



CROSSING EUROPE Film Festival Linz 2019

Media Information #2/19, 27 February 2019

Opening Film, Spotlight 2019 – Iris Elezi, Festival Trailer 2019 & Golden Bag Display WindowContest

Eight Weeks To Go

In eight weeks the 16th edition of the CROSSING EUROPE Film Festival Linz will take place from April 25 to 30, 2019. While the last films are being fixed and itineraries are being made for around 150 film guests from in and outside the country, the festival is becoming increasingly present in the cityscape of Linz. The first posters are up and the lovingly named "Crossing Bim" streetcar (again we wish to wholeheartedly thank our longstanding sponsor Linz AG) is diligently travelling around town. Starting March, the GOLDEN BAG Display Window Contest will begin (in collaboration with our bag sponsor Europack), and we are greatly looking for to many eye-catching designed display windows.

With **Elfie Semotan, Iris Elezi, and Leni Gruber** we will present three generations of artists that have all been highly present in Linz already and will enrich the festival with their contributions from start to finish, in this media information.

One of this year's opening films is dedicated to the renown Austrian **Photographer Elfie Semotan**, the director Joerg Burger dedicated a multi-layered cinematographic homage to her with the film **ELFIE SEMOTAN, PHOTOGRAPHER** - Preview (AT 2019; production: Navigator Film), that will celebrate its world premiere at the opening of CROSSING EUROPE (April 25). Additionally, the **solo exhibition STANDING, WAITING** (2007/2019) with works by Elfie Semotan, will open at the OK Offenes Kulturhaus – a revival of the eponymous project for the OK exhibition SCHAURAUSSCH in the year 2007, that was a precursor to Linz09 and brought art into display windows, shops, and malls in Linz.

After the award-winning director Yeşim Ustaoglu from Turkey, and the successful producer Ada Solomon from Romania, CROSSING EUROPE is putting the focus on a **leading female voice in the European film landscape for the third time** in the program section **SPOTLIGHT**. This year the choice fell on **Iris Elezi** from **Albania**, who had already personally presented her first feature film **BOTA** (IT/AL/Kosovo 2014) to the festival audience in Linz in 2015. Equipped with a Carte Blanche she chose to show both current as well as historic productions from Albania in the program section **SPOTLIGHT**.

For the new **festival trailer** we were able to win over the **two-time CROSSING EUROPE award-winner Leni Gruber**. With **BRACE FOR IMPACT** (AT 2019) the young director catapults the cinema audience into a state of emergency within a minute, but you should only worry about a crash landing on screen.



Announcement of the first Opening Film:

ELFIE SEMOTAN, PHOTOGRAPHER - Preview

As always, CROSSING EUROPE will open with multiple films, which stand as representatives to the diversity of current European film productions, and also showcase a cross section of this year's program.

ELFIE SEMOTAN, PHOTOGRAPHER (AT 2019) – Preview

Directed by Joerg Burger

Program section: Local Artists; Duration: approx. 80 min; Production: [Navigator Film](#)

The **Austrian director and cinematographer Joerg Burger** dedicated his new documentary to Elfie Semotan, one of the **most sought-after and idiosyncratic fashion photographers in the world** ever since the 1980s. Since over half a century the meanwhile 77 year old Semotan has been successfully working in a field where art, fashion, and advertisement photography overlap. Her ingenious visual arrangements have become legendary. Her – partly controversial – body of work is defined by her strong personality and her ongoing resistance to the mainstream.

ELFIE SEMOTAN, PHOTOGRAPHER is not only a **homage to a great artist**, but also to the **passion of photography** itself. For several weeks, the film accompanies the photographer, who still enthusiastically creates up to this day, in her work between Vienna, Burgenland and the USA. In an **artistic dialogue** she reflects upon her work, but also on her field, that is currently in a radical paradigm shift.

On Elfie Semotan

Elfie Semotan, born 1941 in Wels, Upper Austria, started her career as a fashion photographer in the 1960s in Vienna, and became highly successful internationally with her photographs for advertisement campaigns and magazines such as Vogue, Elle, Haper's Bazaar, and The New Yorker. In the 1990s she moved to New York and increasingly began to present her work in an exhibition context. Today she lives in New York, Vienna, and Jennersdorf.

// Director [Joerg Burger](#) as well as protagonist [Elfie Semotan](#) will both be present in Linz on April 25. Additionally to the film ELFIE SEMOTAN, PHOTOGRAPHER (AT 2019) celebrating its world premiere at the opening, the solo exhibition STANDING, WAITING (2007/2019) with works by Elfie Semotan will also open. //

OK | ELFIE SEMOTAN (AT/US)

Exhibition: STANDING, WAITING (2007/2019)

Ever since the beginning, the OK as a center for contemporary art has been an important event partner and impulse generator for the CROSSING EUROPE film festival. Not only spatially – the **Upper Austrian Culture Quarter** acts as the festival center – but also in reference to a topical focus there is a lively “visual” dialogue that has enriched the festival for 16 years by now.

This year the OK will participate with the **solo exhibition STANDING WAITING (2007/2019)**, an in-house production that acted as a precursor of the format HÖHENRAUSCH. In **2007**, **Elfie Semotan** made photographs of 24 selected vendors in shops in Linz, and presented them on two meter high light boxes. Those portrayed should not be seen as amateur (advertisement) models, but be understood as “urban people”, according to the artist.



Twelve years later the OK will revive this project with twelve photographs of the STANDING, WAITING series on the occasion of the world premiere of the documentary ELFIE SEMOTAN, PHOTOGRAPHER at CROSSING EUROPE 2019. Elfie Semotan's photographic homage to the vendors of the city can be seen on the way from the festival center to the cinema hall Movie 1 on the first floor of the OK.

// The exhibition will run from April 25 to 30, daily from 10:00 am – 7:30 pm // www.ok-centrum.at //

Spotlight 2019: Iris Elezi (Albania)

Iris Elezi is a real renaissance woman of contemporary European film culture. She studied film theory and criticism, anthropology, Gender Studies, and film production. She is an active film conservator, and an experienced teacher, producer, author, director, and by far one of the most passionate "emissaries" of Albanian cinema abroad.

Jurij Meden, Austrian Film Museum

Following the award winning director Yeşim Ustaoğlu from Turkey, and the successful producer Ada Solomon from Romania, CROSSING EUROPE is putting the focus of the program section SPOTLIGHT on a **leading female figure in European cinema for the third time**. This year the choice fell on the highly active **Iris Elezi** from **Albania**, who had already personally introduced her first feature length film [BOTA](#) (IT/AL/Kosovo 2014) to the festival audience in Linz in 2015.

After studying in the USA (a.o at the TISCH School of Arts, NYU), Iris Elezi returned to Albania, where she dedicated herself to the **Albanian cinematic heritage and its conservation** next to her work as a director, producer, screen writer, and lecturer. Twenty-seven years after the fall of the isolated Stalinist dictatorship in Albania, it is still the case that little is known about the cinema from this southern European country. As a co-founder of the initiative **The Albanian Cinema Project**, Iris Elezi is a key figure in conserving the national cinematic heritage not only in a material but also in an ideological sense. In this context, they organize e.g. film screenings, in order to sensitize the public to the filmmaking from the time of the dictatorship, that is understandably rejected by large parts of the population. Iris Elezi describes her **efforts for a critical reevaluation** of the Albanian cinematic heritage, that without a doubt also plays a part in the education on cultural identity, as such: "We must free ourselves from this collective amnesia."

The **film selection for her Carte Blanche** is split between a historic part and current productions. Next to three feature films from the recommended director Xhanfise Keko from the 1970s, the **historic program** also includes a comedy blockbuster from the post-Hoxha era by one of the central figures of Albanian cinema, Dhimiter Anagnosti. The **"current" program section** offers an ideal introduction into the Albanian cinematic universe with the documentary by Mark Cousins that is full of facts, yet has hardly been received by an international audience. The section is complemented by two further feature films, next to BOTA by Iris Elezi, the very recent and highly successful production that was shown at multiple international festivals, NËNTOR I FTOHTË by Ismet Sijarina will be shown.

Film Overview – Carte Blanche Iris Elezi

- ❖ **PERRALLE NGA E KALUARA / A TALE FROM THE PAST** (AL 1987), D: Dhimiter Anagnosti, 86 min. – Fiction
- ❖ **BOTA** (AL/IT/KO 2014), D: Iris Elezi and Thomas Logoreci, 100 min. – Fiction
- ❖ **HERE BE DRAGONS** (GB 2013), D: Mark Cousins, 79 min. – Documentary



- ❖ NËNTOR I FTOHTË / COLD NOVEMBER (KO/AL/MK 2018), D: Ismet Sijarina, 93 min. – Fiction
- ❖ MIMOZA LLASTICA / SPOILED MIMOZA (AL 1973), D: Xhanfise Keko, 38 min. – Fiction
- ❖ TOMKA DHE SHOKËT E TIJ / TOMKA AND HIS FRIENDS (AL 1977), D: Xhanfise Keko, 74 min. – Fiction
- ❖ KUR PO XHIROHEJ NJË FILM / WHEN SHOOTING A FILM (AL 1981), D: Xhanfise Keko, 61 min. – Fiction

Film Overview – Program Xhanfise Keko at the Austrian Film Museum (1 & 2 May)

- ❖ HERE BE DRAGONS (GB 2013), D: Mark Cousins, 79 min. – Documentary
- ❖ MIMOZA LLASTICA / SPOILED MIMOZA (AL 1973), D: Xhanfise Keko, 38 min. – Fiction
- ❖ QYTETI MË I RI NË BOTË / THE NEWEST CITY IN THE WORLD (AL 1974), D: Xhanfise Keko, 52 min. – Fiction
- ❖ TOMKA DHE SHOKËT E TIJ / TOMKA AND HIS FRIENDS (AL 1977), D: Xhanfise Keko, 74 min. – Fiction
- ❖ KUR PO XHIROHEJ NJË FILM / WHEN SHOOTING A FILM (AL 1981), D: Xhanfise Keko, 61 min. – Fiction

// Iris Elezi will be present both in Linz as in Vienna for the screenings, additionally she will hold a talk at CROSSING EUROPE – The Spotlight will take place in collaboration with the [Austrian Film Museum](#) //



Festival trailer 2019: BRACE FOR IMPACT – online starting today [HERE](#)

Director: Leni Gruber
Camera: Angelika Spangel

For the new festival trailer CROSSING EUROPE could win over the young filmmaker **Leni Gruber** (*1991) from Wels. The **two time award winner at CROSSING EUROPE – 2018** for her short film [SCHNEEMANN](#) (AT 2018) and 2016 for the music video [WÖSSIDE – WÖS RAP REC](#) (AT 2015) – has been studying screen writing and dramaturgy at the film academy in Vienna. Next to her own work as a director and screen writer, she has also been successful as producer, e.g with the documentary [SAND UND BLUT](#) (AT 2017) by Matthias Krepp and Angelika Spangel, which was shown at multiple international festivals. In 2017 Leni Gruber was awarded the grant for screen writing by the Literar Mechana.

Brace for impact! The commands from flights attendants are insistent and cannot be misunderstood. Emergency! Open your seatbelts! Put on your life jacket! Out! Forward! Thick fog seeps into the cabin. There is no more time to think things over. – In this year's CROSSING EUROPE trailer Leni Gruber accompanies participants in a training for flight safety and shows a simulated crash landing in documentary footage. Rehearsal for emergency.



The festival trailer 2019 BRACE FOR IMPACT (AT 2019, 1 min) will be shown in Austrian cinemas for **festival promotion**. From today on the new festival trailer can be seen [online](#).



Golden Bag Display Window Contest 2019

For the sixth time CROSSING EUROPE is looking forward to **many eye-catchingly decorated shop windows** that add to the beauty of the Linz city image and make us look forward to the upcoming festival even more. Creativity and originality know no limits when it comes to how you go about designing your shop window.

This year **every participating business** – that fulfills certain requirements in terms of shop window decoration – can **win** material prizes during the **Golden Bag evening at the Casino Linz** on Saturday April 27, 2019. Additionally there will be an **audience raffle** for customers and the festival audience. Some decorated shop windows – this year for the first time also at solarCity – can already be seen [online](#). Details on the participation and the prizes can be found on www.crossingeurope.at/goldenbag2019.

// with support by [Europack](#), [ÖÖNachrichten](#), [Casino Linz](#), [Linz Kultur](#), [Posthof](#), [Ars Electronica](#), [solarCity](#) | [IG leben-kultur-wirtschaft](#), [Trumer Privatbrauerei](#) and [LenzMoser](#) //

Upcoming Dates

Program press conferences Linz & Vienna: **10 April 2019**

Deadline for accreditation: **26 March 2019**

Festival dates 2018: **Thursday, 25 to Tuesday, 30 April 2019**

Best-of-Crossing Europe 2019 (award winning films & audience favorites): **1 May 2019**

Picture material & Updates

Festival impressions: www.flickr.com/photos/crossingeurope/collections/

Film stills & picture material: www.crossingeurope.at/xe-presse/pressefotos

Logo & Festival motif: www.crossingeurope.at/xe-presse/logos

Regular **updates** and **current information** on CROSSING EUROPE 2019 can be found as ever on our website www.crossingEurope.at and through our social media channels [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).