

A Creative Business: The Film Sector in Austria

Carina Sulzer / Maria Malle / Robert Harauer¹

1. Austria's Film Market and its Policies

Subsidies Keep Film Sector Alive in Austria

Whether in Hollywood or Bollywood, the film industry requires a vast market audience to flourish. For small countries such as Austria, this is one of the stumbling blocks as film-makers can only dream of profitable revenues and public subsidy is the only way to keep a national film scene alive. Although it is still possible to make good films, small productions cannot attract support for marketing and distribution that major productions enjoy, thus further decreasing the potential for box-office income. In this respect, the situation in Austria is similar to other small European countries such as Portugal or Finland.

Film production in Austria has been described as a 'simulated market', where the prime target is not economic success, but is instead focussed on rewards at festivals. In the national market subsidies have been introduced to enable distributors to also own a number of small cinemas. This measure has led to an increase in the audience share for Austrian films.

Considering the odds, competing with international film productions for audience share is almost impossible. Of 240 new films that are released annually in Austrian cinemas, only one in three is of European origin. Films made in the US dominate the audiovisual market in Austria, particularly within the cinema and video sectors and to a lesser extent in the field of television. Roughly 10 out of the remaining 80 European films released every year to Austrian cinemas or film festivals are of Austrian origin².

Hubert-Klaus Ackerl analysed the market-share of Austrian films³ from 1999 to 2003 and found that while American films commanded 82% of the market-share among the Top 35, only 3.36% represented Austrian films. Approximately 6% of the Top 35 films were of German origin, while another 3.75% were made in the UK. The market share for Austrian films in national cinemas can differ greatly from year to year, for example it was 7.3% in 1999 but decreased dramatically to 1.5% in the following year.

¹ MEDIACULT – International Research Institute for Media, Communication and Cultural Development, Vienna.

² From an average over several decades by Gerhard Schedl, former director of the Austrian Film Institute (ÖFI).

³ Hubert-Klaus, Ackerl. *Österreichische Filmwirtschaft im internationalen Kontext unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Förderungsmaßnahmen*. University of Economics, Vienna, 2004, p. 92.

Box-office value is a rare feature of Austrian films. Only one production released during the Culture-Biz study's period of observation, 1991-93 and 2001-03, attained a 'Golden Ticket'⁴. This film was *Poppitz* (2002), directed by Harald Sicheritz, who was equally successful with his production *Hinterholz 8* (1999) which attracted 617 000 cinema-goers in Austria. In comparison with most other film productions made around the same time in Austria, the Sicheritz movies enjoyed enormous success at home, but were not successful internationally.

In total, the market share of foreign film productions in Austria is 97%. This includes not only US-productions but also all the German soaps and talk shows as well as broadcasted international commercials. Professionals in the industry indicated that only 3-4 Austrian film production companies can compete with international standards in terms of equipment, experience, financial performance, labour capacity and know-how. The restrictions confronting film-makers in Austria are also found in other small European countries.

While the total number of cinemas in Austria has been decreasing in recent decades, the number of *screens* is far higher as a result of the larger cinema chains such as *MultiPlexx*. In the latest data, the Association of Austrian Cinemas listed 199 cinemas nationwide, with a total of 564 screens (excluding mobile screens). In 2002, they attracted 19.3 million visitors⁵.

The Structural Share of the Austrian Film Industry

The Austrian broadcasting company *Österreichischer Rundfunk* (ORF) is by far the largest film producer, employer and distributor nationwide. Although in recent years productions and employees have been outsourced to some degree, ORF still has approximately 3 800 staff (including those working for its radio stations). Besides ORF, there are approximately 1 900 registered enterprises in Austria working in the film sector, whether celluloid or video, production or post-production, commercial or feature film, cinema or distribution, animation or special effects, copy services or sound studios⁶. Regulations concerning payment and professional standards are negotiated among the associations of professionals. Approximately half of the film enterprises concerned with content creation are operated by one person. Only a handful of companies in the film sector have twenty or more employees.

⁴ A prize awarded since 1983 by the *Austrian Professional Audiovision Organisers and Movie Theatre Association* together with the *Austrian Association of Audiovisual and Film Industry* (FAFO) to all films that attract a minimum of 300 000 cinema-goers within a 12 months period.

⁵ Statistik Austria: *Kulturstatistik 2003*. Vienna, p. 134.

⁶ Austrian Chamber of Commerce. Vienna, 2004.

The revenues generated by the Austrian film industry is around 130 million euros per year⁷. Independent productions account for only 11%, while the majority is either commissioned by the ORF or – to a smaller extent – are commercials, educational films or supply private demand.

Vienna is not only the centre of the Austrian film business it also provides 87% of the film industry's annual turnover.

The cost of producing an Austrian feature film is estimated in the range of 1.1 to 2.5 million euros. These figures are very small in comparison to the average budget of a major US production, which can be in the region of 35-50 million dollars. The number of feature films produced in Austria varies slightly from year to year but usually ranges from 12 to 15. An upward trend in 1998/99 was displayed with 22/23 films per year around that time, but by 2001, the number of feature films had decreased again to 13.

Table 1 The Production Value Share of the Austrian Film Industry, 1998-2001

Type of Production	% Value Share
TV-Short	17%
TV-Spots	22%
Industrial and Educational Films	13%
Feature Films	9%
Cinema Shorts	1%
Cinema Spots	2%
TV-Productions	36%

Source: FAFO 2003.

Austria's Film Funding Policies

New policies were introduced in 1981 to tackle the problems inherent in Austria's film market, namely the small marketplace and the lack of investors. The main aim is to encourage films that are of cultural importance and of a standard to compete at film festivals, thus gaining more recognition at national as well as international levels.

The two most important institutions to put this policy into practice are the *Austrian Film Institute* (ÖFI) and the *Vienna Film Fund* (WFF), which support numerous Austrian films, many of which have been successful at prestigious festivals. Moreover, both institutions also support international co-productions to strengthen Austria's role in the context of European film-making. On a larger scale, they are a vital factor in keeping the Austrian film industry (excluding TV) alive, and their activities impact successfully on the economy of the Austrian film business.

⁷ Austrian Film Institut (ÖFI): *Daten zum Österreichischen Film*. Vienna: 2002.

The *Austrian Film Institute* is supported by the Federal Chancellery and the *Vienna Film Fund* by the Town Council of Vienna. Between them, the two organisations received a total of 19.2 million euros in public subsidy in 2003 (10.2 million euros from the Austrian Film Institute⁸ and 9.01 million euros from the Vienna Film Fund⁹).

In addition, the Federal Chancellery has an extra budget of around 4 million euros to be allocated directly to film activities and not via another institution. This small budget is primarily reserved for short experimental or avant-garde films and their promotion. Financial support is given either as repayable credit or as a non-repayable subsidy.

The *Austrian Film Commission* (AFC) is a central point for information and international promotion of Austrian films. Its publications (*Austrian Film Guide*, *Austrian Film News* and the annually published *Austrian Films*) are a valuable source for research on feature films in Austria, but its main objective is to promote Austrian films internationally.

Since the early 1990s, the AFC, ÖFI, Vienna Film Fund, Script-Writers Academy and some related institutions are located in the same building. The Media Desk is also located there now providing direct links for the Austrian film scene with the Media Plus committee and the Eurimages committee of the European Union. In cooperation with their programmes, two feature films were produced last year.

An institution located nearby is *Sixpack Film*, which is a special distributor for Austrian films, co-operating with more than 200 festivals worldwide every year. Its distribution programme comprises around 480 titles, many of which are avant-garde films as Sixpack Film's main objective is to establish a receptive audience for art films. Sixpack Film is supported by the Federal Chancellery's funds for promoting the arts.

Apart from Vienna, funding is also provided for film production by the local governments of the federal provinces of Austria, although on a comparatively smaller scale. Almost all of Austria's nine provinces now have initiatives either from private funds, the public sector or a mix of the two, to support feature film production. The most important ones are Cine Tirol, Aktion Film Salzburg, Aktion Film Vorarlberg, and Aktion Film Oberösterreich.

Distributors of Austrian Feature Films

Austria has a long tradition of subsidised film distribution. In 1926 a film distribution company Kiba was created to promote films of cultural value. The main shareholder was a bank connected to the Social-Democratic Party and the objective was to improve the supply of films of political interest. Kiba not only distributed films but

⁸ *Kunstbericht des Bundeskanzleramts*. Vienna, 2003, p. 91.

⁹ *Kunst- und Kulturbericht des Filmfonds Wien*. Vienna, 2003, p. 4.

also owned 30 cinemas in 1931. Nazi control halted this initiative and it was not before 1947 that Kiba re-emerged when the director Georg Wilhelm Pabst became a share-holder of the company renamed Pabst-Kiba-Produktions-GmbH. After Pabst's death in 1965 the influence of Kiba within nationwide film distribution declined and the number of cinemas decreased every decade. It's programme could no longer be distinguished from that of the international film distributors like Warner, Constantin or Universal which are now the main distributors of movies in Austria. By the end of the 1990s, Kiba had only 9 cinemas left and these have been sold since to private investors or subsidised distributors. In 2004 the internet domain of this long running and powerful institution within Austria's film business was placed for sale.

As distribution is a vital instrument in promoting a film, three subsidised film distribution companies now offer an alternative to the commercial blockbuster variety: *Stadtkino Filmverleih*, *Filmladen* and *Polyfilm*. The gender structure within these companies paints a familiar picture: although women work in many positions such as marketing, distribution or press relations (in fact, women form the majority of employees among these distributors), they are not found in the senior role of managing director.

Around 75%-80% of all Austrian feature films are distributed by *Filmladen*¹⁰. This independent Austrian institution which focuses on promoting Austrian films was founded in the early 1980s. In 1986, the company acquired the *Votiv Kino*, one of the few independent Viennese cinemas. Meanwhile, the company also runs a second cinema, the *Cine Center*. Next in line is *Polyfilm*, another independent Viennese distributor which also runs a cinema *Filmcasino*. Like the *Votiv Kino*, the *Filmcasino* is one of those old traditional style cinemas. Furthermore, *Constantin Film* is a company distributing mainly block-busters, but it also takes 1-2 Austrian films every year into its catalogue. Finally, *Buena Vista* occasionally distributes Austrian films, provided they are successful, such as the 'Bockerer', a feature film on Austria in the Nazi years by director Franz Antel.

2. Labour Force and Professional Associations in the Film Industry

Sourcing gendered data on the labour situation in the Austrian film industry as required by the Culture-Biz study proved difficult. Each year questionnaires are sent out by the Austrian Association for the Audiovisual and Film Industry (FAFO) but many are not returned by production companies. The data from the Unemployment Office (AMS) had to be compared with other sources as it does not necessarily reflect a full picture of professionals who were employed in the film industry. Therefore any data received was considered carefully. Valuable data came from

¹⁰ According to expert Johann Böhm.

Austria's Statistics Office which enabled a comparison with data collected from other sources (AMS and FAFO):

Table 2 Gender Data on Employees in Film Production Companies in Austria in 1995, 2000 and 2003

Years	1995		2000		2003	
Number of Employees in Film Production Companies	T	%F	T	%F	T	%F
		2 998	41%	2 867	42.2%	3 120

Source: FAFO, Statistik Austria, 2004¹¹.

Table 3 Unemployment in the Film Sector in Austria, 2003

Year	2003	
Unemployment Figures	Total	%F
		254*

Source: AMS 2004.

Associations of Professionals in the Austrian Film Industry

Nine associations that support the Austrian Film Industry are organised within the *Union of Austrian Film Makers* (Dachverband Österreichischer Filmschaffender). The manager, Eva Maria Kollmann, is also in charge of the Association of Austrian Actors (210 members). There are 752 people organised in these associations, although actors are excluded from the table below as they did not form part of the Culture-Biz study:

Table 4 Gendered Data on Professional Associations in the Austrian Film Industry, 2004

Association	Chairperson	M	%M	F	%F	T
Cinematographers	Kurt Brazda (m)	119	97%	4	3%	123
Directors	VirgilWidrich (m)	41	77%	12	23%	53
Directors (TV)	Zoltan Pataky (m)	63	78%	18	22%	81
Script Writers	Sabine Perthold (f)	57	62%	35	38%	92
Editors	Daniela Padalewski-Junek (f)	6	12%	45	88%	51
Documentary Film-Makers	Ruth Beckermann (f)	22	76%	7	24%	29
Film Designers	Florian Reichmann (m)	40	53%	35	47%	75
Sound Designers	Bernhard Bamberger (m)	6	55%	5	45%	11
Location Managers	Peter Altendorfer (m)	13	48%	14	52%	27
Total		367	68%	175	32%	542

Source: Figures provided by the respective associations, 2004.

¹¹ We are particularly indebted to Wolfgang Pauli from Statistik Austria for providing us with valuable labour data material on film and publishing in Austria.

There is an Association of Austrian Film Producers - AAFP - but its members are 70 film production companies and not individuals, and therefore it is not possible to compile gender data for them. However, the President and the Vice President are male. The AAFP's board of executive committee members lists the names of nine male CEOs of film production companies and one woman whose job title could not be traced.

Although the share of women in the film industry has reached about 40% in Austria, they do not feature prominently among the associations in the sector. The one exception is the Association of Editors - a decidedly feminised group - with a share of 88%. Cinematography is still male territory; 3% female minority.

Considering that there are around 3 000 people in Austria who work as professionals in the film industry, the professional organisations comprise only 18% of these individuals. One reason may be that the associations of professionals do not function as an interest group similar to a trade union. As one interviewee (male, working as camera assistant for the past five years) put it:

"They are more a club than an interest group. I was a couple of years working in my job before I heard this association even existed. You have to send a roll in and then they decide whether you're acceptable to their club... it's mostly men. When decisions are to be made concerning who is to get a job, then most men shy away from employing a woman. Because to become a camera man you have to go through years of doing the assistant's job and that means carrying a lot of heavy stuff around. I've done a lot of filming in the mountains where conditions are quite challenging and I would say that not many people would employ a woman for such a job."

Among those who represent the associations, the share of women is 32%, as is roughly their total share in all the associations. A closer look shows that one of the three women chairs is leading an association viewed as traditionally feminised (editing); Beckermann represents the documentary film-makers and thus an area where, according to our findings, women find better career chances than in feature film; Perthold is also managing director of the Script Writers' Academy, thus it almost follows naturally she should be chairperson of the Script Writers' Association.

The associations of the producers, directors, cinematographers, sound managers, film designers and location managers are not only chaired by men, but also represent those areas of the film sector where women have not yet found career advancement.

3. Training for Professions in the Film Industry

The film industry still employs a high percentage of people who have not undergone training at educational institutions. Film-making which includes such diverse professions as director, producer, playwright, editor, sound-engineer, camera operator and so on is supported by a broad variety of educational services. Since 1952, when film courses were first established at the Academy for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, it has been possible to study camera work, script-writing, production, editing and directing in Austria. In the past 15 years a number of other institutions have been established although it has been difficult to compile data on their courses. Data is more readily available from the Vienna Film Academy which is collected by Statistik Austria, although this academy does not have a large volume of graduates.

The labour data mirrors the current situation in the employment market while the data on film graduates provides a look at the future development of gender distribution and the work force in total. Due to the high percentage of free-lance or non-registered workers in this sector, it is difficult to compile complete data on the employment situation. Statistik Austria provides valuable data on university graduates, personnel and the gender distribution over a reasonable period of time and other training institutions also provided figures on their graduates. The years chosen were 1992, 1997 and 2002; foreign students, graduates and teachers were included and so were the following institutions that offer educational training for professions in the film industry:

- The Institute for Film and Television (Vienna Film Academy) is the most important educational training institute and is part of the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Courses are offered on editing, directing, film-producing etc. to graduate level.
- Founded in 1998, Vienna Film School offers courses on film-making with a focus on directing and screenplays. This school also offers courses for aspiring actors and actresses. There is less focus on technical training. Courses offered are: Basic (1 year), Advanced (2 years) or the Masterclass (3 years).
- The SAE Institute, a worldwide institution, founded its Viennese branch in 1987 as a school for sound-engineering. In 1997 digital video-editing was added and since 2000 SAE Vienna offers a basic course of 15 months duration in 'Digital Film Making'. Trainees are required to produce a commercial, music video and a short film to pass and be able to move on to the advanced level, the Digital Animation Degree Programme (BA level). Basic courses cover scriptwriting, directing, editing, lighting, storyboards and film studies, while the advanced courses deal also with management, the structures of the film industry and market research.

- The Vienna Script Writers Academy, also known as the Scriptwriters Forum, is an institution aimed at those who are already in the process of making a film. Since its foundation in the early 1990s, the Script Writers Academy has been a vital factor in the realisation of a number of Austrian films. Courses take from 6-10 months and are often held in blocks at weekends, with a maximum of 8 participants. Since 1993, the Script Writers Forum grants the Thomas Pluch-Award for the best screenplay.
- The Danube University Krems was founded in 1995 and offers mainly post-graduate courses. Since Autumn 2003, there is a course on 'Management for Film-Makers' which runs over 3 terms, comprising a total of 408 hours of training and lessons, to qualify for a Master of Arts (MA).
- The Institute for Media and Communication Sciences (Vienna) offers courses that cover video-editing, directing, lighting and sound-engineering, in connection with UTV (university television). UTV was established in 1994 at the time of a major strike at university when its news-productions on the events received quick attention and were shown on national television. Meanwhile, UTV displays its productions on its website.
- The *Salzburg Poly-College for Media and Audio-Engineering* has been operating since 1996 and offers a four year course with a focus on the technical side of media production.

Apart from the institutions named above, there are more training options for aspiring young film makers in Austria, such as the *Hewlett Packard Media Academy* (Vienna), the media art lab at the *University for Art & Design* in Linz (Upper-Austria) or workshops organised under various initiatives in the capital as well as in the provinces.

3.1 The Vienna Film Academy (University of Music and Performing Arts): Gender Distribution of Students, Graduates and Teachers in 1992, 1997 and 2002

Students

In 1992 a significant majority (70%) of students attending the Vienna Film Academy were men. Twice as many men as women trained as directors and almost ten times as many men chose the camera course. On the other hand, fewer women than expected chose to train as professional editors. By 1997 the percentage of women students had risen to 42%. There was also a significant rise in female students training as camera operators. By 2001/2002, from a total of 114 students, 51% were female. (The higher number in the table below accounts for 16 people who studied more than one course programme).

An interesting result is that while women entered the traditionally male territories of cinematography and directing, there now is also a remarkably high number of women opting for editing courses:

Table 5 Percentage of Women Students at the Vienna Film Academy in 1992, 1997 and 2002

Year	1992	1997	2002
Course	%F	%F	%F
Cinematography	9.4	32.0	51.7
Script-Writing	38.5	46.7	28.6
Production	46.7	42.1	59.1
Directing	33.3	37.5	40.0
Editing	40.4	66.7	78.3
Total	29.1	42.5	50.9

Sources: Statistik Austria¹² and the Vienna Film Academy¹³.

Graduates

In 1992, three people graduated from the Film Academy, one playwright and two cinematographers, one of the latter was female. In 1997, there were four graduates one of whom was a woman who had studied directing. Possibly due to pressure from the emergence of other institutions offering training in the film sector, the Film Academy increased the number of qualifying students by 2002 to 13 graduates, six of whom were female.

Teachers

In 1992, a total of 37 teachers (professors, visiting professors, lecturers, contracted teachers and assistant professors) were employed at the Academy. Seven teachers were female and one woman was employed out of four professors, in the editing course. In 2002, out of 39 teachers 9 were female.

Table 6 Gender Distribution among Students, Graduates and Teachers of the Vienna Film Academy in 1992, 1997 and 2002

Year	Students			Graduates			Teachers		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
1992	73	30	29%	2	1	33%	30	7	19%
1997	61	45	42%	3	1	25%	32	6	16%
2002	56	58	51%	7	6	46%	30	9	23%

Source: Statistik Austria.

¹² Statistik Austria: *Hochschulstatistik 1992/93, Hochschulstatistik 1997/98, Hochschulstatistik 2002/03*. Wien.

¹³ Figures provided by the Vienna Film Academy, 2004.

As we can see from the results of the table above the share of female students has risen from 29% to 51% from 1992-2002; the numbers of female graduates has increased from 1 to 6; but only a moderate rise among the female teachers can be observed.

Table 7 Gender Data for Graduates and Teachers of all Austrian Professional Courses in Film Studies in 1992, 1997 and 2002

Year	Graduates			Teachers		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
1992	11	6	35%	33	7	17%
1997	14	7	33%	52	13	20%
2002	101	58	36%	105	33	24%

Source: Mediacult research on the institutions listed in section 3 of this study, 2004.

As visible from Table 7, gender-distribution among graduates has not changed between 1992 and 2002, despite the enormous rise in the number of graduates. Only the percentage of female teachers has risen from 17% to 24%.

More Women Training as Film-Makers in Austria

The flow of female students entering universities and academies no longer meets gender-specific barriers in Austria. However, within the academic realm, students do not have a lot of power and appear to be disconnected from the teaching hierarchy. Traditional gender patterns are still at play when it comes to the teaching profession itself as it is still difficult for women to pass through the old boys' network. While art academies generally provide more professional opportunities for the development of female careers than many other educational institutions, these are still very limited.

One area where there has been a significant rise in the share of women among the scientific-artistic personnel is in the six Austrian art academies and art universities between the years 1992 and 2002¹⁴. In 1992, the share of women was 24.5% compared to 35.5% ten years later and whereas the positions of assistants and lecturers show only a moderate increase, the share of female professors has almost doubled from 13% to 24%, implying that – while women still represent only a quarter of the staff – they have made progress at senior level.

4. Patterns of Gender-Distribution in Austrian Film-Making

In analysing the share of women in Austrian film productions for the purposes of the Culture-Biz Study, the focus was placed on professional positions in feature film productions, as well as documentaries and short films for 1991-93 and 2001-03. Of particular interest were professions that predominantly employed men such as cinematography and film production.

¹⁴ Statistik Wien: *Hochschulstatistik 1991/1992 and 2001/2002*. Vienna, 1992 and 2002.

The *Austrian Film Commission* provides valuable information in its annual reports and this material has been compared with the respective websites of films produced to complete the information. All feature films, documentaries (of at least 60 minutes duration) and short films (ranging from 3-60 minutes) were included. Information on some short films is not available as they are made without public subsidy and therefore difficult to trace. The study examined 77 feature films, 58 documentaries and 82 short films and analyzed 2 223 job positions in total:

Table 8 Austrian Film Production in 1991-93 and 2001-2003

Year	Feature Films	Documentaries	Short Films	Positions*
1991-1993	29	35	47	1 035
2001-2003	48	23	35	1 188
Total	77	58	82	2 223

Source: Mediacult Database on Austrian Films (based on AFC reports and websites), 2004.

Full representative results were drawn for the positions of directors, script-writers, cinematographers, editors and producers*. For 1991-93 and 2001-03, a total of 1 198 cases for these five positions were analysed according to their gender balance.

4.1 More Women Employed in Top Positions in the Film Sector

In recent years, a new generation of female directors like Barbara Albert, Ruth Mader, Sandra Derflinger, Nina Kusturica or Jessica Hausner emerged on the Austrian film scene and also found international recognition at various prestigious film festivals. It is not yet clear whether this is a singular phenomenon or can be interpreted as a trend. In any case, the research has found that the share of female directors in Austrian feature film productions has doubled during the observational period, rising from 9.4% in the early 1990s to 18.9% at the start of the millenium. These positive results in gender balancing are reinforced when they are examined alongside the results of extensive research on feature films, documentaries and short films:

Table 9 Gender Data on Job Positions in Feature Films, Documentaries and Short Films in Austria, 1991-1993

	Feature			Documentary			Short Film			Total		
	M	F	F%	M	F	F%	M	F	F%	M	F	F%
Directors	29	3	9.4	36	7	16.3	39	12	23.5	104	22	17.5
Script-Writers	37	5	11.9	37	7	15.9	41	12	22.6	115	24	17.3
Cinematographers	28	1	3.4	41	4	8.9	43	7	14.0	112	12	9.7
Editors	8	22	73.3	22	18	45.0	25	22	46.8	55	62	53.0
Producers	30	2	6.3	19	1	5.0	2	1	33.3	51	4	7.3
Total	132	33	20.0	155	37	19.3	150	54	26.5	437	124	22.1

Source: Mediacult database based on AFC reports 1991-1993 (29 feature films, 35 documentaries, 47 short films) and official film websites, 2004.

Table 10 Gender Data on Job Positions in Feature Films, Documentaries and Short Films in Austria, 2001-2003

Gender	Feature			Documentary			Short Film			Total		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
Directors	43	10	18.9	19	10	34.5	23	12	34.3	85	32	27.4
Script-Writers	51	18	26.1	20	15	42.9	22	14	38.9	93	47	33.6
Cinematographers	50	1	2.0	32	8	20.0	24	13	35.1	106	22	17.2
Editors	23	30	56.6	15	14	48.3	16	18	52.9	54	62	53.4
Producers	71	10	12.3	37	5	11.9	10	3	23.1	118	18	13.2
Total	238	69	22.5	123	52	29.7	95	60	38.7	456	181	28.4

Source: Mediacult Database based on AFC reports 2001-2003 (48 feature films, 23 documentaries, 35 short films) and official film websites, 2004.

The results of the Culture-Biz research on the share of women employed in feature films, documentaries and short films are listed in Table 11.

Table 11 Share of Women Employed in Feature Films, Documentaries and Short Films in Austria in 1991-93 and 2001-03

Percentage of Women	1991-93	2001-03
Directors	17.5%	27.4%
Script-Writers	17.3%	33.6%
Cinematographers	9.7%	17.2%
Editors	53.0%	53.4%
Producers	7.3%	13.2%
<i>(less representative)</i>		
Production Managers	22.0%	28.3%
Location Managers	36.4%	53.8%
Art Direction	43.2%	37.3%
Sound Engineers	9.0%	13.9%
Costume Designers	89.7%	87.0%

Source: Mediacult research based on AFC reports and websites, 2004.

In Conclusion

The research findings for the share of women employed in Austrian films in the respective periods are promising: in all top positions the share of women has increased significantly. The number of female script-writers, cinematographers and producers has doubled, while female directors almost doubled and the traditional feminised position of editors has remained stable.

Looking closer at feature films, documentaries and short films, the tables demonstrate that both in feature films and documentaries female directors and producers have doubled and female script-writers show an even better performance. This can

be regarded as a very positive development for women in the creative sector of the Austrian film industry.

Only the figures for female cinematographers remained very low at around 2-4%.

4.2 Female Reluctance when it Comes to Self-Promotion?

The data from the tables above were then compared with the data collected by the magazine *Media Biz*, the leading magazine of the film industry's business sector in Austria. Whereas the above results researched by Mediacult have been based to a large extent on the balanced documentation supplied by the AFC, the data derived from *Media Biz* is based on classified directories where inclusion is based on payment of a fee. *Media Biz* books are the yellow pages of the film sector in Austria, not only comprising the film and video production companies but also editing services, photographers, sound engineers, lighting technicians and related professions, which represent more male-dominated areas. Overall, the gender-distribution of the professionals listed in the publications by *Media Biz* displayed a female minority.

Bearing in mind the increases in women employed in the sector as displayed in the tables above, it could be argued that female professionals tend to neglect the importance of self-promotion, just as they tend to shy away from lobbying as raised in the tables dealing with the associations in section 2. Thus, Table 12 demonstrates less the actual rise of creative women in the Austrian film industry and indicates more the importance men put on self-promotion in the sector.

Table 12 Data on Advertising by Film Industry Professionals in Media Biz Magazine in 1996 and 2004

Year	1996			2004		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
Directors	119	20	14.4	154	26	14.4
Script-Writers	79	32	28.8	96	36	27.3
Cinematographers	151	3	1.9	191	6	3

Source: Media-Biz 1996 and 2004.

The impression gained from the data is that male-dominated structures do not further the advancement of the gender cause. The findings concerning the rising share of women in the creative side of the film industry – where there are a lot of freelancers and temporary employees – do not correspond so far with a rising share in the gender distribution.

On the other hand, as Table 11 shows, the number of female directors has more than doubled. A few of these women have formed their own production companies

to make it easier to produce their films¹⁵. The rising share of female script-writers received support from the initiative of the Script Writers' Academy, while the growing number of female cinematographers conceals the fact that most of these women work with video, not celluloid which is a harder area for women to access.

While the number of women in top positions has risen, so did the figures for men, thus not altering the gender distribution.

One interviewee, who is not only one of the very few female producers of feature films in Austria but also managing director of a successful film production company (with a male partner), blamed not just the traditional gender pattern which presumably stops women from reaching to the top, but also the servile attitude of many women and their lack of self-promotion. In 2004, her company was featured in Cannes with four films, one of them a feature film that received international recognition, the others – experimental and short films – received a number of awards. This interviewee clarified the difficulties further:

“As concerns my job, I’m still fighting to keep my place. It does not happen automatically. It’s not that anyone would be listening, if you don’t shout. We still get invitations that address solely our male partner while the female partner is ignored. Such things do happen.”

She added further on employing women:

“I consciously choose to work with women, if I’m free to make such a choice in my team, definitely. I believe, that in the (Austrian) film sector, the recent international success is due to the creative output of assertive young women who say ‘Now let’s do our thing’. This will have an effect on others.”

4.3 Gender Results for the Top 10 Austrian Feature Films

Feature film productions were the field of primary interest for the Culture-Biz study, in particular films which were released for cinema showing prior to television. The research looked at the share of women found in the Top 10 Austrian feature films. These lists evaluate the box office value and are based on the numbers of cinema-goers each film has attracted within a year nationwide.

While it was difficult to gather data for the years 1991-1993, figures were readily available for 2001-03 from the European database LUMIERE. The Austrian Association of Audiovisual and Film Industry (FAFO) was also able to provide data for the years requested. It seems necessary to mention, that since only an average of 15 Austrian feature films are produced annually, two thirds of those films will be among the Top 10 anyway.

¹⁵ Jessica Hausner and Barbara Albert are part of the successful *Coop 99* film production company.

Table 13 Representation of Women in the Top 10 Films in Austria in 1991-1993 and 2001-2003

Top 10	1991-1993				2001-2003			
	M	F	T	%F	M	F	T	%F
Directors	31	5	36	13.9	28	8	36	22.2
Script-Writers	41	6	47	12.8	39	13	52	25.0
Cinematographers	35	3	38	7.9	33	1	34	2.9
Editors	11	21	32	65.6	8	24	32	75.0
Producers	29	1	30	3.3	47	2	49	4.1
Total	147	36	183	19.7	155	48	203	23.6

Source: Mediacult database 2004 based on AFC reports and Top 10 lists.

When the results of women professionals in the Top 10 are compared with data from the general film database at Mediacult a familiar pattern occurs in that women are under represented in the positions of director, scriptwriter, cinematographer and producer. Involvement of women in cinematography is a very young development and can only be detected in data for documentaries and short films but not yet in feature films. However, for the first time female students have outnumbered their male colleagues on the cinematography course and there has also been an increase in female students studying film production at the Vienna Film Academy. These developments are promising for improvements in the gender balance in the film sector.

5. Strictly Gendered: Film Production Companies

The position of managing director of a successful film production company is a powerful one in terms of personal influence as well as income. Although the share of women in the Austrian film industry is higher than ever, women are rarely found in positions of influence.

Because many of the 70 film production companies listed in the association of Austrian film producers (AFP) work mainly for television, only those most frequently named as feature film production companies in the yearbooks of the Austrian Film Commission were included. The Top 30 film production companies whose managing directors are executive committee members of the AFP were examined, because this board represents those Austrian film production companies that are of prime interest to the Culture-Biz study.

Main sources for the research were the AFP website, personal inquiries such as interviews and the yearbooks of the sector. The overall image derived from this research mirrored expectations: whereas doors are opening to women in the creative side of the film industry, the business side is still firmly ruled by men. A total of 39 people working as managing directors in the 30 film production companies are included in the table below, of which 9 are women (23%).

Table 14 Austria's Top 30 Film Production Companies, 2004

Position	M	F	Total	%F
Owners	36	14	50	28.0
Managing Directors	30	9	39	23.0
Producers	39	10	49	20.4
Marketing	7	6	13	46.2
Office Management	6	15	21	71.4
Total	118	54	172	31.4

Source: Mediacult Research 2004.

In total, there are 172 people working as registered employees or owners in the Top 30 film production companies comprised in the above table, with a female percentage of 31.3%. This is a lower share than the one given in the employment statistics on the whole Austrian film scene (40% listed in chapter two for the year 2003) and indicates that the share of women in top companies generally displays a lower percentage than in companies with a less impressive economic performance.

Besides the function of managing director, the other two positions where women are significantly under-represented are as owners and producers. Many women are found in the lower positions: 71.4% of secretaries (or 'office managers') in the Top 30 film production companies were female - as is the case in many other sectors (such as publishing). Nevertheless, the middle-level positions – such as marketing or PR – were previously predominantly male areas and are being conquered by women in recent years.

6. The National Broadcasting Company ORF

The ORF is by far the biggest film production company in Austria, and makes several productions every year that are successfully traded worldwide. In fact, the economic performance of the Austrian national broadcasting company makes the rest of the Austrian film industry look very small indeed.

The general director of the ORF is a woman, but this does not necessarily bring winds of change to the gender pattern that is still vital within national television and radio. Of 15 personnel in her office only one is female and the six directors of the various sections (programme, information, business, technical, radio and new media) are male. Among the directors of ORF's nine local stations located in the federal states only one is female. Another management position held by a woman is in the ORF Teletext business. These women are rare exceptions in an otherwise strictly male-dominated professional area. One interviewee – who has been working in ORF's technical area for 27 years – remarked that having a woman at the top has brought little change to the general gender structure:

“Until last year we had three female production managers. Now we only have one. Yet, on the other hand, some things did happen in re-

cent years that were an improvement, like when the kindergarten was established in 1999. That really changed a lot, because it lead to a baby boom and it also meant that mothers who work here find it easier to return after maternity leave. It also has a good effect if only the father works here because he is the one who takes his offspring to the kindergarten in the morning. The kindergarten really was an achievement, but the women here had to fight to get it for 30 years as it never had top priority for our male directors. Although, when it did happen, it was under the previous (male) director. We started out with 40 children and now, five years later, there are 80! Another good thing is that there are now a few women working again in the sound sector, having studied at SAE. Yet despite the option of the kindergarten I can feel this fear in the back of my bosses head 'What if she gets pregnant?' The technical sector is still very conservative when it comes to family matters."

This view is supported by the appointment of men to all the leading functions (nine in number) of the technical department. The wireless section has two women out of eight as has the programming department and one woman works in the smaller information section. In the department for business matters women only hold two of the nine senior jobs.

The male-dominated image derived is mirrored in the pay structure: The hierarchical structure formed within the ORF places the 3 800 people working there on 18 different levels¹⁶. The top level has a female share of little less than 10% whereas a majority of around 55% of women are found if one sums up the levels 1-10.

The general gender structure of the ORF is not only visible in the various administrative functions but also among those professions which were of particular interest to Culture-Biz such as directors, cinematographers, editors, producers and script-writers. Based on information from the Austrian Film Commission on ORF's feature film productions (58 production and 293 job positions in total), the following tables on the gender distribution during the observational period were produced:

Table 15 Share of Women Working on Films Produced by the ORF, 1991-1993

	M	F	Total	%F
Director	20	4	24	16.7%
Screenplay	24	3	27	11%
Cinematography	22	1	23	4.3%
Editing	2	24	26	92.2%
Total	68	32	100	32%

Source: Mediacult database 2004.

¹⁶ Figures provided by ORF-assistant, 2004.

For some reason - considering the trend outside the ORF - the total share of women in important functions of ORF film productions decreased over the following years. There was not one female director or cinematographer for the period 2001-2003. However, compared with the development in the general Austrian film production market (section 4), the TV production market for the national broadcasting company shows rather contrasting results for women – as the table for the years 2001-2003 illustrates:

Table 16 Share of Women Working on Films Produced by the ORF, 2001-2003

2001-2003	M	F	Total	%F
Director	35	0	35	0
Screenplay	33	10	43	23.3%
Cinematography	36	0	36	0
Editing	0	34	34	100%
Producer	39	6	45	13.3%
Total	143	50	193	26%

Source: Mediacult database 2004.

7. Austrian Film Festivals and Film Awards

Film festivals bring together organisers, producers, PR people, critics, movie-lovers and, last but not least, film-makers. These events bring important press coverage and the possibility of receiving awards. For almost everyone involved in the production of a film the moment of public release is critical. Participation at prestigious film festivals and, moreover, the winning of awards is of great importance to Austrian film-makers, also because success usually means that subsidy for future work will be ensured.

Thus, film festivals are a vital part of the whole structure of the Austrian scene for feature, short or avant-garde films as exist aside the massive presence of the ORF. A fair amount of the annual budget for film is spent every year on public subsidy for the various Austrian film festivals – namely the *Viennale* and the *Diagonale* – as well as for the participation of Austrian films at foreign festivals such as Cannes, Locarno or Toronto.

Every Autumn, the capital is the site of the most renowned Austrian film festival, the *Viennale*. Since it was founded in 1963, this successful festival enjoys growing numbers of visitors. In 2004, 81 600 visitors attended the festival – 6 400 more than the year before - which showed 58 films, most of them international and many of them premiered.

Considering that there were only a few big commercial productions in the programme, the growing number of visitors indicates the success of Austria's pledge to support films that emphasise cultural value. The programme of the *Viennale* is usually a mix of debuts, documentaries and avant-garde shorts, which has, over the

years, gained support from a loyal festival audience. The success of the Viennale means that it has become difficult for young film-makers to have their films screened there. Better options for them are now found at the Diagonale in Graz (Styria, in the heart of Austria) or at the recently established, smaller festival *Crossing Europe*, a film festival that was first held in 2003 in Linz (Upper-Austria).

Women Direct 2 of the 3 most Prestigious Festivals

The rising share of women in the Austrian film scene is also mirrored in the recent development concerning the leading positions of the festivals. Diagonale - Austria's second biggest film festival – now has a female director, the expert, teacher and critic Birgit Flos. Different from the Viennale in various aspects, the Diagonale also acts as a platform for film-makers and Flos intends to focus more on the film-makers (directors, producers, cinematographers etc) in future years. Despite the lower number of visitors – the Diagonale attracts an average of 25 000 every Spring – the number of journalists, critics and international guests almost equals that of the Viennale. One reason for this may be that Diagonale is – more than other film festivals – concerned with discourse on film in general. Apart from the film screenings there are many public discussions with prominent film-makers and experts.

The most recently established film festival is *Crossing Europe*, which was first held in Spring 2004. At the centre of this festival are local artists as well as film-makers from neighbouring countries. *Crossing Europe* screens primarily avant-garde, experimental and video productions which may be linked to the fact that Linz is the location of a renowned university for industrial design and media art which also offers film courses. *Crossing Europe* also has a female director Christine Dollhofer.

Thus, women direct two of the three most important Austrian film festivals. Interestingly, the management role at Viennale is taken by a woman, while Diagonale and *Crossing Europe* are managed by men. In general, the gender-distribution of the three festivals is fairly even which is a rare exception in the film business.

There are other smaller film and video festivals such as the Bergfilm-Festival in Salzburg which screens films shot in mountainous regions; the Südfilm-Festival in Amstetten (Lower-Austria) which features films from the southern hemisphere; the Festival for International Film in Innsbruck; Vienna Independent Shorts; the video festival of the Institute for Media and Communication Science in Vienna; the Queer Film Festival and a couple of small festivals focused on animation and the experimental genre.

The gender distribution of the award winners was examined according to the chosen period of observation from 1991-1993 and 2001-2003.

Table 17 Gender Distribution of Award Winners and Jury Members of Film Prizes in Austria, 1991-1993

Prizes	Award Winners				Jury Members			
	M	F	T	%F	M	F	T	%F
Wiener Filmpreis (V) – Best Feature Film	4	0	4	0	*	*	*	
Großer Diagonale Preis – Best Austrian feature Film (D)	since 1995						0	0%
Diagonale Preis - Innovative Production (D)	since 1995						0	0%
Diagonale Preis - Innovatives Cinema (D)	since 1995						0	0%
Script-Award of the Town of Salzburg – Short	since 1994						0	0%
Script-Award of the town of Salzburg – Feature Film	since 1994						0	0%
Carl-Mayer Script-Award- Main Award (D-1992,1994,1996)	7	2	9	22%	15	4	19	21%
Carl-Mayer Script-Award- Promotional Award (D-1992,1994,1996)**	1	0	1	0%	5	1	6	17%
Honouring Award for Art Film - BKA	5	0	5	0%	7	3	10	30%
Promotional Award for Art Film – BKA	3	1	4	25%	4	5	9	55%
Thomas Pluch Script Award (1993/1995) – Main Award	6	0	6	0%	7	1	8	12%
Thomas Pluch Script Award (1993/1995) – Promotional Award	3	2	5	40%	6	4	10	40%
Österreichischer Filmpreis***	2	0	2	0%			0	0
Total	31	5	36	14%	44	18	62	29%

Source: Mediacult research on annual reports of governmental bodies, websites and direct communication, 2004. Awards are usually donated during the film festivals. Abbreviations: V = Viennale, D = Diagonale, BKA = Bundeskanzleramt (Federal Chancellery).

* data on the jury not available.

** was donated only in 1994.

*** was not donated in 1993.

Table 18 Gender Distribution of Award Winners and Jury Members of Film Prizes in Austria, 2001-2003

Prizes	Award Winners				Jury Members			
	M	F	T	F%	M	F	T	F%
Wiener Filmpreis (V) – Best Feature Film	2	2	4	50.0	8	7	15	46.6
Großer Diagonale Preis – Best Austrian Feature Film (D)	2	1	3	33.3	7	8	15	53.3
Diagonale Preis - Innovative Production (D)*	4	0	4	0	5	5	10	50.0
Diagonale-Preis Innovative Cinema (D)	1	1	2	50.0	5	4	9	44.4
Script-Award of the town of Salzburg – Short**	2	0	2	0	3	3	6	50.0
Script-Award of the town of Salzburg – Feature Film	2	3	5	60.0	4	5	9	55.5
Carl-Mayer Script-Award – Main Award *** (D)	1	0	1	0	5	2	7	28.6
Carl-Mayer Script-Award – Promotional Award (D)	5	2	7	28.6	16	5	21	23.8
Honouring Award for Art Film – BKA	3	0	3	0	5	4	9	44.4
Promotional Award for Art Film – BKA	1	5	6	83.3	3	6	9	66.6
Thomas Pluch Script Award (2001/2004) – Main Award	0	2	2	100.0	3	3	6	50.0
Thomas Pluch Script Award (2001/2004) – Promotional Award	2	5	7	71.4	3	4	7	57.1
Diagonale-Award by the Jury of the Diocese Graz-Seckau (D)	2	1	3	33.3	5	4	9	44.4
Österreichischer Filmpreis	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	22	52	42.3	72	60	132	45.5

Source: Mediacult research on annual reports of governmental bodies, websites and direct communication, 2004. Awards are usually donated during the film festivals. Abbreviations: V = Viennale, D = Diagonale, BKA = Bundeskanzleramt (Federal Chancellery).

* not donated in 2001.

** not donated in 2002.

*** only donated in 2001.

Among the award winners, the share of women has risen from nearly 14% in the years 1991-1993 to 42% in the 2001-2003. This is very significant especially for the new generation of female directors who emerged on the film scene. The rising share of female jury members is less striking, but nevertheless significant, up by 16.5 % in the same period.

Most of the awards are financial, although some are given as material such as celluloid. One of the more prestigious awards is the Wiener Filmpreis (Vienna Film Award) for the best feature film. Since 1991, it includes a financial prize of 7 000 euros awarded by Vienna Town Council and a material grant worth 10 000 euros spon-

sored by two renowned companies. Another prestigious award is given at the Diagonale, where a cash prize of 15 000 euros is given to the director of the winning film and materials worth 4 000 euros are given to the production company. The Honouring Award is usually donated to more mature film makers and provides the winner with 14 600 euros. The Promotional Award is intended to support the younger generation with a prize of 7 300 euros.

Among the script awards, the Carl Mayer-Script Award has the highest esteem and is worth 21 800 euros, while the Thomas Pluch-Award gives about half that sum. The other awards listed in the tables above are comparatively smaller, but nevertheless, they are still important events for any film maker to win.

A Note on the Gendered Role of the Critics

Whereas women now represent a fair share of juries at the various film festivals, men still make up a majority of film critics, despite the fact that there are now more women writing on film than 15 years ago.

The film magazine *Skip* published monthly is available free in most cinemas. A more sophisticated critique of newly released films can be found in the magazines *Ray* and *Celluloid*, or the quarterlies *Blimp* or *Filmkunst*. None of them have a female editor-in-chief although women are now occupying many other important functions within the editorial team.

More widely read than the magazines listed above are the critics of the daily newspapers and some weekly magazines. The most popular film critics (Rudolf John, Stefan Grisseemann, Dominik Kamalzadeh) are male and, as a common feature, they hardly ever review books while female critics often review films as well as books (such as Isabella Reicher).

Wherever women are found in leading functions on a lower level it seems to have been achieved by having excellent editorial skills and a high profile in the media via a number of publications.

The gender distribution of critics in Austrian film magazines *Ray*, *Skip* and *Celluloid*, as well as the Top 5 dailies and four weekly news magazines are included in Table 19.

Table 19 Gender Distribution of Critics in Selected Austrian Newspapers and Film Magazines, 2004

Position	F	M	T	%F
Editor-in-Chief	2	11	13	18%
Film Critics	15	23	28	65%

Source: Mediacult research on the respective media, 2004.

8. More Initiatives Required to Support Women in the Film Sector

Women's initiatives are scarce in the film scene and perhaps the most important is Sabine Perthold's Script Writers' Forum. As managing director Perthold initiated regular meetings for female script-writers and she is an active feminist and member of several juries such as the Thomas Pluch Script Award and the film funding institution. Her influence may have been helpful in improving the gender balance as the Thomas Pluch Award has, in recent years, been frequently given to women. Her activities may also have contributed to the rise of female script-writers in the Austrian film business: out of 80 projects which the Vienna Film Fund supported in 2003, 19 % had a female script-writer and 14% were written by male/female teams¹⁷. Therefore, female script-writers participated in one third of all film projects.

The rise of women directors has been emphasized in many reports (by the AFC, the BKA, etc.) although there is no initiative for directors like the Script Writers' Forum.

Raising the gender quota in public institutions is a political target for the Council of Vienna, and the Vienna Film Fund is one institution where this has been achieved: 63% of all employees are women as are 62% of the jury members¹⁸. In addition, the annual reports on the various forms of art subsidised by the Council of Vienna comprise a separate section for female initiatives and projects where the work of women is particularly emphasized (*Frauenkulturbericht*). The effect of this practice on public perception is not to be under-estimated. On the other hand, one interviewee argued that the director of the ÖFI, the WFF and the AFC are men!

An area that is still very male-dominated is cinematography, despite various efforts to strengthen the position of women in this field. A female camera operator interviewed, one of the very few that actually works a lot with celluloid and is also an active member of the association of Austrian cinematographers, has told of her experiences:

"I have tried to do something within the association by organising an event where only films shot by camera-women are screened, initially thinking that we could extend that idea to female directors, female composers of film music etc, but after the second time that this event took place, I was told that the men prefer to have *their* films screened... It was rather annoying. My plan had been to have a matinee twice a year in the Metrokino and it would have been great."

While women are entering more job positions than ever before in the Austrian film industry, it is apparent that initiatives like the one referred to in the above

¹⁷ *Kunst- und Kulturbericht der Stadt Wien + Frauenkulturbericht 2003*. Vienna, 2004.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

quotation are needed. There are efforts by the ÖFI to initiate round-tables and similar initiatives to build a platform for female camera operators, but so far these efforts have not progressed very far. Nor has the rising share of female directors yet led to the initiation of a women's film festival – with one exception: the *Feminale* in Autumn 2004 in Innsbruck (Tyrol). This was a small and singular event which took place in just one day, showing only a handful of films shot on video, organised by the women of the Interdisciplinary Archive for Feminist Documentation.

An Example of a Young Company – Amour Fou Film Productions

In recent years, Amour Fou has become one of the most prominent independent feature film production companies in Austria, due to the success of their films at international festivals and, to some extent, to their amazing PR-talents. Virgil Widrich's critically acclaimed *Fast Film* was shown at more than 200 festivals!

History

Amour Fou was founded in Vienna in 2001 by film-producers Gabriele Kranzelbinder and Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu and they act as joint managing directors of the company. Both belong to the younger generation of the Austrian film scene (they are in their mid-thirties). There are three more participators holding shares in the company: Bady Minck, Virgil Widrich and Thomas Woschitz, all of whom have made various vital contributions to the Austrian film scene in recent years.

Although a relatively new company, Amour Fou has been quite a successful enterprise since its foundation as, despite their age, Kranzelbinder and Dumreicher-Ivanceanu both have extensive knowledge of the Austrian film industry and practical experience as well. The fact that this knowledge comes from different strands makes their relationship as business-partners all the more productive. This is also true of the other members of the Amour Fou collective, yet it seems noteworthy that only one person in the quintet has an educational background in film studies (Thomas Woschitz). As the 'history' of Amour Fou is still fairly new, the following paragraphs deal with the biography of the individual members rather than Amour Fou as an enterprise. After all, Kranzelbinder, Dumreicher-Ivanceanu, Woschitz, Widrich and Minck have also individually formed other companies and initiatives, in Austria, Germany and Luxembourg. Thus, it seemed apt to focus on the highly talented and creative people involved than the enterprise as such.

Considering her biography, *Gabriele Kranzelbinder* seems to have been born with the natural impulse to be a film producer because that has been her role since she finished university in 1993, even though she studied law, and not film. As it turned out, law is not a bad educational background for a film producer considering all the contracts and paper work involved in the process of film producing. The first

film Gabriele produced was a short film of around ten minute's duration, the first part of the '*Josef-Trilogie*' (1994), a film directed by Thomas Woschitz, released in 1995. A year later she spent several months at the Viennese film academy to learn more about film production. Having already worked in several productions Gabriele already knew a lot about filming, in particular her experiences of working with Thomas Woschitz. Both had worked together during the making of the Josef-trilogy which turned out to be a very successful joint venture as the three parts received various awards at film festivals. Besides, Woschitz worked on several critically acclaimed film projects with Edgar Honetschläger, such as '*Il mare e la torta*' ('The Sea and the Cake', 2003) or '*Sonnenaufgang*' ('Sunrise', 2000).

At the age of 18 *Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu* started to write contributions as a film critic for various Austrian newspapers and film magazines. In 1992, he started to work as a film distributor for Polyfilm and as a curator for movie theatres in Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany and Luxembourg. Since 1994 he is joint managing director of the Munich-based distribution company Danube Entertainment. A year later he founded the production company Minotaurus Film Luxembourg, together with Bady Minck. This company specializes in the production of short, avant-garde and feature films as well as multimedia projects, whereas Agence Mondiale, another common enterprise of Minck and Dumreicher-Ivanceanu (founded 1984 in Vienna), is more focussed on cartoons and special effects.

Bady Minck's educational background is in art studies. She initially came from Luxembourg to study sculpting in the late 70s, when it was still difficult to find a teacher of sculpture courses who would accept female students. Not wishing to restrict herself to only one type of artistic expression Minck's career took in many forms and genres. During her student years she produced a lot of graffiti art with a highly political approach, and eventually turned to film because it seemed to Minck a step forward in her artistic development. Building on her artistic experience with graffiti – fast produced and short lived – it was moving pictures that caught her eye. Consequently, her first films were cartoons. The question of how to make a living as an artist was met in practical terms when Minck drew cartoons for a series of commercials which won her several awards in her mid-twenties. She has since worked on many film projects which have been shown at numerous festivals. Minck was a founding member of several artists' associations such as *13 Superleichen räumen auf* (1983), the *International Infantilclub* (1983), *ASIFA Austria* (1985) and *Der blaue Lotus Wien* (1994). Still an artist with a highly political approach, Minck is also known to actively engage in public discussion through her work as well as through her 'net' activities such as the *Electrical Breakfast* which was also a platform for protest against Austria's conservative government.

Virgil Widrich's artistic oeuvre is as similarly oscillating as Bady Minck's. He has produced some remarkable contributions to the Austrian film scene during recent

years, is a jury member at film festivals, has won many awards for his own films and teaches film studies even though not having studied film himself. In fact, he left the Vienna Film Academy after only a few weeks out of disappointment. Apparently, he has succeeded very well without formal education, having started to film with *Super 8* at the tender age of 13, when he documented his home-life in Salzburg and shot a portrait of the artist Arnulf Komposch. Blessed with a supportive family background he was able to produce his first film a couple of years later with real actors, among them Libgart Schwarz, who was at the time starring at the Schaubühne in Berlin. On the highly idyllic Mönchsberg - the hill overlooking Salzburg where Widrich grew up - his neighbour was Peter Handke, Wim Wenders was a frequent visitor and the artistic atmosphere surrounding his home was to have a lasting effect on Widrich's career.

As a teenager, he shot his first full-length feature film '*Vom Geist der Zeit*' (The Spirit of Time) which was presented in the autumn of 1985 during the Austrian Film Days in Wels (Upper Austria). In the late 1980s, he founded a film distribution company that specialises in art films ('Classic Films'), with two partners. A few years later he sold his share and followed an invitation to Hollywood where he worked as director's assistant for John Bailey. In the early 1990s he worked as a curator on Peter Greenaway's exhibition '100 Objects to represent the World' in Vienna's Imperial Palace.

Widrich also developed skills in working with CD-ROMs which first resulted in the creation of a film database for the Austrian Film Commission. In 1996, he released his first creative work on this medium, a children story with an interactive dialogue engine, which sold over 20 000 copies. A year later, his screenplay for his film *Brighter than the Moon* (Heller als der Mond) won him the Screenplay Award of Salzburg. During the next few years among other activities, Widrich worked on screenplay software, an invention of interest around the world.

Brighter than the Moon was premiered in Rotterdam and won a couple of awards at the film festival at Angers (2000). His next film, *Copy Shop*, premiered a year later in Rotterdam and won 34 awards at various festivals in the following months. It was also shown by many television stations. In 2003, his previous success was topped by his widely recognized '*Fast Film*' which was presented in Cannes' official selection competing for the Golden Palm. In 2004, he was elected chairman of the Association of Austrian Movie Directors and *Fast Film* was shown on the television channel Arte, together with a feature on Virgil Widrich.

Thomas Woschitz is the only one in the team who has actually studied film (in Rome) and today works as a director and cinematographer. He has filmed video-clips, short-films - notably those with Edgar Honetschläger - and the Josef-Trilogy. Despite his work as director and camera operator, he sees himself primarily as an 'image editor' ('Bildmonteur' is how he defines himself on his website). In the press, Woschitz is referred to as the 'Carinthian Kaurismäki' (Carinthia is the South

Eastern region of Austria where Woschitz was born) because of the laconic style he uses in portraying the pitfalls of everyday life.

Programme

As a collective of film-makers and film-producers, Kranzelbinder, Dumreicher-Ivanceanu, Minck, Widrich and Woschitz have issued the following statement on their website:

“AMOUR FOU produces films: Films which transcend borders aesthetically, in content, or technologically. Films that ignore the demarcation line between cinematic genre and category. Films which reflect upon and question the past and present, the possibilities and the future of society and of cinema.

Films produced by AMOUR FOU operate in an area of conflict between the avant-garde and narration, between experimental and genre-cinema, between documentary and fictional work, between film projection and installations, between the abstract and the art of acting, film theory and myth.”

The members all share an *Amour Fou* for film-making and a love for the cinema, thus, the idea of forming a collective was probably the best option to enable them to realise projects that suit their enthusiasm for arty films.

Internationally, arty or experimental films may be difficult to finance, but in Austria, an aspiring film-maker is encouraged to move into that field, because art is seen to be of cultural value within public film funding policies and strategies. After all, the value of these films is mirrored in the international recognition they achieve thus justifying the public means spent on their production. Amour Fou has been doing very well since was founded only a few years ago and this shows in a fair number of recent productions, most of which received favourable critical acclaim. As for the bigger productions, such as *Ma Mère* (starring: Isabelle Huppert) Amour Fou acted as co-producer on other film productions. The joint directors are also active members of *Producers on the Move*, an international initiative of young film producers.

The following list is not complete, but it covers the feature films produced by Amour Fou since 2001 and includes their most remarkable short film productions. It also gives an indication of their distribution, although it would have been inappropriate to name all the festivals and prizes in relation to the list because they are too many. Virgil Widrich's *Fast Film* – to give an example - received 33 awards and 215 festival invitations!

To differ between celluloid and video, the abbreviations 'c.' and 'v.' have been attached to each production named:

Feature Films

- *Ma Mère* by Christoph Honoré (100 min; official selection in Cannes 2004, 26th International Film Festival Moscow; c.)
- *Pas de repos pour les braves* by Alain Guiradie (107 min; directors' fortnight in Cannes 2003, Prix Ciné FX, Namur 2003 ; c.)
- *Struggle* by Ruth Mader (74 min ; official selection in Cannes 2003, Diagonale 2003 – Best Cinematography, Best Script Award from Saarländischer Rundfunk und ZDF; c.)
- *Die Josef-Trilogie* by Thomas Woschitz (65 min, Viennale 2004, Film Festival Locarno 2004; c.)
- *In the Beginning was the Eye* by Bady Minck (45 min; directors' fortnight Cannes 2003; award for the cinema of the future - Pesaro 2003; c.)
- *Il mare e la torta* by Edgar Honetschläger (60 min; Viennale 2003, Crossing Europe 2004, Diagonale 2004; v.)
- *Things. Places. Years.* By Klub 2 – Simone Bader and Jo Schmeiser (90 min; Diagonale 2004, v.)

Short Films

- *Fast Film* by Virgil Widrich (14 min; official selection of the short film competition Cannes 2003, Audience Award – L'Etrange Festival Paris, Best Animated Short at the Worldwide Short Film Festival in Toronto 2003, Best Experimental Short Film at the International Film Festival in Melbourne 2003, Milagro Award for Best Animation – Santa Fé Film Festival 2003; c.)
- *Deanimated* by Martin Arnold (60 min; Kunsthalle Wien 2003)
- *Habibi Kebab* – Aus dem Leben einer Künstlerin by Paul Horn and Harald Hund (12 min, Kunstbiennale Köln 2004, 16. Filmfestival Dresden 2004, Crossing Europe Linz 2004, Diagonale 2003, Special Award donated by the association of the German Film Critics 2004, v.)

In November / December 2004, there were six film projects in production, four of which are feature films. *Taxidermia* by György Palfi and *Crash Test Dummies* by Jörg Kalt seem particularly promising, both are celluloid productions and are 90 minutes long. A dozen more projects were also at the development state, among them the documentary *The Global Heart* by Martina Kudlacek and *Hannah and Martin* by Andreas Gruber / Thomas Woschitz. The latter is a feature film on the lives and loves of Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger.

People

Amour Fou has a lot of employees as, in addition to film production, it maintains an editing studio which it rents out including staff. There is also a constant number of 15 or more people who are employed in production, post-production, press relations, sales, dvd production, web production, office management and administration.