

DOK LEIPZIG
INTERNATIONALES
PROGRAMM
2018

EISENBERGER

KUNST MUSS SCHÖN SEIN, SAGT DER FROSCH ZUR FLIEGE

EIN FILM VON HERCLI BUNDI

MIRA FILM ZEIGT IN KOPRODUKTION MIT SCHWEIZER RADIO UND FERNSEHEN MIT CHRISTIAN EISENBERGER, SANDRO DRUSCH, CHRISTIAN EISENBERGER, HERMANN GLEITLER, PHILIPP KONZETT, BRIGITTE KOWANZ, URSULA KRINZINGER, GRETE MÜLLER, JULIAN RIESS, GERNOT SCHULZ, PHILIPP TEUHLER, MANFRED WIPPLINGER. PRODUZENT PETER ZWIERHO. ASSOCIATE PRODUCER HERCLI BUNDI, VADIM JEDREVIK, WALTER ADRIAN STAHL, RÜRELD RUCHWALDER, CHRISTIAN EISENBERGER, HERCLI BUNDI, TOM PATRICK BEYER, MATTHIAS NEEL, HERCLI BUNDI. MONTAGE NELA MARKI, MUSIK DANIEL ALMADA, SOUND DESIGN DANIEL ALMADA, DOMINIK AVERWEDDE, NELA MARKI, PICTURE DESIGN ANDROMEDA FILM, REDAKTION SRF, URS AUGSTBUERGER, DENISE CHERVET. MIT FINANZIELLER UNTERSTÜTZUNG VON BUNDESAMT FÜR KULTUR (BAK), FACHAUSSCHUSS FILM UND MEDIENKUNST BSZBL, ZÜRCHER FILMSTIFTUNG, KULTURFONDS SUISSIMAGE, SUCCES PASSAGE ANTENNE, URS KULTURSTIFTUNG, KULTURFÖRDERUNG KANTON GRAUBÜNDEN, FONDATION SUISA.

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Eisenberger – Art must be beautiful, as the frog says to the fly

Logline and Synopsis	3
The Film	4
The artist Christian Eisenberger	5
Secondary Protagonists	7
What is art?	13
Director's Statement	14
Art quotations	16
Bio-Filmography Hercli Bundi	17
Mira Film Production Company	18
Cast & Crew	19
Downloads	20

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Download Filmstills and Presskit
<https://eisenberger-film.ch/en/press-contact/#downloads>

Logline

Where does artistic freedom begin and where does it end? And does art actually still require artists?



Synopsis

Art is merely a label of no relevance according to the artist Christian Eisenberger. At the age of 40 he has created over 45,000 works. He deposited thousands of them on streets and squares, where anyone could gather them up. He defies galleries, art fairs and museums with his unrestrained production. His art runs rampant, eluding all control. In a milieu that desperately struggles for attention and recognition, the question arises again and again: "What really constitutes artistic freedom? And does it require artists at all?"

The Film

Where does artistic freedom begin and where does it end? Through Austrian artist Christian Eisenberger we experience the daily pressures felt by artists to be unique and to live up to the expectations of others. We see how art is created, how the concept of art is extended beyond all limits, and what drives the art market.

At the age of 40, the Austrian artist has created more than 45,000 works of art. Galleries, art fairs, and museums exhibit his art and set the prices. In order to challenge this system, the artist is not afraid to destroy his own work. With great pleasure he observes how art comes into being haphazardly, and how his exuberant creativity not only surprises his audience, but, foremost, himself.

Eisenberger's cardboard figures received attention early on in his career. He exhibited over 9,000 of these figures on streets and in public squares, where anyone could collect them. His land art installations are equally fascinating. Without an audience, Eisenberger creates fragile sculptures and pictures out of grasses, pine cones, smoke, or ice around his parents' farm in Semriach.



Eisenberger's work opens up a kaleidoscopic cosmos in which the passion of a bishop meets the curiosity of a factory worker, and in which the fanaticism of his fans for collecting his work renders the criticism of curators irrelevant.

Art is just a label without any real relevance, says Christian Eisenberger. In the showdown between Eisenberger, his admirers and his critics, a realm that struggles for attention and recognition emerges. The interpretation of a work of art often seems more important than the work itself. In this kind of setting the artist can only exist if he consistently follows his own path.

The artist Christian Eisenberger

Christian Eisenberger was born in 1978 in Semriach in Styria (Austria). He lives and works in Semriach and Vienna.

After a locksmith apprenticeship, Christian Eisenberger studied painting at the Ortweinschule in Graz in 1999. In 2000, for a short period, he attended Brigitte Kowanz's Transmedial Art class at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. His cardboard figures received early attention, and he distributed more than 9,900 of these works on streets and in public squares worldwide. Eisenberger still works with cardboard, adhesive tape, and waste material, but he also now uses other possible materials and mediums: he effortlessly moves between painting, sculpture, video, performance, street art, and land art. His way of working is characterized by intemperance, the pleasure to work, tempo, and coincidence. Through constant repetition, he is perpetually creating new series. Despite all abstraction, the human being remains a recurring motif.



"Anyone can do what artists do, but not everyone does it and that's the small difference, to my mind."
Christian Eisenberger

In 2002, Christian Eisenberger opened "K2", a tiny exhibition space, in a flower bed in the village center of Semriach. There he exhibited miniature works of art created by artist friends.

The art industry in Vienna became fully aware of Eisenberger when he taped self-printed posters on the windows of established galleries before important vernissages. Fans had already started to systematically take Eisenberger's cardboard figures from the streets to collect them and to sell them.

"Although I always paint the same head, it is never the same head. There are always differences and I find that exciting". Christian Eisenberger

As of 2006, Eisenberger was exhibiting in art galleries. He achieved success during art fairs through exhibitions with gallery owners Viktor Bucher and Philipp Konzett. Since 2013, Eisenberger has been represented by the Viennese gallery Krinzinger.



"The studio is the size of an indoor tennis center with thousands, if not tens of thousands, of artworks. But it also has a table at which he works. There are all kinds of paintings on the floor. He pours something on them, an acid or something similar, that eats up the painting and gives it a new design. If I had a little money, I would buy the whole studio exactly as it is, buy everything, then close it, and leave it that way for at least a hundred years". Nicola von Senger, Gallery Owner and Art Collector, Zürich

<http://christianeisenberger.com>

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Eisenberger

Secondary Protagonists



«He once said: "I want to consciously miss everything here for 40 days". It is the opposite position to the demand to live events and experiences, in which we are all caught up in and are driven by. He did not design this action as a religious act, but it automatically had great spiritual depth. He represents the many individuals who are always running around — but he chose instead to lock himself in the church.»

Hermann Glettler has been Bishop of Innsbruck since 2017. From 1997–2017, he was pastor in the parish of Graz St. Andrä. Behind his church, the young Eisenberger was able to use a shelter as an open-air studio. In 2007, Eisenberger fasted in silence for 40 days on the church gallery – it was an experience that deeply influenced him and that he later expanded upon with a performance symbolizing the resurrection at Art Cologne in 2009.

> <http://www.andrae-kunst.org/kunst.html>



Philipp Teuchtler is a record salesman in Vienna. While his mother was accumulated cookbooks and his father coffee machines, Philipp Teuchtler started collecting street art. This interest has grown into a passion, and Teuchtler now has an extensive collection, which needs more care than he can provide.

He lives in constant worry that water damage or mold could destroy these works. Teuchtlar has a story behind every piece – an early morning foray, a smart trade-off, the realization that an object that no one appreciates is in fact already a work of art.

«If something is valuable, it is hidden behind plexiglass or dismantled within hours. Except for Christian's cardboard figures. Either they were picked up by the garbage collector or somebody tore their heads off. People knew that they wouldn't stay put for long. Within hours they would disappear.»

> <http://www.schallplatten-ankauf-wien.com>



«Christian was always outside. In the brook, in the forest. He needs nature. He is a child of nature. Christine Eisenberger.»

Christian Eisenbergers parents **Christine Eisenberger** and **Willi Eisenberger** run a small farm in Semriach. In the past, Christine Eisenberger used to receive guests for holiday on the farm; Willi Eisenberger worked at the paper mill nearby, where Christian Eisenberger later completed a locksmith apprenticeship. In the meadows and forest belonging to the farm, Christian Eisenberger works on countless installations and performances out of public view.

> <http://www.semriach.at>

Dr. Grete Müller Dr. Grete Müller holds a doctorate in art history and art criticism. After studying at the LMU in Munich and Bochum, she conducted research at international university institutes such as the University of Cambridge (UK) and Paterson University, (New Jersey, US). Müller has authored numerous publications, including "Das Kreuzigungs-Retabel von Tilman Riemenschneider" ("The Crucifixion Retable by Tilman Riemenschneider") and "Zur Bedeutung des Zeitgenössischen innerhalb zeitgenössischer Denk- und Praxisformen" ("On the Significance of the Contemporary within Contemporary Forms of Thought and Practice"). In addition to regular publications in Art, Parnassus, etc., Müller also organizes interdisciplinary workshops, such as the "Interdisciplinary Symposium for Artists and Academics within the ArtPRO doctoral program", University of Hanover. Müller works as a freelance curator and lives in Düsseldorf and Maribor.



«That's, of course, the million-dollar question, "What is art?" I used to think a lot about it, but in the end, I gave up pursuing the question because there are just so many answers. I have moved on to the position of viewing art as what gives me aesthetic enjoyment, things that engage me.»

Ursula Krinzinger runs her gallery in several locations in Vienna and maintains artist residencies abroad. Presenting her gallery's program, Krinzinger attends relevant international art fairs throughout the year. She has represented Christian Eisenberger since 2013 and coordinates his exhibitions with the institutions that exhibit his work.



«This split that most artists experience – on one side their work and on the other the art market - is actually terrible. Because it's about money, it's about worth, interesting collectors, and superficial investors. But we need to have the art trade and the retail side or you can't help the artist along.»

> <http://www.galerie-krinzinger.at>

Sandro Droschl was in charge of several artistic projects like for Steirischer Herbst, the Kunsthaus Graz, the Diagonale Film Festival and the Museumsquartier Vienna. As director of Künstlerhaus Graz

he featured there Eisenberger's first big museum show in 2014, where he opposed two diametrically opposed artists in the exhibition "André Butzer/Christian Eisenberger".



«Christian Eisenberger's work and personality are expressed through his resolve and gestures and an almost permanent production process. But this is also dangerous — because the pursuit of clear artistic strategies may suffer as a result.»

> <https://www.km-k.at>



Philipp Konzett is an art dealer and gallery owner in Vienna. He possesses a large collection of work from the Viennese Actionism movement as well as by Franz West. His gallery represented Christian Eisenberger from 2008–2014.

«I think that people actually deal with art on a daily basis within their lives: Even cooking can be an artform. Art is intrinsically connected with life.»

> <http://www.artkonzett.com>

Brigitte Kowanz is an artist and professor for Transmedia Art at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Since 1980 the core of her work focuses on the relation of space and light. Together with Erwin Wurm, she represented Austria at the 2017 Venice Art Biennale.



«It is certainly not enough to create good art. Success also has to do with the network that an artist has – or does not have. This network comprises curators, galleries, museum people, and also the collectors who accompany you. And, of course, the recipient. A large number of people are involved in the artist persona in order to allow an artist's career to flourish.»

> <http://kowanz.com/de>



«Art leads to a new boundary in one's way of perceiving. The more one is involved with art, the farther one can see. That's exciting. There is no limit.»

Julian Riess is co-owner of the traditional cookware factory Riess. He is regularly inviting artists in order to design selected pieces from his product lines. In this task, Eisenberger visited the factory twice and was fascinated by the processes that are taboo for Riess' employees: dents on pots, chipping in the glaze, fingerprints, hammer blows. His objects were finished by the Riess personnel with the usual level of quality implemented for standardized manufacturing – as if they were normal pots.

> <http://www.riess.at>



«Someone who does not know Christian Eisenberger will probably be disturbed by the density of sculptures, works of art, and everyday objects that can be found in his studio. There is no separation between where he lives, works, sleeps, or cooks. I know people who went there and said: It's too much for me, it's too full – I don't know what I saw there.»

Gernot Schulz is an engineer and art collector in Vienna. He has repeatedly procured properties meant for demolition so that artists from Eisenberger's environment can use them as inexpensive studios. Schulz maintains the Kunstnetzwerk initiative, which operates various exhibition showrooms in Vienna and Krems.

> <http://kunstnetzwerk.org>

Hercli Bundi is the director and mostly works in the background. In certain situations, however, he steps into the spotlight. When in front of the camera, Eisenberger often addresses Bundi directly and a dialogue between the observed and the observer ensues.

Eisenberger: «So, do you know what art is? Can you tell me?»

Bundi: «Yes, of course. When you frame it, hang it on the wall and can sleep underneath it without continually waking up paralyzed with fear, then it's art. And if I think I'd like to do it by myself but I lack the confidence to do it, then it's art too.»

Eisenberger: «Aha, interesting, great explanation!»

> <http://www.mirafilm.ch>

What is art?



« Art must be beautiful, says the frog to the fly.» Christian Eisenberger

«Art doesn't have to be beautiful, instead, art leads you to new limits of perception.» Julian Riess

«Art is what gives me aesthetic enjoyment.» Dr. Grete Müller

«Art is just a societal pretext. We have art, we have religion. We have this category, that category and the other category. But everyone wants to deconstruct those categories.» Christian Eisenberger

«When you look at Eisenberger's work, you often ask yourself: Why is "something" "something" and "nothing" "nothing"? With Christian Eisenberger, however, everything that he touches is "something". That is the exciting thing. He does something, and art comes out of it. While certain others do the same thing, but nothing comes out of it, just something to throw away.» Philipp Konzett

«I remain silent in my corner and say everything that can be said through art.» Christian Eisenberger

«Art is what artists do.» Brigitte Kowanz

«Anyone can do what artists do, but not everyone does it and that's the small difference, to my mind.» Christian Eisenberger

Director's Statement

I met Christian Eisenberger when he was looking for a place to sleep in Basel many years ago. He stayed in my apartment for a few days. He wanted to explore ART Basel, understand the hype behind this art fair, why the whole art world goes crazy when galleries and collectors from all over the world meet every year in June for a few days in my hometown.

Because recycling materials were about to be collected, the night before Eisenberger amassed a pile of large cardboard boxes and over the next two days produced a series of anonymous cardboard figures, which he installed throughout the city. A year later, Eisenberger visited Basel again. Once again, he produced these cardboard figures. This time they were featured in the newspaper with the assumption that this anonymous action was a work of art. While it was possible to collect free Eisenberger cardboard figures from the street, an employee of Eisenberger's former gallery delivered a carload of these cardboard figures to collectors, who paid for them.

I was fascinated by the coexistence of anonymous art on the street and art that could be purchased in the context of an art fair. Like many others, I became a fan of Eisenberger's cardboard figures. Even many years later, after Christian had stopped producing these cardboard figures, to me, he remained the artist with the cardboard figures. My nostalgia towards this long-gone era clouded my view of his current work. In contrast to his early cardboard work, Eisenberger's current work provoked me and left me at a loss. But my curiosity remained and my desire to understand his work is propelling me forth.

Looking back, I think humans instinctively stick to what we can name and classify, out of a sense of familiarity. We have a tendency to categorize things. There is a great temptation for artists to create content that fits into those categories and to meet the expectations of others. Eisenberger resists this. He always wants to create something new and surprising. And I am constantly asking myself: What is that?

Initially, I would stand helpless before the universe of individuals like Eisenberger, but now it becomes increasingly fun for me to get involved in it. I see this as a great source of satisfaction and meaning: that my brain and my heart are concerned with things that lie far outside of myself and that keep me awake.

With Eisenberger, there is additionally something very decisive. His art exists above all within a context. The cardboard works are a perfect example of how a work gains in significance and expressiveness through contact with its surroundings: some throw the work away, others collect it on the street, and others buy it at auctions and from dealers. Is it art or garbage?

This context can also affect the viewer: a drawing or caricature can cause a huge uproar. Depending on what is depicted, the authors can receive death threats. At the same time, provocation has become an overused trick in the creation of art. Nudity, violence, and blasphemy are part of the standard repertoire.

How can artists find their bearings within all of this? This question has become the leitmotif of my film. The longer I have observed Eisenberger, the more a triangular constellation has emerged between the artwork, the artist, and the audience.

If I wanted to create a fiction film, it would be set in a garden. In this garden, an artist paints. There is a fence around the painter. People are watching him from the other side of this fence. If the painter places the fence too far away, people can no longer see the picture, which the painter would not want. If the painter places the fence too near, he does not have sufficient room to focus and is overwhelmed by the crowd. So, while he is painting, he must constantly pay attention to the distance between himself, the painting, and the audience. The painting is at the center, but everyone is pushing around the fence.



Art quotations

«If I knew what art was, I'd keep it to myself.» Pablo Picasso

«You become an artist out of despair.» Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

«It is just as interesting and difficult to say something well as it is to paint something well.» Vincent van Gogh

«Models should try to resemble their portraits.» Salvador Dalí

«We have art in order not to perish from the truth.» Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

«Unfortunately, only reality, said the painter.» Manfred Hinrich

«Art is when you can't, because when you can, it's not art.» Johann Nepomuk Nestroy

«No one in the world hears so much foolishness as museum paintings do.» Jules und Edmond Huot de Goncourt

«Every art requires a whole human life.» Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin

«There are pig troughs that should have become violins.» Manfred Hinrich

«The art of art is not the actual work, but its interpretation.» Gerald Dunkl

«Art does not come from ability, but from necessity.» Arnold Schönberg

«Art washes away from the soul, the dust of everyday life.» Pablo Picasso

Hercli Bundi



Hercli Bundi was born in 1964 in Glarus. From 1988 to 1992 he studied film directing and producing at the Ecole cantonale d'art in Lausanne. Together with Vadim Jendreyko he founded in 2002 the production company Mira Film. From 2007 to 2010 he worked in addition as a producer at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste / Master of Arts in Films. As a director Hercli Bundi is interested in the interface between society and art. In his films with Christian Eisenberger ("Eisenberger – Art must be beautiful, as the frog says to the fly" 2018), Ai Weiwei ("The House in the Park", 2010) or Not Vital ("Not Vital - half Man, half Animal", 2000) he is looking for a personal but yet critical access to dominant protagonists. He wants to open a particular insight into their creativity. As a producer and dramaturg Hercli Bundi is enthusiastic about films with a love of cinematic form that appeal to a wide audience.

Selection of Films

- 2018 **Eisenberger – Kunst muss schön sein, sagt der Frosch zur Fliege**, Feature documentary, Coproduction with Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen SRG SSR, 90 and 52 Min.
- 2010 **The House in the Park**, Feature documentary, Coproduction with China Film Coproduction Corporation, 86 Min.
- 2003 **Der Code**, Short fiction, Coproduction with Schweizer Fernsehen, 12 Min.
- 2000 **Not Vital – half Man, half animal**, TV-documentary, Coproduction with Fama Film and Schweizer Fernsehen, 55 Min.
- 1996 **Lettre d'une ville inconnue**, Experimental movie, 12 Min.

Awards / Grants

- 2018 Literarischer Werkbeitrag der Stadt Chur
- 2015 Basler Filmpreis für den besten Auftragsfilm «Hawed'ere»
- 2010 Schweizer Filmpreis Quartz für «Die Frau mit den 5 Elefanten» von Vadim Jendreyko
- 2001 Kulturförderpreis der Stadt Chur
- 1996 Studienprämie des Eidg. Departementes des Inneren für «Lettre d'une ville inconnue»
- 1996 Kulturförderpreis des Kantons Graubünden

Mira Film

Mira Film was founded in 2002 by Vadim Jendreyko and Hercli Bundi. Both of them work as author, director and producer. With partners in Switzerland and abroad they produce since 1990 many awarded movies with a worldwide distribution for TV and theatrical release.

Filmographie

- 2018 «Eisenberger – Kunst muss schön sein, sagt der Frosch zur Fliege» by Hercli Bundi, 94 Min.
- 2018 «Blue Note Records: Beyond the Notes» by Sophie Huber, 85 Minutes
- 2018 «Beyond the Obvious» by Vadim Jendreyko, 52 Minutes
- 2017 «Les Dépossédés» by Mathieu Roy, 90 Minutes
- 2016 «Zaunkönig – Tagebuch einer Freundschaft» by Ivo Zen, 78 Minutes
- 2016 «The Beekeeper and his Son» by Diedie Weng, 85 Minutes
- 2016 «Calabria» by Pierre-François Sauter, 116 Minutes
- 2016 «Ama-San» by Cláudia Varejão, 99 Minutes
- 2015 «UNESCO Welterbe Schweiz» 34 Short documentaries for UNESCO Switzerland
- 2014 «The Chimpanzee Complex» by Marc Schmidt, 75 Minutes
- 2014 «Padrone e Sotto» by Michele Cirigliano, 72 Minutes
- 2014 «Eine Familie kämpft - Leben mit einer unheimlichen Krankheit» by Michael Werder, 51 Minutes
- 2013 «Everyday Rebellion» by Arash & Arman T. Riahi, 110 Minutes
- 2013 «Die Reise zum sichersten Ort der Erde» by Edgar Hagen, 100 Minutes
- 2012 «Where the Condors Fly» by Carlos Klein, 90 Minutes
- 2012 «Zwei Flüsse – Zwei Lieder» by Sarah Derendinger, 52 Minutes
- 2011 «Marchesa» by Hercli Bundi, 26 Minutes
- 2011 «Flying Home» by Tobias Wyss, 80 Minutes
- 2010 «The House in the Park» by Hercli Bundi, 86 Minutes
- 2009 «Die Frau mit den 5 Elefanten» by Vadim Jendreyko, 93 Minutes
- 2008 «Geheiligt Gebein» by Dominik Wessely, 57 Minutes
- 2005 «Play - don't Play» by Manfred Ferrari, 52 Minutes
- 2005 «La savur dil palc» by Manfred Ferrari, 25 Minutes
- 2004 «Leistung am Limit» by Vadim Jendreyko, 53 Minutes
- 2004 «Pastiziers - Zucker, Heimweh, Abenteuer» by Manfred Ferrari, 25 Minutes
- 2003 «Transit: Zürich – Flughafen» by Vadim Jendreyko, 53 Minutes

Cast & Crew

Mit

Christian Eisenberger

Und mit Sandro Droschl, Brigitte Kowanz, Philipp Konzett, Ursula Krinzinger, Gernot Schulz, Christine Eisenberger, Willi Eisenberger, Bischof Hermann Glettler, Julian Riess, Grete Müller, Philipp Teuchler, Manfred Wiplinger, Joachim Vötter, Johann Loibl, Peter Kozek, Mathias Lehner, Raimo Rudi Rumpler, Hieronymus

Regie	Hercli Bundi
Montage	Nela Märki
Kamera	Adrian Stähli Aurelio Buchwalder Christian Eisenberger Hercli Bundi
Ton	Patrick Becker Mathias Hefel Hercli Bundi
Musik	Daniel Almada
Produzent Produktion Associate Producer	Peter Zwierko Mira Film Hercli Bundi Vadim Jendreyko
Marketing und Outreach	Susanne Guggenberger
Online/DCP Lichtbestimmung	Andromeda Film Patrick Lindenmaier
Tonmischung Mastering	Daniel Almada Dominik Avenwedde
Koproduzent Redaktion SRF	Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen Urs Augstburger Denise Chervet
Mit finanzieller Unterstützung von	Bundesamt für Kultur Fachausschuss Film und Medienkunst BS/BL Zürcher Filmstiftung Kulturfonds Suissimage UBS Kulturstiftung Kulturförderung Kanton Graubünden Fondation Suisa

Downloads

Download Filmstills, Poster, Flyer und Regieporträt:
<https://eisenberger-film.ch/en/press-contact/#downloads>

