudia Slanar | Artistic Directors

The Volkskundemuseum (Folk Life Museum) is located at the foot of the Schloßberg in Paulustorgasse. The Heimatsaal, integrated into the museum, can accommodate 130 to 250 people, depending on the seating arrangement. Thanks to its beautiful, spacious window front, technical equipment, seating capacity, and directly adjacent terrace and garden, it provides a wonderful ambience for the planned events and is an ideal extension of the festival district.

The charming *Gatto im Museum* restaurant, which is also located there, is the perfect place to meet people, network, or simply take a break before or after the *Forum* events.

## Thanks to the



## Partners



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