

AWCH CURRENTS

CELEBRATING
A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

INTRODUCING
2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FEATURING
EXCLUSIVE FILM REVIEWS

SPECIAL THEME
**HANDMADE IN
HAMBURG**

THE AMERICAN WOMENS CLUB OF HAMBURG, e.V.

April-June 2022 Vol. 38, No. 1
www.awchamburg.org

Editorial

Dear Currents readers,

We were enthusiastic about this issue's theme from the get-go. After all, we knew that there were creators galore in our club—we'd seen the work, covered some of it in past issues, heard rumors of still more to be discovered amongst our ranks.

And, truth be told, if all of you who create had submitted your work for this issue, we would have had a problem; there would have been multiple magazines worth of material! But we are grateful for those of you who contributed. I've got to say, editing this was a treat.

Creativity can be hard to define. A painting, a poem, a hand-knitted shawl—all clearly qualify. But living well and productively may be the greatest and most creative work of all.

That is where our club comes in for so many. Connecting and forming bonds with others requires some truly creative mental gymnastics; taking yourself out of yourself to give to others is a stretch of the soul; building and contributing to a culture-within-a-culture calls for some outside-the-box thinking. This is why this issue is, while a lovely cross-section of what some of our members are capable of, still very limited. There is so much going on here. Just living cross-culturally requires much innovation!

So, while we acknowledge that creat-



We're all friends here!
(Artwork & photo by Jess M.)

ivity is our wont, we here honor a few of our members who have gone the extra mile to make something extra special. These are pieces that reach out to others. Comforting food, snugly toys, pieces that fire up and inspire, that teach, that inform. We are proud to present these here. Thank you, contributors, and may you and your art flourish. You are an inspiration to us all.

All the best,

Mason Jane M. & Stephanie M.A.
currents-exec@awchamburg

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APRIL-JUNE 2022



REMEMBERING BARBARA H.M.



OUR MEMBERS MAKE AMAZING STUFF!



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April-June 2022

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President's Message

Dear Members,

Spring is in the air! This morning my husband pointed out a daffodil blooming in our garden. A single daffodil flower. For whatever reason, of all the bulbs I planted, only one produces a plant that blooms—but it does so every year.

The winter has been relatively mild ... but the Omicron peak put a freeze on many of the club's activities. Nevertheless, there have been many highlights, including several excellent art tours, the opera club's first, in-person, live opera in two years, lively book club discussions, a night-out at the English Theatre, regular Stitch'n'Bitch meet-ups, and many Hamburger Helper groups meeting for walks, drinks, or sending out Valentine's Day cards. Several members have also joined Jennifer L., Shelly S., and Holly T. in contributing to Hanseatic Help's #Wärmegeben campaign by collecting and/or sorting warm clothes for the homeless.

I hope many of you took advantage of the wide selection of virtual events that the US mission in Germany and the US consulates offered during Black History Month in February. I for one was greatly inspired by the film about Audre Lorde and her time in Germany ... and what fun it was learning about hip-hop music!

We have postponed a larger event to celebrate Women's History Month this March but I do hope our members participate in our tribute to women who have provided healing or promoted hope—either personally or from afar. We are posting these tributes in our various communication channels throughout March.

Of course, the biggest event the past few months has been our own Annual General Meeting—held virtually for the second time. It is always exciting to review the events of the past year, thank the many, many members who contribute in so many ways to the club to make it special, and to pay tribute to the



We collected donations from club members for Hanseatic Help.

(Photo by Shelly S.)

women who have served on the board of officers for the last year. We are indebted to all the time and energy that goes into serving the club in this capacity.

With spring now comes a new constellation of board officers, amazing women from different backgrounds and with different experiences. I look forward to working together with them to put the club back up to full speed.

Seeing my single daffodil this morning reminded me of Lady Bird Johnson's quote: "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." I am hoping for a wonderful spring with many opportunities to see you all again!

Best wishes,
Carol

AWCH 2022

Meet the Board Members

What's your name and board position?
Where are you from originally?
Which AWCH events have been your favorites?

Carol Harbers
President



I'm from: California
I loved: *Don Carlos* in Leipzig with Opera Club, "Nevertheless She Persisted" event, and 2021 Summer Challenge

pres@awchamburg.org

Diana Perry Schnelle
Vice President



I'm from: New York City & New Jersey
I loved: Halloween 2018 at American Consulate and the Flim Group

vpres@awchamburg.org

Chris Lorenzen
Treasurer



I'm from: Hamburg
I loved: Holiday events and the Summer Challenge party in Stadtpark

treasurer@awchamburg.org

Melissa Aziz
Secretary



I'm from: Malaysia
I loved: Summer Challenge, visit to Cornelia Tae's art studio, virtual wine tasting

secretary@awchamburg.org

Adrienne Bulow
Membership



I'm from: Toronto, Canada
I loved: At AWCH of Surrey (UK) — running and walking groups, and business networking events

membership@awchamburg.org

Stephanie Allen
Communications



I'm from: Idaho & Oregon
I loved: Book Swap and 2021 Halloween party at a pumpkin farm

communications@awchamburg.org

Sara Bornemann
Activities



I'm from: Braunschweig in Niedersachsen
I loved: Fundraisers, AGM meeting, silent auction, and Mah Jong Group

activities@awchamburg.org

Nanci Schmidt
Events



I'm from: Cleveland, Ohio
I loved: Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, and after-dinner drinks

eventschair@awchamburg.org

Jordan Wagner
FAWCO Representative



I'm from: Washington, DC, and Traverse City, Michigan
I loved: Fourth of July events and Stitch 'n' Bitch meetups

fawcorep@awchamburg.org

AWCH News & Events

AWCH's Spirit Not Dampened by COVID-19

Our 2022 Annual General Meeting was once again held online

On January 29, 57 AWCH members participated, either online or through absentee ballots, in our Annual General Meeting (AGM). For the second year in a row, the meeting was held virtually. Although holding a virtual AGM certainly dampens the excitement of seeing each other again, it does provide an easy venue for members to tune in.

The AGM serves to inform its club members of what we have been doing, to review the club's budget, and to elect a new board of officers—but also to express appreciation to the many members whose active involvement in the club makes it possible for us to reach our goals—to connect, to inspire, and to empower. Here are the highlights of the meeting:

Philanthropy Report

Representing the Philanthropic Collective, Carol H. reviewed the tremendous philanthropic activity of the club in 2021. Hanseatic Help e.V., which distributes clothes and other necessities throughout Hamburg for refugees, the homeless, and women's shelters, is our 2021–2022 local charity. Throughout the year, a number of events (from valentine chocolate roses to flea markets) raised €4,930 for this charity to purchase women's and children's undergarments for the needy. After a tour of the facilities in early 2021, members have been meeting on weekends to help sort donated clothes. Our own From the Heart Pillow Project, which sews and donates heart pillows and drainage bags to breast cancer patients, raised €732 from bagel sales to buy supplies. Additionally, our pre-loved book sale raised €905 to provide the additional needed funds for a storage building for grains and seeds and other help for 22 families in Maharashtra, India. Finally, we again supported the Hamburger Tafel with a food drive at our Thanksgiving dinner and Hamburg's women's shelters by participating in their yearly charity run.



A screenshot from the 2022 virtual AGM.

Treasurer's Report

Outgoing treasurer Sue B. reminded us that 45% of our membership dues went toward subsidizing cultural and social events for our members, with another 17% reserved for future events in non-pandemic times. Other expenses were administrative costs, *Currents* publications, and FAWCO expenses.

Membership Report

Hannah B. reported that we recruited 18 new members last year, giving us a total of 195. Thus, despite two years of COVID-19, our membership numbers have stayed fairly stable. Over half of our members are in their 40s, providing new energy and ideas. Hannah thanked our many Hamburger Helpers, who provide valuable "first-response" work in welcoming new members and establishing neighborhood networks. Julia R. and Doro D. stepped down as HH coordinators this year, but Charis H. will continue in this important role, supported by new member Karen S.-T. A big thank-you to all.

AWCH Coronavirus Protection Policy

We care about our members, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. All events and activities will follow the guidelines and recommendations set forth by the city of Hamburg and the latest version of our own **Coronavirus Protection Policy**, which can be viewed on our website (www.awchamburg.org/club-info/official-club-docs).

You can read the most up-to-date Hamburg guidelines for containing the coronavirus in detail in German on www.hamburg.de/verordnung. In English, a shorter version is available at www.hamburg.de/faq-english.

As of March 23, most contact restrictions on gatherings have been lifted. After April 2, masking is still required in public transportation, clinics, and specific indoor loca-

tions with vulnerable residents. If Hamburg is declared a hotspot area, further restrictions may be announced (for example, continued entry restrictions at indoor venues).

In light of the highly contagious Omicron variant, it is urgently recommended that everyone gets fully vaccinated, including boosters, as soon as possible.

Vaccinations: To get a vaccination for yourself or a child 12 and over, sign up at your doctor's office or place of work, or go to a pop-up site in your area. Vaccinations for children ages 5-11 are available at doctors' offices.

Test Centers: An interactive map of certified rapid test centers can be found at www.hamburg.de/corona-schnelltest

Activities and Events

Morgan R. highlighted the many activities and events that the club held in 2021. In addition to the traditional holiday events, two events stood out: 1) our Women in Leadership panel discussion in March 2021, which attracted 140 participants and enthusiastic praise; and 2) our Summer Challenge, in which 105 participants virtually traveled to 20 national parks—accumulating 36,872 miles by running, walking, swimming, golfing, and other forms of exercise. A sincere thank-you to all AWCH members who have worked so hard to put on our many events.

Callie H. thanked and praised the leaders of our 17 various groups (or “clubs within our club”), which offer a wide selection of activities. Cumulatively, over 150 activities were held in 2021, despite months of lockdown and uncertainties.

Communications Report

Jordan W. recapped the various media we use to communicate

with our members. Our biweekly newsletter reaches the most members, but our private Facebook page also provides a great platform for sharing information. Other social media avenues are drawing increasing numbers of followers. Our *Currents* team put out three beautiful copies of our club magazine. Beatrice K. stepped down as editor-in-chief this year, but Mason Jane M. is continuing in this role, supported by our new layout editor, Stephanie M.A. The film club also produced two special issues of *Currents* with reviews of various film festivals in 2021. Cat C. continues to provide invaluable service as our web engineer ... and our new website will be launched in the spring.

FAWCO Report

Our FAWCO rep, Carol S., recognized the many AWCH members involved in our umbrella organization FAWCO and reminded our members that they are eligible to take advantage of the many activities and resources that FAWCO has to offer. AWCH has

been an important supporter of the FAWCO target project S.A.F.E. in Tanzania, reaching the highest status on the FAWCO Foundation Club Donor Wall. In addition, both of the projects that our club nominated for Development Grants were awarded in 2021.

The main order of business was the election of the new officers of the board. With heartfelt thanks, Hannah B., as chair of the Nomination Committee, individually honored and thanked the outgoing officers for their unwavering commitment and teamwork. The meeting was closed by wishing the newly elected officers the best for the upcoming year and thanking them for taking on this vital responsibility.

On a final note, the many, many unnamed members who continue to make this club so special were thanked and, by citing Eleanor Roosevelt, we were reminded that “it is only by inducing others to go along that changes are accomplished and work is done.” (Carol H.)



A group of AWCH members, spouses, and children enjoyed a guided tour of the TOYEN exhibit at Hamburger Kunsthalle in February. (Photo by David Wang)

A Morning with Toyen

Exhibit highlighted how this female Czech artist pushed boundaries

What a treat! Sixteen AWCH members (and a few spouses and children) met on Sunday morning, February 6, at the Hamburger Kunsthalle to view artworks from Toyen. Billed as one of the most important female Czech artists of the twentieth century, my expectations were aroused but I was truthfully skeptical. The Czech artist Alfonso Mucha is well known—but who has heard of Toyen? Indeed, the idea for the exhibition began when the curator of the exhibition, Dr. Annabelle Görgen-Lammers, asked a similar question: Who is that woman among all those male artists in the photographs?

Her curiosity paid off. Dr. Görgen-Lammers joined curators in Prague and Paris to collect 300 artworks from the artist, little known today. Marie Čermínová (1902–1980), who from early on used the name Toyen (from the French citizen, or citizen), was a well-known member of the Czechoslovakian avant-garde in the early 1920s. She later joined the Surrealist movement in Paris, where she settled after the Second World War. As reflected

both in her choice of pseudonym and her work, Toyen challenged stereotypes in her art and in her life—whether it was with regard to typical gender roles or to prevailing styles.

The outstanding collection assembled clearly showed that Toyen was ahead of her time. The Kunsthalle made good use of its own Surrealist, Expressionist, and Cubist collections to juxtapose Toyen works with (male) giants, such as Max Ernst, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee. Both in terms of motif and technique, Toyen was clearly a pioneer—pushing the limits of the times and her own creativity.

One cannot agree more with the Kunsthalle's own assessment: "TOYEN's images, as poetic as they are provocative, oscillate between reality and imagination, the seductive and the cryptic." It was an inspiring morning, ending with a small discussion around lunch at the Liebermann Café. Thank you, Holly, for organizing the tour! (Carol H.)

FAWCO Conference Begins

We celebrated the success of Target Project S.A.F.E. and introduced the next topic: Target Environment



Due to the uncertainty around the pandemic at the beginning of the year, FAWCO decided to postpone the Interim Meeting in Luxembourg from the beginning of March to the middle of May. Instead of eliminating the event in March, FAWCO chose to split the Interim Meeting into two parts — a virtual event in March and an in-person event in May!

The virtual aspect in March just wrapped up, and it was an online FAWCO celebration! With part one as the business portion, this online event addressed and honored the personal-, club-, and FAWCO-wide achievements from the past few years. Held over two days, the main stage events recognized the amazing achievements FAWCO had with its member clubs.

Friday evening started with a welcome session on the main stage from the FAWCO, FAWCO Foundation, and FAUSA presidents. Additionally, there were presentations about the *Inspiring Women* magazine as well as an overview of the FAWCO Youth Program. This year's Cultural Volunteer program for children 15 to 19 years old will be held in Amsterdam. This week-long excursion for children of FAWCO members fosters cultural awareness and volun-



Rhobi Samwelly is the director of Hope for Girls and Women Tanzania and gave an inspirational talk to FAWCO attendees.

teerism through educational and leisure experiences.

The highlight of Friday evening was the conclusion of FAWCO's 2020-22 Target Project: S.A.F.E. (Safe Alternatives for Female Genital Mutilation Elimination), a project for Hope for Girls and Women Tanzania. This incredible organization not only provides a safe haven for girls during the cutting season, but also provides individual and family therapy, educational programs to local communities, income-generating opportunities, and access to the National Health Insurance Fund plan. Introduced a week before the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the fundraising goal of \$160,000 was no obstacle for FAWCO member clubs. In total, FAW-

CO clubs raised \$176,000 for this incredible initiative.

Our club was honored as one of four to reach Diamond Donor level, the highest fundraising tier! In the past two years, AWCH has raised over \$10,650 as a group.

The evening ended with an incredible message from Rhobi Samwelly, the founder and director of Hope for Girls and Women Tanzania.

Saturday evening introduced the next Target Project—Target Environment! The team did a fantastic job giving an overview of the environment category as well as a breakdown of how to submit potential projects, the application process, and important deadlines.

FAWCO rounded out the evening with "Dreams are Made!" In honor of 50 years of Education Awards and 25 years of Development Grants, the FAWCO Foundation had a virtual celebration for all the past recipients and gave an outlook for the future of these projects.

While these two days were a fantastic opportunity to dive deeper into the FAWCO world virtually, we can't wait to attend the in-person FAWCO Interim Meeting this May in Luxembourg. See you there! (Jordan W.)



New Member Spotlight

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE NEWEST MEMBERS WHO JOINED AWCH IN 2021
PLEASE SAY HELLO IF YOU SEE THEM AT AN EVENT! IF YOU WANT TO REACH ANYONE DIRECTLY,
YOU CAN FIND CONTACT INFORMATION IN THE 2022 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Adrienne B.



- * Adrienne is originally from Canada, but has lived in London, Houston, and The Hague.
- * She was a member of the American Women's Club of Surrey (UK) for four years.
- * She is passionate about rowing and loves going out on the Alster.
- * Adrienne speaks English, German, and Dutch.
- * She has two grown kids, in LA and London.
- * She volunteers as the membership chair for the AWCH board this year.

Esther P.



- * Esther was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, to Dutch parents; they all moved to the USA when she was six. She's lived in Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, Washington, and New York.
- * She and her husband are both Penn State professors on a one-year sabbatical in Hamburg with their 13-year-old daughter. Esther is a visiting scholar at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning with a focus on adult and family literacy.
- * Esther's favorite things in Hamburg include: living a 10-minute walk from the Alster, the bakeries, the cultural options, and the beautiful architecture, public spaces, and scenery.

Enke C.



- * Enke was born in Wiesbaden, Germany, but lived near Chicago for five years. She just moved back to Germany with her husband and their two kids.
- * She joined the AWCH to keep her English as fluent as possible and to keep the American culture and holidays alive.
- * Enke's favorite places in Hamburg include the Alster and harbor area.
- * When Enke and her family first moved to the USA, they really missed German food. Now back in Germany, they miss American treats like "Toasties lime" and s'mores!

Jennifer F.



- * Jennifer is originally from a small Texas town called Sweet Home but lived in the Houston area for 17 years. She now lives with her husband and 10-year-old son in Neustadt.
- * She works in human resources for a maritime company and is getting experience in the corporate offices to take back to the USA.
- * She enjoys running around the Alster and walking through Planten un Blomen.
- * Favorite things in Hamburg that she can't find back at home? German bread and good public transportation!

Karen S.T.



- * Karen is German but loves the English language. She worked as an au pair and intern in the USA.
- * She loves going to the movies. (Passage is her favorite movie theater!)
- * Swimming and ballroom dancing are two of Karen's favorite sports.
- * She is known to be a good listener and enjoys discussions about "Gott und die Welt."
- * She is really bad at telling jokes, but loves to laugh.
- * Whenever she has a chance, she travels. There are still a lot of places to see!

Petra R.



- * Petra was born in Germany and grew up on a US Air Force base in Hahn.
- * She earned her MBA at Harvard Business School and worked in the USA for 25 years, including Boston, Atlanta, Memphis, and Toronto.
- * Now she splits her time between Santa Barbara, California, and Eppendorf to spend time with her 85-year-old mother.
- * Some of her favorite things to do in Hamburg are boating on the Alster, biking along the Elbe, shopping at the Isemarkt, and going to jazz clubs.

Stephanie A.



- * Stephanie moved to Hamburg with her husband and nine-year-old son in 2020. They previously lived in Idaho and Oregon.
- * They adopted a mini-dachshund puppy last summer, and Stephanie is smitten.
- * The best things in Hamburg that she can't find back at home? Public transportation and currywurst!
- * Stephanie volunteers as the communications chair for the AWCH board this year. She also is the design editor of *Currents* magazine.

Tatiana S.



- * Tatiana was born in Barcelona, Spain, but has also lived in California.
- * Her husband works for Airbus, and they love exploring the Altes Land. They like bike riding, bird watching, and the riverside beaches.
- * She has a very good dog and a son who is almost two.
- * She volunteers as the co-leader of the Mom's Connection Group and is also active in Stitch'n'Bitch and Book Club.
- * Her hobbies include dancing, baking, and horseback riding. She is training to become a movement therapist.



AWCH regularly spotlights all of our members in the email newsletter, online, and in *Currents*. If you haven't filled out the questionnaire yet, please do so today!
<https://forms.gle/4eumaDqGBYgPSpnW6>

In Memoriam

BARBARA HENLEY MEYER

An April 1995 *Currents* article introducing her read, “Barbara grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, where she met her future German husband at Texas Christian University. She worked as a sixth-grade teacher for two years before moving to Brussels. She and her husband moved to Wedel in 1978. Barbara has two sons, Tom and Christian, whose bilingualism and biculturalism she finds fascinating. Barbara’s interests are reading, attending cultural events, and discussing European and world history with people from all over the world.”

Barbara joined AWCH in 1983 and was a very active member. She chaired the Westend Evening Group, meeting in restaurants between Altona and Wedel. In 1986, she hosted coffees to support “M.O.M.S. (Mothers Offering Moral Support), and in 1988, she organized the club’s annual orientation meetings. Barbara attended FAWCO conferences in Bern, Bad Homburg, Washington, Dublin, and London. She was a regular contributor to *Currents* in the ‘90s.

Personal Remembrances

“I first met Barbara when I joined the club in 1995. We served on the board together 1995-1996. She was my big sister in Hamburg. She and I talked about everything and, sometimes, nothing at all. The kindred spirit with whom I could talk about



sociology, philosophy, the arts, medicine, family, life, the South, even religion and politics! And we laughed more than anything else! We loved working on the board together and continued after that with a large Welcome to New Members seminar and into our personal lives. We attended family parties and anniversaries or went out for lunches. My husband and I attended the wedding of her son, Tom, to Tina. It was a very lovely event, and she was, as ever, a very gracious hostess. She was devastated at the loss of Heiko but found solace in her family.

She discovered her cancer in 2017 and fought valiantly. She

reached out when she was up for it but mainly surrounded herself with family. The addition of her grandson, Ben, was her absolute joy for these last years, and she was so hoping to make it to the coming of Ben’s sister this spring. She passed on Christmas Eve.” (Mary K.)

“As a newcomer, I met Barbara, who warmly coaxed me into joining the team to help orchestrate a fantastic event where I met many AWCH members. She taught me the importance of getting involved in our club. She will be missed.” (Shelly S.)

Compiled by Mary K., Becky T., and Shelly S.

Handmade in *Hamburg*

Creativity Comes in Many Hues

Our members have diverse and fascinating talents. Some you may know about, some might be new discoveries.

In the next few pages, learn a little more about some womens' unique ways of expressing themselves.

Harmony in Silver by Gülin Z.



Photos courtesy of Gülin Z.

I design and create silver jewelry. I get my inspiration from the world around me, start sketching, and play with the materials until I create a design that is harmonious. At my workbench, the design becomes a unique piece of jewelry. I'd be happy if you had a look online to see more of my jewelry.

Online
[instagram.com/gulin_zois_jewelry](https://www.instagram.com/gulin_zois_jewelry)



Handmade in *Hamburg*



Jess M. cuddles some of her handmade toys at the gift shop she operates in Ottensen with several other artists. (Photos courtesy of Jess M.)

Living Her Dream: Artist & Maker by Jess M.



Tiny World Dome and an upcycled bunny, both created by Jess M.



Sometimes I have to remind myself that if five-year-old me could see me now, she would be so excited, thrilled, and most of all proud that I am a full-time artist and maker. It's all I've ever wanted to be, which is not a fact I've always consciously understood. So does this mean I've made it? Does this mean I'm living the dream? Some days that is how it feels. Other days it's hard to put one foot in front of the other and remember that these hard days will pass.

We can all be our own worst enemies, so I'm lucky to be surrounded by extremely supportive people in my life who cheer me on daily. Running a handmade business can be very solitary, multifaceted,

busy, messy, fun, and creative, but it also involves a lot of self-criticism, failure, and disbelief. Being your own cheerleader is hard, so I take myself back to why I am doing what I'm doing.

Giving the gift of something handmade to someone you love is something I have done since I was able to articulate "I made this for you." I was the kid who gave handmade cards on birthdays or "just because." Who would spend weeks after school making different "creations" from repurposed toilet rolls, paper, fabric scraps, and glue. I then hammered together a "stall" from wood and nails found in our shed so that I could sell them in my driveway on weekends. "Lucky Dips" and homemade lemonade, made from our tree out back, were neatly stacked, ready for all my customers.

But it was never about the minimal pocket money I made. The excitement always came from the smiles, laughs, and oooohs and ahhhhs from my friends and neighbors when they saw what I had made.

That special feeling has never left me. I still get a rush today when I receive a message or photo from a happy customer. It's what drives me to keep creating and making. It helps me to remember that even in a very small way, I am contributing to the world around us and touching the lives of people in it.



A young Jess M. (left) and her sister at the art stall they set up in front of their home. (Photo by their mother, Barbara Richter)



Handbound notebooks by Jess.

In December of 2019, I was fortunate enough to be chosen to join the artist collective at Lital—a tiny shop in Ottensen full of items handmade by myself and five other incredibly talented women artists from Hamburg with the same passion and drive that this crazy world we live in needs more handmade. It is an ever-changing, on-going exhibi-

See More of Jess's Work

Visit her shop, Lital, at Kleine Rainstr. 6 in Ottensen or go online to [Instagram.com/gusandollie](https://www.instagram.com/gusandollie)

tion full of creative ideas turned into wearable, huggable, sustainable, loveable pieces of art.

So I guess you could say I've come full circle, but instead of my driveway, I'm in Hamburg/Ottensen, and instead of toilet rolls and glue, my creations have matured into hand-bound notebooks, tiny sculptures, and one-of-a-kind soft toys, sold under my brand names "Gus and Ollie" and "Studio JAM Handmade."

If you're ever wandering around Ottensen, come on in and say hello! You're sure to find something you love, handmade just for you.

Handmade in Hamburg

Baked in Germany by Carol H.



Carol's love for baking didn't wane when she moved to Germany, but her tools and resources have definitely adapted.

(Photos by Carol H.)

Before I moved to Hamburg in February of 1982, I tried my hand at making Apfelstrudel. I remember streeeeeeetching out the dough on the kitchen table... and enjoying the fruits of my labor with friends. It was exciting, preparing for my move: What should I bring? Where will I live? What will the weather be like? (Hamburg is almost the same latitude as Juneau, Alaska!) Will I remember any of the German I'd learned? But, perhaps, most telling was the box of spices I slipped into my trunk. I wanted to be sure that I could still cook and bake—the way that I knew how.

Unexpectedly, adapting to baking here proved to be harder than I thought. No, I did not need to be a master of Strudelteig—in fact, my banana bread, cheesecake, and carrot cake were always quite welcome at parties. But something was never quite right. Was it the flour? The lack of baking soda? Wrong baking powder? No Crisco for my pie crusts? No canned pumpkin? No wax paper? I became creative ...

...but I also embraced my newly adopted country. My trusted *Betty Crocker* cookbook and *Bon Appetit* subscription were exchanged for German cookbooks and *Essen und Trinken*. Measuring cups for a scale. Dr. Oetker was my new friend.

I still bake pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving—yes, made in Germany, and they taste pretty darn good! I have adapted and learned to be more creative.

Knitting My Way Around the World

by Shelly S.

It started with a quilt square. Tracy M. gathered a group of us to work on the Heart Pillow Project, and while we were cutting, stuffing, and sewing heart pillows and drainage bags, she and Susan S.-W. displayed the latest FAWCO quilt to be auctioned off at the next conference. They both indicated the need for individuals to help sew squares for the upcoming quilt,

and simply seeing the pattern—a beautiful butterfly in green tones—was enough to reel me into the quilt project despite my novice status. Now, many quilts later, I am still sewing these squares, always thrilled to see how much money each quilt brings in, which in turn is donated to the current FAWCO target project of the year. Most importantly, I was invited to spend Tuesday nights with the Stitch’n’Bitch group, where I met some of the most confident and skilled crafts-ladies who were willing to share their knowledge. Before long, I was introduced to crocheting, cross-stitching, and knitting while hearing wild adventures and interesting tidbits.

I started with knitting scarves, hats, headbands, and sweaters. I donated some of them for our yearly auction in the hope that they would find a new home and the money earned would go to the target project. I then decided to combine this



Shelly visiting a school near Kalaw. Below are two recipients of Shelly’s hats and scarves: a woman in Padaung and Becky T. in Hamburg. (All photos courtesy of Shelly S.)



new hobby with an old hobby: traveling to isolated places and helping the local communities. I usually go deep into the mountains or into deserts with school supplies, books, paper, etc. I find the local schools and then volunteer time teaching English to children, teenagers, young monks, and nuns. English is essential for them to further their education. The first time I

traveled into the mountains in Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand, I noticed women wearing very light dresses weaving silk and linen scarves in the cold. These scarves would later on be sold to us. Most of them were working long hours on their looms. Strangely enough, wool seemed to be nonexistent here. So I decided on my next trip to

make 70 wool scarves and gave each woman I met a friendship scarf. The pandemic has slowed my traveling down but not the production.

A heartfelt moment was giving Becky T. a scarf as a post-surgery gift, which she immediately threw over her head. Looks like all this extra time didn’t go to waste this year, since I can’t stop compulsively knitting and am waiting impatiently for the borders to open again. My advice to all the newcomers in our club is, get involved in making some FAWCO quilt squares or learn a skill that will bring you into a circle of lifetime friends.

Handmade in *Hamburg*

Guiding a Worldwide Paper-Crafting Community by Sara N.

Making something by hand is always fulfilling—as is the process of creativity and the fun of learning something new. Fortunately, the world of online craft education is full of possibilities for those who want to pick up a new skill or re-invigorate a creative interest.

In 2010 I left my corporate job in the craft industry, yet continued teaching others how to explore their creativity. Part of my marketing job at Oregon-based Hot Off The Press involved traveling to teach crafting workshops around the world. From the United Kingdom to South Africa and all across the USA, I taught scrapbooking, card-making and mixed media at art retreats, stores, and at stamping and scrapbooking conventions.

It's always been great fun and a privilege to see people enjoying the creative process—often attending classes with friends or relatives or going alone and forming new friendships. The best part? When a student would say, “I'm just not that creative,”



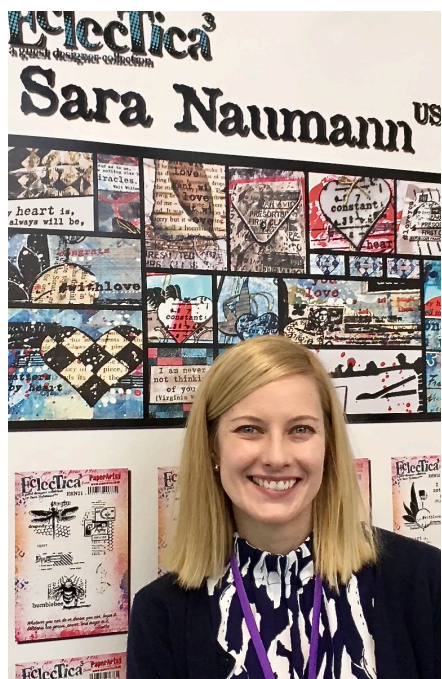
Sara teaches crafters how to make a variety of projects, such as these mixed-media cards featuring paint, embossing powder, and stamps. (All photos courtesy of Sara N.)

and then surprise themselves with what they'd made!

As a craft instructor, my job is to take the mystery out of products and techniques and make them accessible to hobbyists, while still leaving room for people to take things in their own direction. Someone can choose to recreate a project exactly as I've made it or use it as a starting point for their own ideas.

These days, platforms like You-

Tube, Facebook, and blogs have shifted craft education from in-person classes to online learning. For example, New York-based stamp manufacturer Altenew offers Facebook Live demonstrations throughout the week (at 9 pm German time). I host a segment called *Sara's Stamping Hour* a few times each month and teach smaller online classes where crafters can work alongside me. Paper Wishes, in Oregon, offers how-to Webisodes several times a week, with



Conferences used to be a large part of the international crafting community. Hopefully they will return again soon!

an emphasis on beginning and busy crafters. You can join me twice a month for *Saturday with Sara!*

Stamp manufacturer PaperArtsy offers a fabulous blog full of projects. When I'm not designing products or writing blog posts for them, I often teach Facebook Live demos for one of their partner stores in Scotland. A truly international collaboration—and everyone is invited!

All of these are meant to share paper-crafting techniques and how to use various products while connecting crafters. So if you're interested in crafting, creating, or just want to join in on a very welcoming online community of international creatives, please join us!



Travel Through A Lens by Jordan W.

As a millennial, I grew up in the era of iPods, flipphones, and point-and-shoot cameras. But who knew 20 years ago that these technologies would become a whole new creative medium in the digital world?

When I moved abroad to Heidelberg for graduate school in 2013, I started my first blog to keep my parents, siblings, and extended family updated on my life—aptly titled *Beer Time with Wagner*. This tongue-in-cheek name elicited questions whenever I told a new person about it, and my online diary began morphing into a travel journal. I started posting more photos of my travels (with truly awful edits!) and connected with others in this digital sphere. For Christmas 2014, my parents gifted me

a Sony a6000 camera, and it has accompanied me on all of my adventures ever since.

By the time I left Heidelberg in 2015, I was meeting other travel bloggers on the weekends, going to conferences, being hosted by hotels, and steadily growing my following. The next year took me to Croatia and Bulgaria for internships and then Scotland for business school. Living in many different places around Europe pushed me to explore off-the-beaten-path locations—and my camera was always there to capture that perfect moment.

I eventually rebranded *Beer Time with Wagner* into *Wayfaring with Wagner*, a travel blog for those seeking their

Story continues on **Page 22**

Handmade in *Hamburg*



Jordan W. shares her travels through photography on a couple of blogs. Some of her trips have included: Innsbruck, Austria (previous page); Plitvice Lakes, Croatia (left); Valletta, Malta (below); and Kayersberg, France (bottom).

(All photos by Jordan W.)

Wayfaring with Wagner
wayfaringwithwagner.com

Hamburg and Beyond
hamburgandbeyond.com

Continued from **Page 21**

own fairytale adventures in Europe. Using my words, photographs, and blog, I was able to share my thoughts, travel tips, and creativity with an online community! I was determined to make 2020 my year—until the pandemic halted all travel. It's hard to run a travel blog when you're not able to travel! But I missed writing and photographing cool places. So, I pivoted.

When I moved to Hamburg, I noticed the city and surrounding region lacked English-speaking travel content. There were so many hidden gems I knew nothing about because I lacked enough German. The pandemic forced me to explore my background and resulted in my newest project: *Hamburg and Beyond*. It is an English-speaking guide and resource on what to see, do, eat, and drink in Hamburg, Kiel, Northern Germany, and the surrounding region.

I create through my words and images. You may not be able to physically touch them, but I love that my digital medium reaches thousands of people monthly!



See additional photos on Page 41

A Length of Yarn by Jenny M.



Knitting projects that look like food always delight their recipients.

(All photos by Jenny M.)

Friends in Connecticut created amazing patchwork quilts and cross-stitched intricate samplers, but they told me that they'd never learned to knit. I admired their skills but they in turn admired mine, which had been acquired in elementary school. I knitted tiny jackets for their babies and was embarrassed to hear that one little girl was christened in hers, and another came home from the hospital in his. That jacket would be used to bring future brothers and sisters home from the hospital where they were

born. I was embarrassed because I'd have knitted more intricate jackets if I'd known that they were valued so highly.

Knitting baby clothes and toys for relatives and friends and their children and grandchildren has kept me busy for years. "The things you knitters can do with a length of yarn," said a friend when I handed her a teddy for a new granddaughter and some "crazy cupcakes" for her big sister. Knitting toys and play food is fun and doesn't take long, though a certain sausage dog

pattern once had 20 separate pieces to knit and sew together and won't be used again in a hurry. Knitting sushi and putting it in a sushi container makes it look like the real thing, and pita pockets filled with lettuce, onion rings, and shrimp delight parents as much as their children.

Teddy bears made with shaggy wool are quite difficult to make, as it's hard to see and pick up a dropped stitch, but they are always popular. So far, a blue, shaggy teddy lives in Hungary

Story continues on **Page 26**

Handmade in *Hamburg*

Practical Beauty by Hilary W.



Some of Hilary's finished pottery pieces. (Photo by Hilary W.)

Pottery is such a fun and deeply satisfying art form. One of the things I particularly appreciate is how meditative it is. You can't properly center the clay unless you're feeling centered yourself. I also love its practical side. It gives me great pleasure to eat and drink out of dishes that I've made with my own hands, and to be able to give handmade gifts to my friends. Unfortunately, it's not a hobby you can easily do at home unless you're lucky enough to have your own wheel and kiln. One of the things that made me saddest during our corona lockdowns was all the lost time I wasn't able to make pottery! I'm deeply grateful that the Volkshochschule is open again and that I can once again spend my Wednesday evenings sitting at a pottery wheel.

Story continued from **Page 25**

with Oliver and a pink one with a bow made from Chanel ribbon lives with Florence in Sussex. Three "teddy bear"-colored ones live in Hamburg with Eire, Theodora, and Marla. And of course my own grandchildren each have one!

Years ago, I found a pattern for baby "sandals" and have lost count of the number I've made. The same pattern book has baby slippers, adorable and impractical but gorgeous when knitted in pink angora wool and decorated with satin bows. Making small things for children doesn't take up much time and satisfies the need to be creative.

Now that I've left Hamburg and



Baby booties are adorable and don't take much time.

returned to London, I've started to knit for homeless children and hand in mittens, hats, and sweaters to a donation point. During the first lockdown, I made tiny donkeys for a fundraiser for a donkey charity. Before I left my home in Hamburg, a friend asked me to make some angel

decorations for a Christmas bazaar. We knitted them together and used many different shades of skin-colored wools for their faces, ranging from pale pink to dark brown. Last Christmas, I made reindeer for a charity shop that raises funds for cancer research. Jeremy Fisher, Beatrix Potter's story character, was purchased from a charity shop. He is a delight; he has a lacy cravat, a pink waistcoat, stripey legs, and tiny bows on his shoes.

My knitting is a humble cousin to those glorious New England quilts and samplers, but making presents for children is an enjoyable way of passing the time. If you feel inspired, I shall be happy to send you my patterns. I specialize in quick and easy!

THE CLUBS WITHIN OUR CLUB

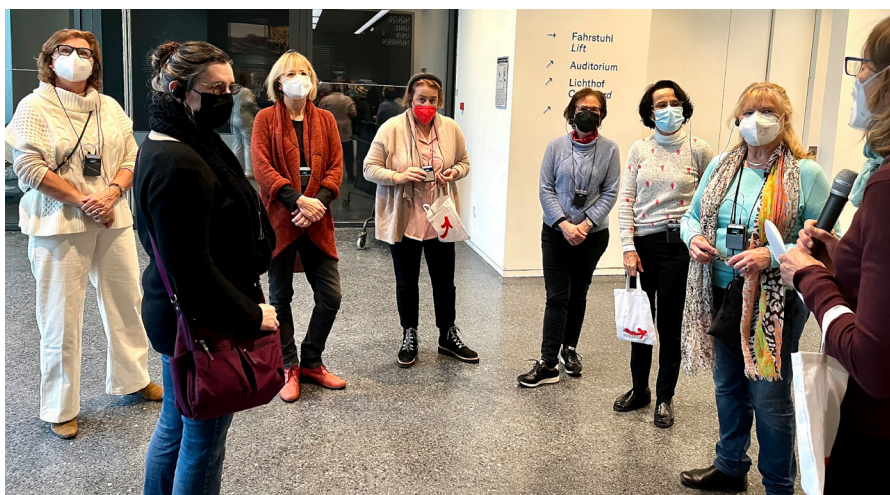
ART GROUP

A Closer Look at Emil Nolde

In January, a small group of AWCH members met at the Bucerius Art Forum, where Holly Todd led us through an impressive tour of the Emil Nolde exhibition.

Nolde had his roots in Northern Germany, where he was born, and in Copenhagen and the Danish islands, where he lived. This Nordic influence can be seen in Nolde's early landscape paintings, which we were invited to take a closer look at. Holly juxtaposed these canvases with the works of other Danish painters included in the show.

Among Nolde's early work were *Self Portrait* (1899) and *Holiday Guest* (1904), reflecting the artist's firm belief in "Blut und Boden" (blood and earth) and his great love for the countryside and wind-swept plains. We observed how this feeling of solitude permeated his early paintings, and we were invited to compare these works with Vilhelm Hammershoi's *Double Portrait of the Artist with*



AWCH member Holly T. (right) guides a group of members through the Nolde exhibit at Bucerius Art Forum in January.
(Photo by Carol H.)

Join the Art Group

If you want to learn more about the Art Group, send an email to artgroup@awchamburg.org

His Wife (1892) and Viggo Johansen's *The Artist's Family* (1895). Both Danish painters are well known for their interiors and for employing a more open style of brushwork moving toward Impressionism. As Holly pointed out, the use of a kind of clear, cool Danish light played an important role in these pain-

tings. They were not seen as studying light and its effects, as is inherent in Impressionist works, but rather as using light to create a subtle heightening of reality. This departure from reality is something that appealed to Nolde.

In 1911, Nolde traveled to

Story continues on Page 27

ART GROUP



Art Through An Artist's Eyes

Thank you Susan S.-W.! She organized a tour of the yearly exhibition at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg (HFBK), Hamburg's University of Fine Arts. Standing in line, I took in the features of this magnificent building with its bold, opaque stained-glass windows. It was designed by the architect Fritz Schumacher and built between 1911 and 1913. In 1970, it was accredited as an arts and science university. Walking into this historic building was indeed a contrast to the modern art we were about to experience.

We were greeted by Susan's charming son, Sammy, who is currently studying sculpture and who informed us that 800 students were exhibiting. He indicated that this was his first tour ever, added several disclaimers, but then proceeded to show us his favorite pieces and explain



Above: **Sammy relaxes on Christopher Dippert's giant pillow.** (Photo by Susan S.-W.)

Top: **Work by Nikomambo Mboya.** (Photo by Shelly S.)

why they were interesting to him.

Since this was a spontaneous tour, our group was small, consisting of Carol B., Holly T., Morgan and Michaela A., and

Sammy's family. Sammy began by introducing us to an artist named Svenja Wassill, whose work reflected on how women's handicrafts are not considered on the same level as fine art. We then viewed the works of one of the only African artists exhibiting on campus; Nikomambo Mboya's large diptych took us to his home country where religion has a strong influence.

Hani Hape, who has worked in the fashion industry and was interested in working with leather, explained that she watched hours of film on making shoes before she created her sculptures. Her work was both technically difficult but, at the same time, sensual.

We also spoke to Janosch Boerckel and Jakob Sitter, who look at their work from a scientific perspective. We had a long

ART GROUP



Work by Rosa Lüder.
(Photo by Susan S.-W.)

discussion about Sammy's collaboration with Paula Hammer, which was an oversized table with beautiful fruit that he'd made using a very complicated and technical method. I definitely wanted to take a bite out of that forbidden fruit. Did you ever hear the story about the dog eating the homework? Well, gossip quickly spread that Maximilian Seegert and Robert Bergmann's post-art sugar work was destroyed by a hungry dog. A dog who loves sugar?

Sammy then took us to one of his favorite pieces, stating that its beauty made him wish that he'd made it. We all gazed on Rosa Lüder's large metal tree with brilliant fruits and petals that shimmered in the room. We instantly understood Sammy's sentiments. One of the final pieces was the freshly finished master's building. A true highlight was Prateek Vijan's wooden conveyor belt rigged to a sensor that would create tones depending on which piece of wood was going through the sensor. It was a piece that others actually could interact with. Sammy's genuine honesty, combined with his sensitive insights, made this both an outstanding and pleasurable tour. (Shelly S.)

Nolde continued from Page 25

Holland and Belgium, where his style made a radical departure from earlier works. His colors are much brighter, and he becomes known for his paintings of people behind masks. Nolde's message was not satire but an expression of the unfolding drama within himself. Many of his works attested to his continuing religious crisis.

Free Spirit (1906), part of the Bucerius exhibition, featured Nolde's view of himself as an unappreciated genius, saint, philosopher, and maybe even a Christ figure. He called this his first religious painting. This canvas depicts a full-frontal figure with crossed

hands surrounded by disciples foreshadowing the crucifixion.

Nolde's beliefs were referred to in Holly's lecture. The subject of Nolde and his relationship to the north is useful to examine for its relevance to the artist's enthusiasm for Nazi ideology. At the end of the war, Nolde's Nazi past was covered up. Art historians and Nolde himself replaced it with the myth that the artist was a tragic victim of the Nazis. This myth was popularized in Sigfried Lenz's novel *Deutschstunde*.

Before he died, Nolde created a foundation to manage his estate, archive his papers,

and run his home in Seebüll on the North Sea as a kind of memorial museum. He stipulated that the foundation keep his correspondences and journals out of the public eye.

The trustees of the foundation went even further and made access to Nolde's papers pretty much impossible for outside scholars. It wasn't until 2014 that the new director of the foundation opened the archives to visiting scholars and initiated a course of studies and exhibitions working through the material in Seebüll. The exhibition we visited at the Bucerius Art Forum was a part of that cooperation. (Marilyn R.)

FILM GROUP

Have You Dreamed of Being a Movie Critic?

Film Group members attend festivals, sneak peeks, and press junkets while also fulfilling the duties of industry journalists



Members of the Film Group doing what they love!

This unique group is the first I ever joined. It is unique because it gives you the opportunity to write. The title of the group is actually misleading. Although it gives you access to press showings and festivals, it is more about writing, interviewing, and meeting professionals in the field. You have the chance to develop skills in photography, critique writing, asking questions at a press conference, and interviewing people you truly admire.

Our film group became a club activity in 1995 under the guiding hand of Becky Tan and has been recently taken over by Rose Finlay. The job has been not easy for Rose, especially during the pandemic. We saw how the movie industry struggled to find a viable way to show films while being forced to compete with Netflix and other online programs. When there was a press showing, Rose had to officially sign one person from the weekly list onto the film. Rose has used her brilliant observations and

humor to write a weekly press screening list which includes any behind-the-scenes interest as well as upcoming festivals in which we could participate. Many of these festivals have only been offered online but luckily some were not, like Filmfest Hamburg.

We also have two websites: Kinocritics.com, started by Kirsten Greco, who still maintains the website even though she lives in Colorado, and awchamburg.org, which is maintained by our favorite techie, Cat C.

Most importantly, we have produced several film supplement magazines over the years, and, during the pandemic, we published five magazines that included all the festivals in which we have participated both here and in the US.

Again, Rose stepped up to the plate and did the



Above: Rose F. and Shelly S. attend the Berlinale International Film Festival. At right: Becky T. distributes copies of a film supplement issue of *Currents* produced by the Film Group.



layout even though she had never done it before. The other layout editor is Karen Pecota, who lives in the US but has stayed a faithful member of our club. Her presence can be felt in her active participation in US film festivals such as Sundance and Tribeca. These magazines are distributed to over 60 press companies and film festivals. Many of us have jumped in and helped with photography, layout, proof-reading, distribution, and, most importantly, participation.

The group has also had an online film lounge, and every year we have an Oscar party sponsored by Nancy Tilitz.

Our group has approximately 30 members, many of whom are no longer active, and so we are looking for new members. If you love to write and are interested in the film world, please contact Rose or myself. I will send you a copy of the latest magazine so you can see what it is all about—and remember, the Oscars are just around the corner! (Shelly S.)

Join the Film Group

If you want to learn more about the Film Group, email Shelly S. and Rose F. at filmgroup@awchamburg.org

Online: kinocritics.com



OPERA CLUB

A Deep Dive into *Rigoletto*

Opera Club members share their impressions



Becky T.

I so enjoy sitting in Elizabeth's living room concentrating seriously on her remarkable discussions about opera. *Rigoletto* was no exception. I learned so much that I feel I have already seen the opera on stage, which is quite possible, considering that I've been attending operas in Hamburg for over 50 years, beginning with *Carmen*, my very first opera. Sadly, I missed seeing *Rigoletto* with the opera group, both in Holi Cinema and in the Staatsoper, but I will certainly catch up. In the meantime, I will continue humming, "La donna è mobile, qual piume al vento" (A woman is fickle like a feather in the wind).

Carol H.

I, for one, will never see *Rigoletto* with the same ears or eyes again. Elizabeth's wonderful introduction attuned us to the fantastic quartet in the final act—with the conflicting and intertwined emotions of the four characters coming together so beautifully. And *Rigoletto's* "La ra la la" in the second act still resonates in my head. But the most emotional aspect was the tragic figure of Gilda, whose portrayal was so different in the three interpretations we watched, clearly reflecting cultural norms. A heart-wrenching #MeToo aspect



Opera Club members met at the home of Elizabeth R. (center in maroon shirt) to learn about *Rigoletto* before seeing a live performance. (Photo by Jonas R.)

was not to be overlooked. Not surprisingly, *Rigoletto* has been set in many different settings, including, more recently, in Silvio Berlusconi's world.

Mary W.

As a long-time participant in the opera group lead by Elizabeth R., I have been extremely lucky to learn all about opera from the creative classes of a true natural-born teacher. I studied business, then law, with no time for any of the arts in my curriculum. Although I made up for literature by asking well-educated friends for reading lists and then reading on my own, music and the finer arts were a bit more challenging.

I had seen only one opera, *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City and was dazzled but a bit confused by all the stage changes and singing I could not understand. I joined the opera group after my friend Anja told me how wonderful the classes were and how much she enjoyed them. There I learned, to my embarrassment, that *Die Fledermaus* was not actually an opera. Although I still prefer musicals over operas, what I appreciate the most are the classes that Elizabeth diligently prepares and enthusiastically teaches. Elizabeth is like a weaver. She sits at her loom of electronics (with



Before their excursion to the opera house in February, the group first watched *Rigoletto* on a movie screen at Holi Kino in January. It was a performance from the Met Opera in New York. (Photo courtesy of Carol H.)

The Met on Demand, recorded music, iPad photos, YouTube performances, printed excerpts, news articles, and more) and skillfully weaves together her knowledge of an opera, which includes the performers (past and present), the librettos, the composers, the history, and even lively gossip surrounding performances and players. The result is a tapestry so vivid and beautiful that even a Boeotian like me can understand, enjoy, and truly appreciate opera.

Freda P.

The Live in HD Metropolitan Opera production in the cinema was spectacular, but for me, it was a little upsetting, with its links to the rise of the Nazis. I also like the backstage interviews, which you only get with the streamed version!

Andrea H.

I'm still hoping to see the little-known alternate version sometime. The one where Gilda and

Join the Opera Club
 If you want to learn more about the Opera Club, email Elizabeth R. at opera@awchamburg.org

Maddalena get to talking. Gilda convinces Maddie to give up her life of crime. Mads convinces Gilda to stop throwing herself under the man bus, and they open a life-coaching business in the tavern after tossing Maddie's bro to the cops and emancipating Gilda from Dad. The Dick, I mean Duke, goes on his merry way, 'cause women might be *mobile*, but some shit just never changes.

Lisa S.

The Met production of *Rigoletto*

was so enjoyable! This opera has everything: love, lust, betrayal, intrigue, and drama, all coming at you with gorgeous scenery and Italian music and singing. Since it was a live broadcast from New York, we got to see interviews with the singers backstage during the intermissions. It was a very fun evening.

Holly T.

I was only able to attend, but absolutely loved, the first session of Elizabeth's lively introduction to *Rigoletto*. She contrasted two extravagant productions separated by 40 years: the orgiastic Act I of Jean-Pierre Ponelle's 1979 film starring Luciano Pavarotti and the magical staging at the 2019 Bregenz festival consisting of a huge jester's head and hands hovering over Lake Constance. Hoping to be able to participate more next time! (Holly T.)



BOOK CLUB

An Unflinching Look at America

Homeland Elegies

By Ayad Akhtar (2020)

In January, the AWCH Book Club met virtually to discuss thoughts on Pulitzer Prize winner Ayad Akhtar's latest novel, *Homeland Elegies*, a sweeping story that masterfully explores the very current themes of identity, belonging, and dispossession facing immigrants in the United States.

The television network FX is currently developing it into an eight-episode series.

Join the Book Club
If you want to join the discussion, email bookclub@awchamburg.org

Though the book is fiction, it is written like a memoir, with the narrator sharing many autobiographical details with Akhtar, including his name and personal and professional background.

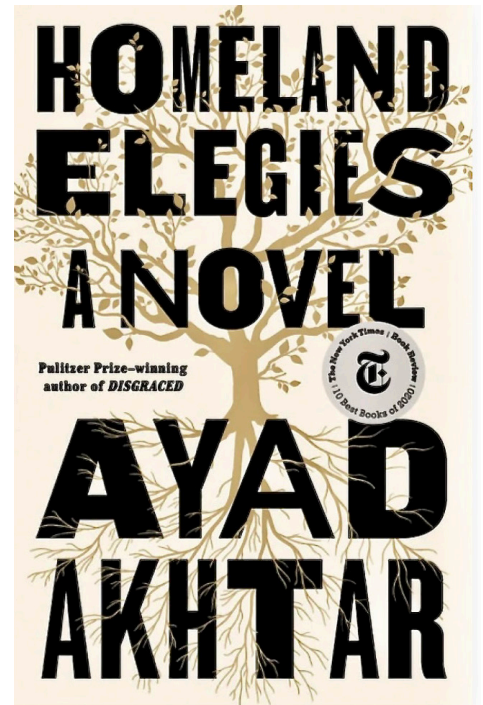
Our members agreed with the literary consensus that telling the story as autofiction was a very bold and daring choice, since the novel shares so many personal experiences and challenges faced by Akhtar himself, the son of Muslim immigrants from Pakistan. His life is forever caught between two very different countries and cultures. We see firsthand what it was like

to grow up with a mother who never felt at home in America and a cardiologist father who wholeheartedly embraced the capitalist frenzy of the '80s and admired Donald Trump, a one-time patient of his. We also experience what it was like for him to go from struggling writer

to celebrated playwright, rubbing elbows with the likes of Elon Musk at lavish dinner parties.

Akhtar's astute observations on the culture of America from these dual vantage points is unerring.

His very personal experiences during 9/11 in New York City also gave much insight to the struggles faced by Muslim Americans and provided a relatable framework for examining how Donald Trump's election exacerbated existing rifts in our society. As the book puts the reader so fully in the shoes of a strong narrator, one can't help but experience Akhtar's America as one's own—an imperfect home that is, nonetheless, all that we have. (Adelina G.)



I thought this book was an absolute literary masterpiece, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. By weaving together many different threads and using multiple genres, Akhtar has created a new kind of novel that marries autobiography and fiction in deliciously ambiguous ways. I was hesitant to read this book, as I worried it would be preachy or didactic, but it was neither. Instead, it was hilarious, smart, exhausting, and heartbreaking, and, ultimately, unexpectedly beautiful. (Diana P.-S.)

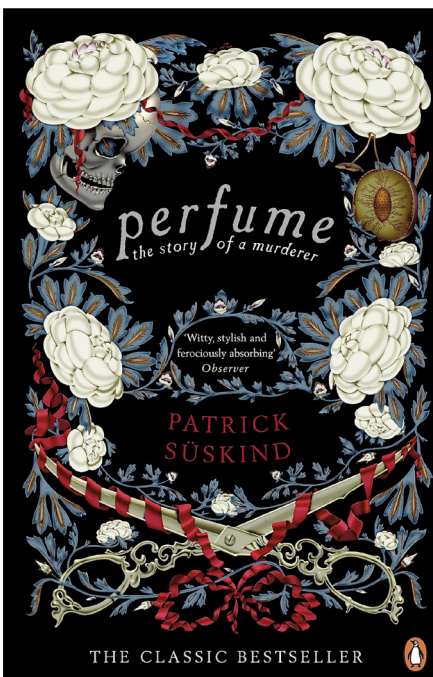
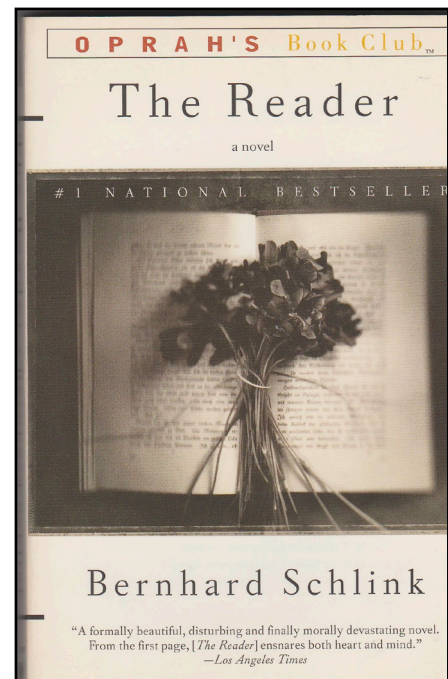
BOOK CLUB

Discovering German Literature in Translation

by Michaela A.

This month, we look at two blockbuster books from the Deutsche Welle list of “100 German Must-Reads,” both of which became successful English films worldwide and were released within two years of each other.

The Reader, by Bernhard Schlink, was first published in 1995 and falls under the genre of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*: the national struggle to come to terms with the problems of the past, or what we might simply call Holocaust literature. Michael, a young student, meets Hanna, a train conductor twice his age, by chance one day and they quickly fall into an intense, passionate relationship until one day she disappears. It is only years later, when he sees her again, that he starts to realize the secrets she kept from him, including her work as a concentration camp guard. *The Reader* explores the question of how the post-war generation should face the crimes of the increasingly older generation who played a part in the atrocities. It was also met with criticism, with some not liking the sympathy that Hanna’s character is granted. It is an engrossing, page-turning read—emotional, erotic, thoughtful—and Schlink has used Michael’s character well to walk us through his own personal *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.



Perfume, by Patrick Süskind, published in 1985, has remained on *Der Spiegel*’s bestseller list for a whopping nine years and remains one of the best-selling German novels of the twentieth century. It is a historical fantasy novel, set in eighteenth-century France, and tells the story of a man, Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, with an exceptional sense of smell. He uses his skill to become a master perfumer, but his genius, his obsession for the intoxicating smell of a woman, and his contempt for the rest of mankind, lead him into a dark world of murder, manipulation, and cruelty. *Perfume* is a dark, sensory, gritty, magical novel—and I can particularly recommend the audiobook narrated by Sean Barrett, who does a brilliant job with the voices and with bringing to life Jean-Baptiste’s character, who is, as a child, in Süskind’s words, “tough as a resistant bacterium, and as content as a tick sitting quietly on a tree and living off a tiny drop of blood plundered years before.”

In Hamburg

Cultural events throughout the city, including museums, film showings, live theater, and art exhibits



Mary Warburg portrays her son-in-law, Peter Paul Braden, 1928.
(Archive Warburg Institute, London)

A Hamburg Art Power Couple: The Warburgs

BY HOLLY T.

Hamburg can't get enough of one of its historic cultural luminaries: art historian and culture theorist Aby Warburg (1866-1929). A reconstruction of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*, Warburg's attempt to create a "map" or system to study the "afterlife of images" and "human visual memory" just closed in October

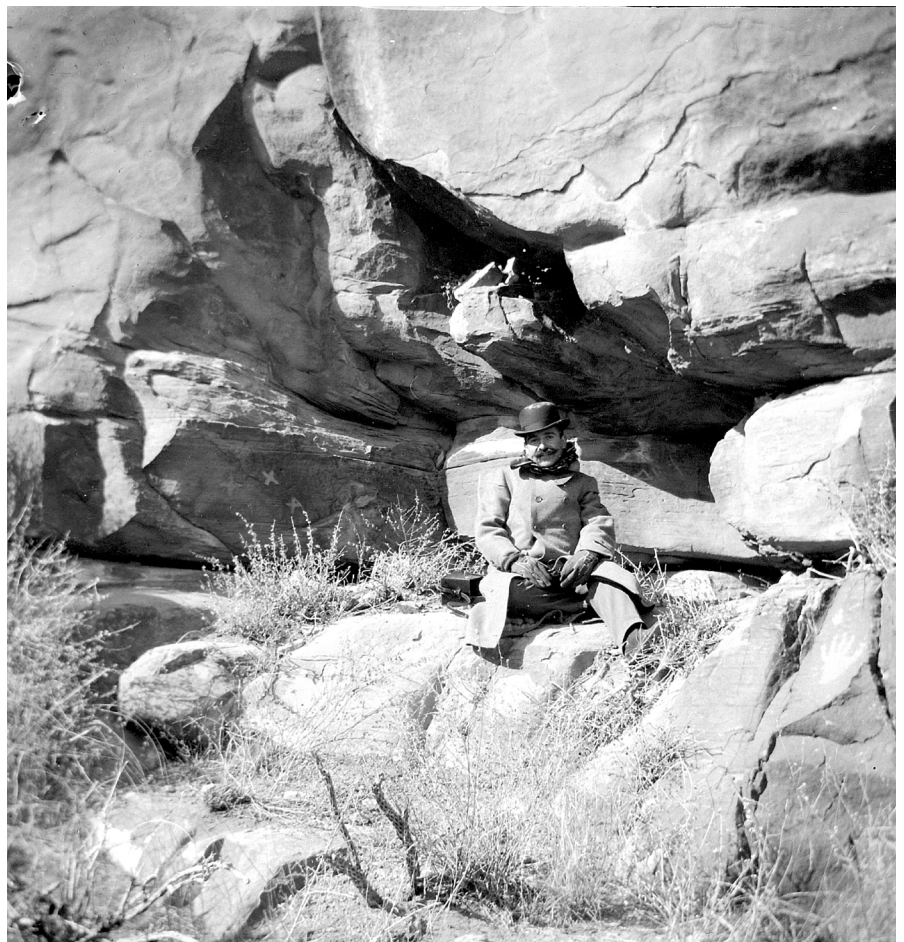
at the Sammlung Falckenberg in Hamburg. In March, *Lightening Symbol and Snake Dance* opens at the Museum am Rothenbaum für Kunst und Kulturen (MARKK). This exhibition focuses on Warburg's fascination with the native cultural symbols and rituals of the American Southwest.

Warburg, a rebel against the banking tradition of his family and against traditional (Western European) art history, traded his firstborn privilege to run the family bank with a younger brother for a lifetime unlimited budget for books. The library he built in the 1920s to house the 60,000 volumes he eventually

amassed, many very rare, can still be visited on Heilwigstrasse in Winterhude. However, the books themselves were forced by the rise of National Socialism to move to London in 1933, forming the core of today's Warburg Institute, a research facility focusing on the role of images in culture and run by the University of London.

Initially seeking more authentic life rituals after a brother's high-society New York wedding, Warburg traveled to Pueblo communities in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona in the winter of 1895-96. While "collecting" for Warburg for the most part meant books and photos, he did acquire Hopi, Navajo, and Apache objects used in rituals on this trip. Many of these now belong to MARKK and form the nucleus of the exhibition.

Aby did not work out his forward-looking theories on his own. Some of the images included in his famous *Atlas* were created by his wife, Mary, who art history has largely overlooked. As a young woman coming of age in Hamburg in the 1880s, serious artistic training was barred to Mary Warburg, and later her energies were focused on raising a family and supporting Aby's career. How tenaciously Mary pursued her passion for art and developed her considerable talent, despite these constraints—drawing in ink and pastel whenever she could and later taking up sculpture, traveling to Florence (where she met her husband) to see great Renaissance and classical art, seeking private instruction from prominent artists, and carrying out commissions for illustrations, posters and invitations—is beautifully documented in an exhibition devoted to her art at the Ernst Barlach Haus in Jenisch Park.



Aby Warburg in the Galisteo Basin, New Mexico, on his journey through the USA in 1896. © Warburg Institute London. Photo by Gotthold August Neef

Warburg Exhibits

Mary Warburg – Auf Augenblicke frei und glücklich, Ernst Barlach Haus until June 12

Blitzsymbol & Schlangentanz: Aby Warburg und die Pueblo-Kunst, Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK) until January 8

Katsina figure Sa'lakwmana (Sa'lakwmanatihu), artist unknown. Hopi, Arizona, 1890-1895. Painted poplar wood and plant fiber. Acquired by Aby Warburg in Wáłpi. MARKK Collection Aby Warburg (1902), Inv.-Nr. B6152 © MARKK. Photo by Paul Schimweg



Benin: Looted History

Museum am Rothenbaum until end of 2022

When British troops captured the kingdom of Benin in what is now Nigeria in 1897, widespread looting occurred in the palace and ancestral shrines.

Though the British were responsible for the looting, Hamburg shippers and traders played a central role in bringing the objects to Europe and distributing them to museums and collectors. It is therefore fitting that Hamburg will be the first German city to return its considerable collection of Benin artifacts to Nigeria.

Before this process begins next year, the public can view the collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum für Kunst und Kulturen (MARKK). On view are many of the bronze heads, animals, and plaques that Benin art is best known for, as well as ivory, wood, and iron objects. Historic photos document the sites before and during the looting and during shipping, while other displays focus on the museum's role in worldwide restitution efforts and introduce the viewer to cultural life in Benin City today. (Holly T.)



Altar Figure of a Rooster
Unknown workshop of the Bronze Age foundry guild Irgun Eronmwon, Kingdom of Benin, Nigeria, 17./18. Jh. Bronze, H 44cm, B 44cm. Donation of Wilhelm Anton Riedemann, 1902. MARKK C 3347 © MARKK

Discussion: The British Museums. The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution

With Dan Hicks and Barbara Plankensteiner, in English. Entry is € 5 and free for students

This lecture has been postponed until September. Exact date will be announced.

Dan Hicks, professor of contemporary archaeology at Oxford University and curator for world archaeology at the Pitt Rivers Museum, will talk about his 2020 book, *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*.



Let There Be Light!

Brightening Hamburg's dark winter days are two current exhibitions featuring works of art made with light. Neon and fluorescent installations by American artist Dan Flavin and Danish-born Jeppe Hein feature prominently in *Minimal Art: Bodies in Space* at the Bucerius Kunstforum (until April 24).

At the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (MK&G), Hamburg's museum of arts and crafts, luminous kinetic sculptures by the Amsterdam-based artist duo Studio Drift unfurl, flower-like, or imitate the flight of birds. Be on the lookout for the Art Group's evening outing to the HafenCity at the end of April to experience Drift's *Breaking the Waves* illumination of the exterior of the Elbphilharmonie. Many thanks to member Ann G. for suggesting this! (Holly T.)

Dan Flavin: untitled (to Barnett Newman), 1971, Christof Seibt Collection Contemporary Art, Hamburg. Photo by David Zwirner Gallery, New York

Film Reviews, Spring 2022

Paul Schrader's *The Card Counter* is a quiet, yet piercing movie that packs guilt, revenge, redemption, and even love into a visually rich and resonant dramatic thriller. Much of Schrader's screenplay dialogue, by protagonist William Tell through his journal, is virtually poetical; not least, Schrader's confident directorial choices have his trademark finesse and discomfitures. In tandem, the talent in front of and behind the camera melds into the film's mellifluous forcefulness.

From a kid who thought any kind of confinement was abhorrent, the confined man is comfortable with routine and regimen—**Oscar Isaac's** portrayal of William Tell is viscerally hypnotic and intellectually stimulating. While doing a stretch in military prison, and besides getting to know himself and reading books, Bill learned how to count cards, play cards, and do card tricks. Now Bill travels a circuit; he plays for small stakes, lives austere—no frills, no fuss—and always overnights in motel rooms rather than casino hotels. On top of that, Bill suffers from tortuously tormenting dreams. For counterbalance, **Tiffany Haddish's** character is La Linda, a sexy, funny, smart, and savvy stable manager, i.e., she recruits gamblers for a group of investors to financially back for a cut of their winnings. She tries to re-



© Weltkino Filmverleih GmbH

cruit the inscrutable Bill, but he prefers being “under the radar.” Still, they are easy together. In Atlantic City an antagonist appears; **Tye Sheridan**, as Cirk Baufort, catches the protagonist off guard, and during their early-morning first meeting, Bill thinks, listening to the kid, “Who is this insolent little prick?” Until he realizes their lives are interconnected through a onetime military officer, now a private mercenary. **Willem Dafoe** plays the insidious John Gordo with rant-packed gusto. Somewhat alarmed by Cirk's slipshod avenge mission and hoping to steer him clear, Bill offers Cirk a road-trip detour.

Cinematographer **Alexander Dynan's** choices in film tonality, angles, and distinct focal variations play into the gritty

The Card Counter **1/2**

USA 2021

Opened March 3, 2022

Directed by: Paul Schrader

Writing credits: Paul Schrader

Principal actors: Oscar Isaac, Tiffany Haddish, Tye Sheridan, Willem Dafoe

subterranean world that exists behind gamblers' closely guarded hands and the crucial subplot. For example, Dynan uses fisheye-lens distortion to defuse the beastlier immoral abuse (the film replicates it) at Abu Ghraib, the Baghdad prison-cum-detention center run by US military police (leaving an indelible black stain on US history). The sound design's timing, variety, and sometimes ominousness, e.g., indeterminable breathing heard during the film, is impressive. **Benjamin Rodriguez Jr.** cleverly edits in harmony with **Robert Levon Been** and **Giancarlo Vulcano's** music. Paul Schrader tapped into professional/available sources for card game explanations, etc.

Metaphors and allusions aside, *The Card Counter* storyline is engrossingly tense, stark, and searing, as it evocatively builds, e.g., during Bill's nightmare, to what might to some seem a cryptic ending. Instead, its plausible setting speaks volumes, and where there is closure, there can be new beginnings. Besides its being educational vis a vis cards. 112 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)

At age three, Antonio LeBlanc (**Justin Chon**) was adopted from his home country, Korea, and grew up in Louisiana, USA. Thirty years later, he faces deportation because of his lack of US citizenship. He and his wife, Kathy (**Alicia Vikander**), are expecting their first child. He is a helpful stepfather to Kathy's first child, Jessie (**Sydney Kowalske**). They live on a small income. Naturalization is difficult because of an arrest for a supposed robbery; Antonio is innocent, but policeman Ace (**Mark O'Brien**) has his own private interests: he was affiliated with Kathy and is the father of Jessie. Should Antonio go to court? Can they afford a lawyer? How will Kathy cope if the family is separated?

This film is excellent due to the actors (especially Kowalske), but also for the topic, which is based on the real-life experiences of adoptees throughout the United States, who face futures in the completely unknown worlds of their births. The situation was improved somewhat with the Child Citizenship Act of 2000, but still, many over the age of 18 face deportation. Hopefully, a not-yet ratified law, the Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2021, will solve



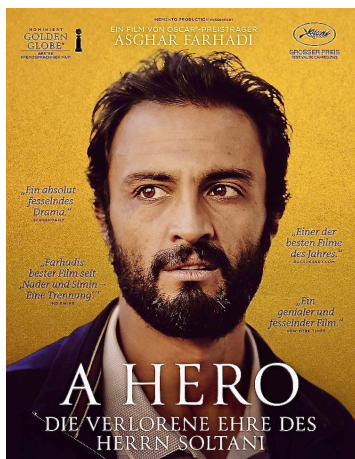
© Universal Pictures International Germany

Blue Bayou ****

USA/Canada 2021
Opened March 10, 2022

Directed by: Justin Chon
Writing credits: Justin Chon
Principal actors: Justin Chon, Alicia Vikander, Mark O'Brien, Linh-Dan Pham, Emory Cohen, Sydney Kowalske

the problem. As a long-term member of the citizenship committee of the Federation of American Women Overseas (FAWCO), I have worked on many US citizenship issues, but was never aware of this particular problem until I was privileged enough to view *Blue Bayou*, which showed at the Cannes Film Festival in 2021. The title refers to bayous in the state of Louisiana, which are small lakes or slow-moving streams. Here the bayou represents a magical area of calm, in contrast to the hectic problems of the participants. (Becky Tan)



A Hero: Die verlorene Ehre des Herrn Soltani (Ghahreman, A Hero) *1/2**

Iran/France 2022
Opening March 31, 2022

Directed by: Asghar Farhadi
Writing credits: Asghar Farhadi
Principal actors: Amir Jadidi, Mohsen Tanabandeh, Fereshteh Sadrorafaii, Sahar Goldoust

© Neue Visionen

Iranian writer-director **Asghar Farhadi's** (*A Separation* in 2012, *The Salesman* in 2016) current awards season contender, *A Hero*, is a biting commentary on the world's allure to fame and prevalent bureaucratic ludicrousness. Farhadi's screenplay focus is the practice of imprisoning debtors, customary even in

Spain, and affable, attractive Rahim Soltani's (**Amir Jadidi**) two simple actions that are twisted into a jaded narrative with an undeterminable maze of checks, balances, retribution, regret and retrieval, and ultimately resignation.

Released for a two-day prison

leave—almost unheard of—Rahim rejoins society continually smiling. He is hoping to somehow find enough money to repay, or at least to shorten, his 10-year sentence. Beloved Farkhondeh (**Sahar Goldust**) found a purse containing gold coins that could be his ticket to freedom and their future together. However, reality arrives when the coins are appraised. Brother-in-law Hossein (**Alireza Jahandideh**) cannot help financially; when sister Malileh (**Maryam Shahdaei**) discovers the purse, her moral compass guides Rahim. Overnight Rahim is a hero. Praise and adulation come his way; release seems imminent. His creditor, embittered ex-brother-in-law Bahram (**Mohsen Tanabandeh**)

Director **Mike Mills** is no stranger to sharing his personal life onscreen. While his 2016 film *20th Century Women* explored the complicated relationship with his mother, 2009's *Beginners* told the story of how his real-life father came out in his seventies, played beautifully by the late Christopher Plummer.

Mills' latest venture, *Come On, Come On*, explores the unique bond between an uncle, Johnny (**Joaquin Phoenix**), and his nine-year-old nephew, Jesse (**Woody Norman**). Shot entirely in black and white, this film explores what it means to listen—especially to children. Johnny is a single and childfree New York-based radio journalist whose current work involves interviewing kids, asking them about their hopes and fears for the future.

When he gets a call from his LA-based sister Viv (**Gaby Hoffmann**), asking him to temporarily take care of Jesse while she



© DCM

Come On, Come On *****

USA 2022

Opening March 24, 2022

Directed by: Mike Mills

Writing credits: Mike Mills

Principal actors: Joaquin Phoenix, Gaby Hoffmann, Woody Norman, Scoot McNairy

tends to her ex-husband (**Scot McNairy**) who is suffering from bipolar disorder, Johnny ends

up taking Jesse on an impromptu road trip across the US, even to New Orleans.

Although Mills gives us several glimpses into what it's like for Viv, dealing with her troubled ex, the story ultimately revolves around Johnny and Jesse, letting us watch their relationship unfold in real time. It's also revealed that Johnny and Viv are only recently on the mend, having had a falling out after the recent death of their mother.

Throughout the film, Johnny repeatedly tries to turn the mic on Jesse, asking him to share his own thoughts on life. It isn't until the very end that we get to see the strong-willed, yet sensitive Jesse acquiesce to his request, filling the audience with plenty of emotion.

With a dynamic soundtrack (everything from opera to Lou Reed), this movie reminds us to really slow down, listen, and cherish those closest to us. (Erin Huebscher)



is mistrustful, skeptical, and seethes as praise is heaped on Rahim. The plot thickens when simple actions cast doubts; two-penny advice flows. Rahim's impenetrable smile slips; he frets over his young son (**Farrokh Nourbakht**). As well, Bahram is incensed, since the unpaid debt effects daughter Nazanin's (**Sarina Farhadi**) dowery. Unremitting frustration compels Rahim's repeatedly rash actions, although it is a confrontation with Bahram that sends his life

spiraling uncontrollably.

Farhadi has cobbled together a working-class morality tale that swelters under intense sun, crowded streets, and the screenplay's sometime incongruousness. The cast is formidable; Amir Jadidi and Mohsen Tanabandeh's sparked discord is compelling. Some scenes seem stilted, or squeezed in to fit the overall action. Production values are solid from cinematographers **Ali Ghazi** and **Arash Ramezani**,

editor **Hayedeh Safiyari**, sound mixer **Mohammad Reza Delpak**, and set designer **Medhi Moosavi**. Scrutinizing each simple act causes one to pause and consider the bureaucratically created "Catch-22" situation—how can someone repay money when they cannot work? *A Hero's* premise is one too many are familiar with. The film is Iran's submission for the Ninety-fourth Academy Award for Best International Feature Film. 127 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)



© Happy Entertainment

Drei Etagen (Tre Piani, Three Floors Up) **
Italy/France 2022
Opened March 17, 2022

Directed by: Nanni Moretti
Writing credits: Nanni Moretti, Federica Pontremoli, Valia Santella
Principal actors: Nanni Moretti, Margherita Buy, Riccardo Scamarcio, Alba Rohrwacher, Tommaso Ragno, Adriano Giannini

Italian director Nanni Moretti (*Mia Madre* in 2015, *The Son's Room* in 2001) co-wrote the screenplay with **Federica Pontremoli** and **Valia Santella** based on Israeli author Eshkol Nevo's 2015 novel *Shalosh Qonmot (Three Floors Up)*. Moretti working from an adaptation is surprising, and perhaps that is where his usual narrative freshness gets lost in the translation.

The action crashes onscreen as drunken driver Andrea (**Alessandro Sperdute**), the aberrant son of judges, careens around a corner, killing a woman, which the pregnant Monica (**Alba Rohrwacher**) sees while leaving a grand apartment building in an affluent Rome (instead of Tel Aviv) neighborhood. Nevertheless, Monica takes herself to a hospital, gives birth, and returns home before informing husband Giorgio (**Adriano Giannini**), regularly away because of work. Postnatal depression, lack of companionship, and a recurring illusion has her tottering on sanity's edge. Whereas professionals Lucio (**Riccardo Scamarcio**) and Sara (**Elena Lietti**) pack so much in their days, good-hearted Giovanna (**Anna Bonaiuto**) and Renato (**Paolo Graziosi**) next door frequently mind Francesca (**Chiara Abalsamo** at seven, **Gea Dall'Orto** at 17). One fateful evening, Lucio, conveniently overlooking Renato's memory impairment, asks his help babysitting Francesca, and then they go missing. Lucio finds them disorganized and traumatized in the nearby woods. Lucio immediately, and sans validation, thinks the worst about Renato, thus provoking a decades-long feud. Nevertheless, he has no qualms about intimately responding to their teenage granddaughter Charlotte's (**Denise Tantucci**) overt flirtations. And finally, the judges, phlegmatic Vittorio (Moretti) and lenient Dora

(**Margherita Buy**) are beside themselves with their troublemaking son. Except, this time, one decides to stand on the side of decency regarding Andrea's conviction.

The film plows from one unhappy event, occurrence, affair, circumstance, and/or experience to another with a certain feel of manipulated melodrama and sentimentality. Stretching over three time-periods, *Drei Etagen* lacks insight, depth, and humor. Some scenes defy credibility, e.g., Charlotte enticing Lucio, others clarity, e.g., Monica's crow, while others compassion, e.g., the Renato situation. The cast brings little expression to one-dimensional characters that never develop, change, or talk about anything important. The uplifting, grace-saving film score by **Franco Piersanti** boosts the overall mood. *Drei Etagen* may have premiered at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, yet contrary to its print inspiration, it is a forgettable film. 119 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)

Meine Schrecklich Verwöhnte Familie (Pourris gâtés, Spoiled Brats) ****



© Telepool

France 2021
Opening May 12, 2022

Directed by: Nicolas Cuche
Writing credits: Nicolas Cuche, Laurent Turner
Principal actors: Gérard Jugnot, Camille Lou, Artus, Louka Meliava, Tom Leeb, Francois Morel

Billionaire Francis Bartek (**Gérard Jugnot**) lives with his grown children in a luxurious villa in Monaco. He has been a widower for 15 years. His oldest son, Philippe (**Artus**), should take over the company, Bartek Enterprise, but he would rather push a new idea called "The Shoe that Fits." Here, a company employee wears new shoes until they are comfortable and then hands them over to the owner. Instead of flying to Avignon for family business, he sneaks off in a private jet to party in Ibiza. He loves his Corvette. The daughter, Stella (**Camille Lou**), spends the day shopping for expensive fashionable clothing.



Top: **A silver ring by Gülin Z.**
Bottom: **A handmade card by Sara N.**
Above: **Jeremy Fisher by Jenny M.**

(Photos by the creators)

She celebrates her 24th birthday with hundreds of guests, who enjoy shooting golf balls as a means of opening champagne bottles. She is engaged to marry the Spanish-speaking Juan Carlos (**Tom Leeb**); they plan a cruise to Buenos Aires, financed by Francis. The younger son, Alexandre (**Louka Meliava**), skips out on university classes and sleeps with fellow students, as well as their mothers. Sadly, Francis suffers a heart attack.

He recovers, but two months later, the police raid the house. The family is bankrupt. Credit cards, bank accounts, and mobile

phones are locked. All four sneak out, steal a car and drive to Marseille where they move into an old broken-down house. How will they survive? There isn't even one bread crumb on the table for supper. Francis is frail; no one knows where they are. The three children must make some "adult" decisions, with no prior experience.

This super fun story is based on a Mexican film, *Nosotros los Nobles* (*The Noble Family*), from 2013.

Slowly we learn about each family member's personality. The house happens to be Francis'

childhood home. What does Francis' good friend Furrucio (**Francois Morel**) know? How does Juan Carlos locate them to show up unexpectedly? Slowly we guess the truth and, nine months later, we are back at another party, but times have changed.

All the actors are excellent, but **Tom Leeb** as Juan Carlos almost steals the show; watch until the end of the credits to discover more. There are morals to the story with lessons about dealing with life, useful even for non-billionaires. (Becky Tan)



Seamus Newham (Tony Reilly) and Nora Connolly (Aoife Muldoon) in *Outside Mullingar*. (Photo by Stefan Koch)

OUTSIDE MULLINGAR

By John Patrick Shanley
presented by the English
Theatre of Hamburg with
Clifford Dean directing

Outside Mullingar runs
through April 10. Closing the
Season is Patrick Cargill's
*Don't Misunderstand
Me*, a fast-paced comedy
premiering April 21.

Tickets online
(eth-hamburg.de) or at the
theater, Lerchenfeld 14, 22081
Hamburg, Tel: 040-227 70 89

An Amusing Right-of-Way to Settling Scores

by Marinell Haegelin

When in his early 40s, John Patrick Shanley, the Pulitzer Prize and Oscar-winning playwright, accompanied his dad back to familial roots in Ireland's rich, fertile Midlands outside the county seat of Mullingar. So impressed was he that, some 20 years later, *Outside Mullingar* was produced about four people in the selfsame setting, borrowing profusely from Irish kinsfolk. Delving into ancestral pride of and connection with the land, Shanley's characters are contentious, provocative, and amusing. "It's a fusion of drama and (black) comedy with romance," summarizes the director.

The Reillys and Muldoons, longtime neighbors, are "just after" burying Christopher Muldoon when widower Tony Reilly thinks nothing of telling the newly widowed Aoife, invited for tea no less, that she'll probably be dead within the year,

now that Chris is gone. Anthony berates his dad, whereas Aoife gets back at Tony, inquiring whether he's signed the farm over to Anthony yet. Anthony is stunned when Tony claims he's not a land-loving Reilly, but more a Kelly on his mam's side, particularly like the "mad as a full moon" grandfather, John, who didn't love land. As Anthony leaves to find Rosemary, Aoife nonchalantly announces that Rosemary doesn't like him. Perplexed and hurt, he departs. Continuing to chat candidly about their kids' oddities, Aoife elicits from Tony that he plans to sell the farm to an American nephew. Of course, there's that Muldoon right-of-way through the Reilly land that Tony is hoping Aoife'll sell back to him. Setting off a well-worn dispute, Tony is amazed to learn it's Rosemary's strip of land to sell. Meanwhile, Anthony finds Rosemary; forever secretly in love with Anthony, she's annoyed by his aloofness, enjoys needling him, and today's touchy topic is ex-girlfriend

Fiona. Exasperatedly he replies, "Is the human race against me this night?" Hearing about what her mam told him, Rosemary parries, "You're a bit of a lump," but then he tells her what Tony said concerning his inheritance. He departs for the fields while Rosemary, knowing Anthony's merits, goes indoors and boldly upbraids Tony for questioning Anthony's birthright. Who in turn warns her that Anthony will never marry; dogged, Rosemary resorts to emotional pressure. As seasons come and go, so too are torches eventually passed, and madness prevails: How mad? "You'll find out. When it's too late."

Since first reading *Outside Mullingar*, after directing *Doubt* in 2008, seasoned director Clifford Dean loved its melancholy, its promising optimism, its Irishness. Authenticity is essential, and Dean's principal casting requirement was: be Irish. Breaking the seven-scene play into two acts—"delayed

Marylyn Addo wins Hammonia Award

“A shining example for women in science”

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Marylyn Addo has been a prominent personality—calmly and clearly explaining to the public the virology, the risks, and the precautions of the pandemic but also the efforts and importance of vaccine development. She appeared so much in the press, I often thought of her as the Corona Cover Girl. But those numerous photos on the cover of the Hamburger Abendblatt and her abundant appearances in tv interviews served another important purpose: Advocating women’s equality. Indeed, most of us will remember her from our Women in Leadership event in March 2021, in which she was one of our panelists—bringing her light-hearted humor and acute awareness of the problems facing women striving to balance career and family.



young women in science. The Hammonia Award, named after Hamburg’s city goddess, honors women who have made a competent and decisive contribution to equal opportunities for women and has been awarded annually by the LFR since 2008.

The award ceremony was a hybrid event in December. The excellent laudatory address by LFR chairwoman Petra Ackermann highlighted Prof. Addo’s scientific and clinical achievements at the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF) and as head of the Infectious Diseases Section at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE). She went on to emphasize, “As a champion for more equality in science and research, Ms. Addo is also committed to ensuring that young female scientists will no longer have to choose between career and family in the future. This commitment cannot be overestimated.”

Hamburg’s Senator for Equal Opportunities and Science, Katharina Fegebank, also thanked Ms. Addo on behalf of the Senate for

inheritance” and “delayed romance”—Dean’s direction is straightforward, genuine.

Seamus Newham embodies the ailing Tony Reilly’s crotchiness, confusion, and deep-seated discomfort around Anthony. Brian Tynan’s relaxed innateness

solidly portrays son Anthony’s cautious secretiveness and then cascading confessions. Nora Connolly strongly portrays Aoife (pronounced Eé-fa) Muldoon’s pragmatism, resilience, and unflagging support of daughter Rosemary. Catherine Deevy wonderfully depicts Rosemary’s



her outstanding achievements. “She is not only a role model for women in science, but also a top physician in her field and a central figure in the fight against the Corona pandemic here in Hamburg and nationwide.”

Prof. Addo accepted the award with her usual charm, pleased that she was receiving an award for doing what she likes to do and knows is important. Congratulations Marylyn! (By Carol H.)



In March, our members wrote profiles about women who inspire us in the fields of health and humanity. Read them all at awchamburg.org and on AWCH social media.

candid, tenacious convictions. Understandably, we’re itching to know whether these two stubborn teenage-acting adults will see their way clear to taking a chance. Or instead, keep running in circles until the torch goes out?



Kheel Center, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

"Nobody really does anything alone ... it is only by inducing others to go along that changes are accomplished and work is done."

—Eleanor Roosevelt

CURRENTS MAGAZINE

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