

American Women's Club of Hamburg, e.V.

CURRENTS

Summer/Fall 2019 Vol. 35, No. 3

www.awchamburg.org



CHANGE



Cornelia Creischer, president of the Landesfrauenrat (third from left), and some of her team surprised us at our July board meeting with flowers and a card. They heartily congratulated us for the U.S. Team's 2019 Women's World Cup win. As their card stated, "Women will conquer more than the soccer field like breaking every single glass ceiling!" What a great example of women supporting women.

President's Message

AWCH sends a very special welcome to each of the 30 members who have joined in 2019. We're proud to have you in our club and hope to see you at our upcoming events.

I hope you had a lovely summer, whether enjoying the superlatives of Hamburg and Germany, traveling abroad, or combining both. AWCH had a lot to offer to those staying in Hamburg with our annual Independence Day Celebration, the FAWCO-inspired health activities of the Get Up & Move Group and the Women's Circle, the charity event *Run Against Violence*, the Art Group tours, as well as our regular group activities—many of which you can read about in this issue of *Currents*.

The last months of the year are typically the busiest for AWCH, so I hope you are energized for what's ahead. There will be the traditional holiday events and many special events. A highlight will be the celebration *Cluborama—Get to Know AWCH* with face-to-face interactions between our members and our groups and teams during a fun and festive event. Our club is about bringing people together through social, cultural, and philanthropic activities and helping them connect to each other and Hamburg while having fun. This will be an opportunity to look behind the scenes, meet the players, and be inspired.

Christine R. and Shelly S. are co-chairs of the new Philanthropic Committee, which will review and coordinate our contributions both locally and globally. It is rewarding for AWCH to give back, and we are very proud of what we contribute. Since the last issue of *Currents*, we have had

- A Bagel Fundraiser and Sewing Bee for the **From the Heart Pillow Project** benefitting breast cancer patients at the Helios Mariahilf Hospital in Hamburg-Harburg. Thank you Tracy M. and team for your dedication since 2015 to this project!

- Active support of the 5th Hamburg Autonomous Women's Shelter: thank you Weibin L. for offering your expertise and hosting the Dumpling Fundraiser. Many thanks to Jennifer L., her committee, and the more than 25 members, family, and friends who supported the *Run Against Violence* by assisting with set up, donating baked goods, participating in the run, and supporting in absentia. A very special thank you to Coca-Cola Germany for their generous donation of ViO bottled water for all the participants of the run.
- A donation of hand-sewn quilt squares for the 25th Anniversary FAWCO Friendship Quilt, which will be raffled at the 2020 Interim Meeting to benefit the FAWCO Foundation's philanthropic causes. Thank you, Carola A., Tracy M., Shelly S., and Susan S.-W.

The last board meetings of this year will be open board meetings, and all members are cordially invited to attend. This is an opportunity to get to know the board and how it works, as well as a chance to present your interests and concerns. The results of the AWCH survey have been published (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/w6fvf8wuqdp9212/AWC%20Hamburg%20Survey.pdf?dl=0>). The board is working with this survey to update our club communications and activities. Elections for the new AWCH Board will be held at our 2020 Annual General Meeting. Holly T. has been appointed Nominating Committee Chair and will be announcing the committee members soon. If you would like to serve in a board position, we would love to hear from you.

On a closing note, the board expresses its gratitude to all those who volunteer for AWCH. Every act of volunteering contributes to the whole and keeps our club the community that we want. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Carol Strametz

2019 AWCH President

Currents Magazine

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Currents proofreaders enjoying a lunch after a busy morning session!





Independence Day Celebration in BallinStadt

A group of 60 AWCH members, family and friends celebrated the 4th of July on a hot, sunny day at the Emigration Museum BallinStadt, the “Port of Dreams”, in the Hamburg harbor. The fun started already enroute, as many boarded a ferry at Landungsbrücke to take a 40-minute tour through the harbor before disembarking at BallinStadt.

There we started by learning about the museum in an introductory lecture skillfully translated by Peter v. d. B. The historical halls housing the museum were built 120 years ago by the patron Alfred Ballin, a shipping magnate, to serve as the last homestead for the emigrants, who were about to start their journey to the New World. From 1850 until 1939 it is estimated that 5 million Europeans emigrants left through Hamburg, with 4 million of them heading on to the US. In total nearly 25 million Europeans immigrated to the US from 1880 to 1924, when the US introduced the Immigration Act 1924 to radically restrict immigration.

As many of us are descendants of immigrants, BallinStadt is a meaningful place to celebrate the Fourth. The museum highlights the economic and social circumstances that have pushed people to migrate during several different epochs, and the hardships and uncertainties that they encountered. English speakers can navigate the museum listen-

ing to the voice of Diana S. on the App BallinStadtXplore sponsored by the U.S. Consulate General of Hamburg.

Leaving the cool entrance hall of the museum we walked two buildings down to the outdoor courtyard of the Restaurant “Nach Amerika”. Here we enjoyed a barbecue featuring delicious Ballinburgers with all the trimmings and our wonderful homemade American desserts. Outdoor games for the children were available in the shaded area behind the museum. The adults and children staying in the courtyard took it easy with crafting patriotic windcatchers, coloring 4th of July motives, and answering the challenging questions on the adult’s, teenager’s or child’s patriotic quiz.

It was a fun celebration. As in the past, I find it amazing how we can come together to celebrate the Fourth and actually catch the spirit of the day. A special thank you to the BallinStadt for their generosity and hospitality. Many thanks to all the volunteers—Shelly S. and Jennifer L. for coordinating the outdoor games, Sarah T. for organizing the crafting of the patriotic windcatchers, Jordan W. for the patriotic quizzes, and Carol H. for coordinating the ferry ride—and to all who came to make this celebration memorable. (Carol S.)



Hands-On Support for the Fourth of July Party at the Consulate General

Five-hundred goody bags, filled with chocolates, pens, an umbrella, a film DVD, power bars, jelly beans, and brochures were packed by a small, energetic, and efficient team of AWCH members for the guests of Consul General Rick Yoneoka and Kathrin Yoneoka at the celebration of the 234rd Anniversary of Independence. Rick had invited German politicians, business associates, and friends to thank them for the strong bilateral relationship during his three-year stay in Hamburg. American fare, including hamburgers, burritos, donuts, beer, and Jack Daniel's, kept the party going long after the sun had set. Thank you, ladies!



Laufend Gegen Gewalt— Run Against Violence

In the very early morning hours of Saturday, August 18, several AWCH members and their families joined forces with a team of women representing all five of the Autonomous Women's Shelters in Hamburg. It was a typical end-of-summer Hamburg day, with *Schmuddelwetter* threatening to turn to rain. An immediate sense of "we belong" was felt as the organizers quickly showed their appreciation of the extra helping hands. In the middle of the green Alsterpark, tents sprung up from nowhere, tables and chairs were distributed, banners and balloons hung, and the *Kaffee und Kuchen* table assembled. By 9:30 a.m. the preparations were done, and the Japanese drum group TAIKOON electrified the air as the 342 participants—runners, bikers, skaters, and walkers—assembled for the 7.4 km run around the Alster lake, in so, demonstrating their support for the efforts of the Autonomous Women's Shelter to end domestic violence and provide support for abused women.

AWCH support for this cause was initiated at the 2019 Annual General Meeting when we chose the 5th Women's Shelter as our local charity for 2019 and 2020. In addition to collecting clothes for the shelter at "Sip and Swap" events (next one in November), we committed ourselves to help out at the *Laufend Gegen Gewalt* event. Jennifer L. and Carol S. coordinated this effort, organizing a donation of 400 liters of water from the Coca Cola Company, getting over 20 AWCH members to provide cakes,



brownies, and cookies for the event, and enlisting helpers for the morning setup, half-way water station, and *Kaffee und Kuchen* station—and encouraging AWCH members to run (or walk)!



At last count, we were 17 runners representing AWCH, including husbands, partners, sons, daughters, and neighbors (19, if we include Sus E.-W. und Carol S., who circled the Alster enroute to the half-way point to distribute water.) Although no AWCH member was amongst the top three finishing in under 30 minutes, each could be pleased with her/his time as the finish line was crossed to the drums of the SAMBAHIA drum group from Volksdorf. A few took advantage of the massages offered by Kim Wellness at the finish area ... or of the children's make-up stand. And I doubt any of us passed up a cookie or brownie at the stand distributing the AWCH-donated baked goodies, pleasantly and professionally managed by Stella K.-R.

The Run Against Violence quickly came to a close ... but, unfortunately, the cause that it supports is still ongoing. We as AWCH members can be proud of the small but significant effort we have made to raise money and awareness for this important cause. Domestic violence must NOT be ignored, tolerated, or trivialized. (Carol H.)



Our early morning crew!

A BIG thank you to all who helped!



Our helpers at the half-way water station!



Our runners!



Our bakers! No pictures but our baked goods went like hot cakes!



Hamburg Autonomous Women's Shelters



Violence against women is the most widespread form of human rights violation of our time. For many women and children in Germany and elsewhere, violence is part of their everyday lives, regardless of income, education, or social class. Ongoing acts of violence or threats of violence bring fear and insecurity and cause psychological and physical damage to women and their children. People who experience violence in their families during childhood and adolescence often perpetuate violence in their own families later.

For 40 years, the Hamburg Autonomous Women's Shelters have been offering protection from partnership violence. Over the past 10 years, 7,201 women and 5,414 children have found shelter in an Autonomous Hamburg Women's Shelter.

Every woman is admitted at any time of the day or night through "24/7" (emergency hotline: 040-8000 4 1000). All women and their children who have experienced domestic violence receive temporary shelter and protection, regardless of their nationality or financial situation. The Hamburg Women's Shelters offer women and children individual counselling, support, and a hope for a life without violence. For more information see www.hamburgerfrauenhauser.de.

Hearts and Dumplings!

Our social engagement did start or end with the Run!

In August Weibin K. sponsored a second dumpling making class. All proceeds went to Hamburg's Fifth Women's Shelter.

The end of summer also marked the beginning of the "From the Heart Pillow Project," organized by Tracy M. Pillows and drainage bags are donated to breast cancer patients at the Helios Klinik Mariahilf.



Thank
you ❤️



AWCH Evening of Art

On June 6 a group of AWCH members and friends enjoyed an exclusive guided tour in English of the exhibition *Generation Wealth* by the award-winning film maker and photographer Lauren Greenfield in the House of Photography in the historical Deichtorhallen. This spectacular exhibition of large-format photos showed today's ubiquitous and grotesque quest for status, beauty, and wealth. Lauren Greenfield's view on toxic wealth is explained in an NBC News video (<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/video/generation-wealth-filmmaker-lauren-greenfield-on-how-to-overcome-the-toxic-effects-of-money-1289132099905>). In brief she states that "the desire to consume has consumed us. We're dancing on the deck of the Titanic without a moral compass, and our identity is tied to what we have." She continues with the following observations: The American Dream has changed from a culture of "hard work, frugality and discretion" to a culture of "bling, celebrity and narcissism that has been exported around the world." Luxury, affluence and the desire to be famous lead to addiction and dissatisfaction. The antidote to this is getting back to what matters—to an identity that is not tied to what one has and to values of family and community.

Following the tour we had time to browse the exhibition on our own or with others. The evening ended at a lovely restaurant nearby where we exchanged our impressions of, and thoughts on, this powerful exhibition. (Carol S.)





The AWCH Board invites all members and potential members to its CLUB-O-RAMA.

This will be a unique opportunity for ALL to see what the AWCH offers.

Representatives from FAWCO, our various groups (Art, Book, Film, Opera, Theater, Get Up & Move, Stich 'n' Bitch), our special activities (German Conversation, Hamburger Helpers, After Work Drinks, *Currents*, Club Communication, Moms and Bumps, National Women's History Month, Women's Circle, *etc.*) and Activities, Archive, and Philanthropic Committees will introduce their aims and activities, and answer questions.

This is the event to **CONNECT, GET INVOLVED and CELEBRATE!**

Live folk music by Caroline Cotter. Refreshments.

Location: Amerikazentrum Hamburg, Am Sandtorkai 48

Please RSVP on our website calendar or at activities@awchamburg.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

The holiday season is quickly approaching!
Please mark your calendars now,
so you are not left out of the festivities.
Details will follow soon.

Halloween Party	Wednesday, October 30
Thanksgiving	Saturday, November 23
Holiday Party	Wednesday, December 11

Want to help organize, decorate, or share ideas?
Contact Anne-Marie at
activities@AWCHamburg.org

ATTENTION!!

Speaking of the holidays....did you know that AWCH earns money on your Amazon internet orders?

Use the link below (also found on our website) when ordering. This is NOT an Amazon SMILE account. For AWCH to profit from your order, please be sure you are on the following website:

<https://www.amazon.de/?tag=awchambeve&linkCode=ur1>





Get Involved: Awareness, Advocacy, and Participation

FAWCO seeks to build strong support networks for its members; to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide; to advocate for the rights of U.S. citizens overseas; and to mobilize the skills of its membership in support of key global issues.

FAWCO does this through its programs: Membership Support, U.S. Issues, United Nations Advocacy, and Global Issues (Human Rights, Health, Education, Environment). The FAWCO Foundation supports the philanthropic goals of FAWCO through development grants and education awards.

Within these FAWCO programs, there is a range of issues that could be of interest to you. Finding the areas is the key and getting involved can take many different forms. The

most important part is to be involved in the issues that matter to you.

*Raise your **Awareness** by reading and watching recommended material.

*Become an **Advocate** by sharing the information you have gained with family and friends.

***Participate** by attending, sponsoring, chairing an event, or donating.

As the FAWCO Representative (Rep) for AWCH, I am here for any questions, suggestions, or comments: Christine R., fawcorep@awchamburg.org.

FAWCO Region 5 Meeting



The FAWCO Region 5 Meeting *Living, Laughing & Learning* takes place in Leipzig, Germany, November 15-17. Topics will coincide with the new Target Program *Health: Ensuring Healthy Lives and Promoting Well-Being to Improve the Lives of Women and Girls*. This is a great opportunity to connect to members of other FAWCO clubs in Germany and Austria as well as AWCH members. A group of eight from Hamburg has already registered. If you would like to join this group, contact Christine R. at fawcorep@awchamburg.org.

FAWCO UN Advocacy—Climate Change in Focus

Our Voice in the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change

FAWCO was awarded Observer Status to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in late 2016. This accreditation enables FAWCO to send representatives to UN climate change conferences. Since 2017, FAWCO's U.N. Reps Stacey Kimmig and Ayuska Motha have represented us at the climate change conference that takes place in July every year. FAWCO has joined the [Women and Gender Constituency](#) of Observer NGOs at the UNFCCC which will further strengthen FAWCO's participation, coverage of and involvement with the climate conference process.

Climate Change Impacts Global Migration

[Climate Induced Displacement](#) is an informative brochure developed by the U.N. NGO Committee on Migration, in which FAWCO is an active member and FAWCO's UN Rep Jane Politi is the Vice Chair of the executive committee.

In 2018, FAWCO signed on to the [Declaration on Climate-Induced Displacement](#) initiated by CIVICUS, a global network of civil society and other stakeholders to engage constructively in finding common solutions to global challenges.

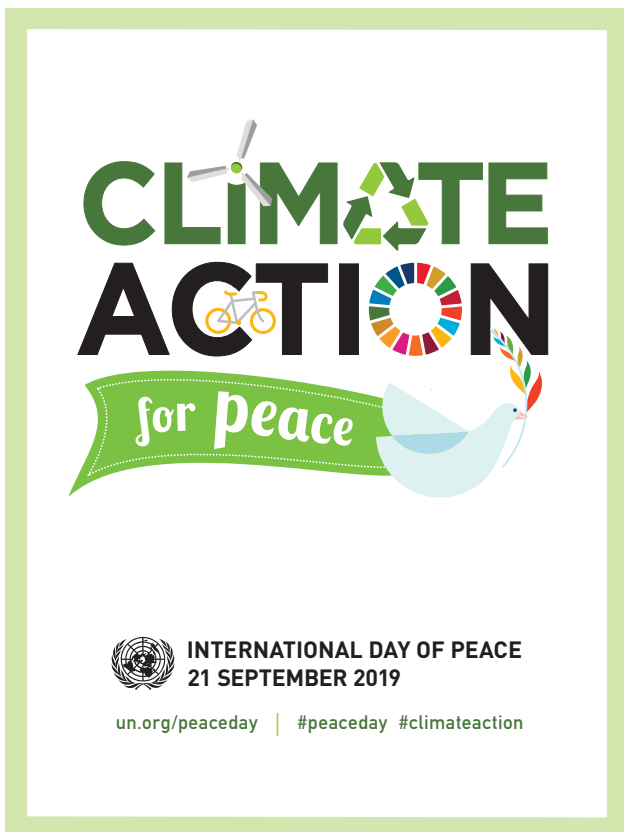
FAWCO's commitment to the U.N.'s climate change initiatives matter to all of us. The estimates of population movements due to environmental changes vary substantially, from 25 million to 1 billion environmental migrants by 2050, with 200 million being the most cited figure (World Migration Report 2018). This displacement will substantially impact world peace as more people compete for scarce resources.

Get Involved

read FAWCO's UN Climate Change Conference [blog posts](#).

read the [Pocket Guide to Gender Equality under the UNFCCC](#).

subscribe to [FAWCO UN Liaison Bulletins](#)



International Day of Peace is September 21

"It is possible to achieve our goals, but we need decisions, political will and transformational policies to allow us to still live in peace with our own climate—nature does not negotiate"

—U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, 2019

The 2019 Theme is "Climate Action for Peace," drawing attention to the importance of combating climate change as a way to protect and promote peace throughout the world.

Climate change causes clear threats to international peace and security. Natural disasters displace three times as many people as conflicts, forcing millions to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere. The salinization of water and crops is endangering food security, and the impact on public health is escalating. The growing tensions over resources and mass movements of people are affecting every country on every continent.

Peace can only be achieved if concrete action is taken to combat climate change. Every human is part of the solution—from turning off the lights to taking public transport.'

AWCH's New Women's Circle

Organized by our FAWCO Rep Christine



The new FAWCO Target Program is Health. Thus, in our new Women's Circle, AWCH will focus on women's health issues. A Women's Circle is a safe place for women to come together to learn, discuss, share, empower, and of course, inspire. The topics covered will be varied but focus on women's health in the various forms that it takes: physical, mental, spiritual, financial, and emotional. The intention is to hold workshops, seminars, classes and discussion groups that put the health of women at the center.



“In the first workshop, I learned that in working through a traumatic event, people tend to go from A (something bad happened) to B and then to C. The person then returns to A and relives the experience again and again. Not being able to continue with their life they're stuck in this vicious circle. I learned it's important to create a D (*“the meaning”, A.S.*). I also learned, how I grew, and what can I glean from this experience that allows me to go forward. I can immediately put into practice the things that I learned. Thank you, Christine and Anna! ”

—Susan St.-W.

In the first pilot meeting to understand the needs and expectations of AWCH members, we started by identifying a variety of meanings behind the concept and topics for subsequent meetings. For AWCH members, the definition of health is more than just the absence of illness; it is a stress-free life, healthy relationships with others and with oneself, healthy body and spirit, healthy environment, and the possibilities of fulfilled, meaningful life. The participants of the first Women's Circle developed a list of main topics and associated keywords related to health.

The planned Women's Circle activities include seminars on hormones, nutrition and detox with Marion B.; workshops on stress and self-acceptance with Anna S., workshop on Mindfulness with Makia M., and Qigong classes with Sally N. Invitations will be sent and posted on our website as dates and times are set.

Also planned are discussion groups. After all, what better way to foster women's health than by discussing and sharing important topics with like-minded women. A moderator will put together relevant material—articles, Ted Talks, and podcasts—that help

to inform the discussion. The other members of the group will bring their views, opinions, experiences, suggestions, concerns, and compassion.

Ideas for our discussion group sessions:

- ◇ Isolation & making friends in a new place
- ◇ Menopause—Really?!
- ◇ Coping with chronic illnesses
- ◇ Dementia & the disproportionate impact on women
- ◇ Who am I now—after divorce, kids leaving home, or retirement?
- ◇ Toxic relationships & how to removing them from your life
- ◇ Body Image
- ◇ Self-Care—why do I need to be busy all the time?

If you are interested in moderating one of these topics, have a topic suggestion or perhaps have a skill that you can contribute to a Women's Circle, please let me know. Christine R. fawcorep@awchamburg.org



“ We all have our tigers, things which create a lot of anxiety for us. Generally, though, we have to deal with our tigers. I think that it is important to reflect on what we have learned when dealing with them. It can help turn a negative situation into a positive one and empower us, help us tame our tigers. But, also, it’s helpful to realize that someone else’s tiger may be something that doesn’t cause us any anxiety at all and it helps us to understand what they may be going through. And we can reach resolution instead of conflict. ”

—Anne C.



Stress & the Tiger in the Room

by Anna Sizorina

In the first two meetings of the Women’s Circle, an important theme was identified and further discussed: **Stress and Self-Regulation**. How do our mind and body react to it? How can we learn to respond better to the stressors that impact us daily?

Acute stress is a reaction to life-threatening danger. Imagine a tiger pacing in the room where you are. With your eyes fixed on the predator, you would probably slowly retreat into the corner or some other kind of shelter, your heart will beat faster, your hand may search for a stick or another kind of weapon, ... or your muscles might stiffen unable to move. Fight, flight or freeze are the responses of our autonomous nervous system to an extraordinary life or death situation and are meant to ensure our survival.

We all have our own “tigers” of pain, loss, loneliness, exclusion, failure, anger or fear. If not tamed, these tigers make our world revolve around them, conquering our attention and reducing opportunities. These tigers make us alert and force us to see dangers even in neutral or irrelevant situations. Research has shown that we tend to interpret facial expressions through the light of our emotional state: being angry we tend to perceive neutral faces as rather furious, being sad, we have a feeling of being surrounded by depressed individuals. Our tigers require huge energy input but are designed to be temporary.

However, when this abnormal situation lasts over time, or when the brain perceives every little discomfort as a “tiger” fight, or flight become the sole response pattern to every slightly difficult situation—stress surmounts. Stress may affect the immune system and our bodies start suffering: the healing of the wounds may be impaired, or blood

pressure may increase leading to cardiovascular problems. Thus, a tiger is sufficient to cause acute stress and a threat to life. But other life events may also have an impact, and the accumulation of these effects may approach tiger level.

In the second meeting on September 12, we concentrated on self-regulation. According to Andrea L. Bell, a licensed clinical social worker, the term self-regulation means “control [of oneself] by oneself.” Self-regulation is the ability of a person to remain calm and present or to return to a baseline after everyday hardships. We learn to keep the emotions manageable and to resist impulses and unwanted behaviors by experience, first in contact with parents, and then on our own. Adversities and life events may impair the development of this ability. Some of the coping strategies learned earlier in life and suitable for one particular situation do not apply to others.

Some stories tend to be repeated again and again. Like in the literature, each life event has a beginning, a middle, and an end. However, the most important part of any story is its meaning. Taking a moment to sort out what does all that happened mean to you, what you have learned from the event, and how it helps your advancement, will allow you to finish the story and progress on the road called life.

In our Women’s Circle we talked about everyday stressors and discovered some ways to adapt our reactions and coping mechanisms accordingly; we experienced how mindfulness and imagination allow us to reduce pressures and calm down; some of us started a big “clean up” action in order to gently and carefully store old stressful events in the archive of our past, where they belong.

Theme: CHANGE

“Expect the Unexpected”

by Marilyn Richter and Carol Harbers

Change. Life changes. Events that have changed your life. A new job. A move to a new city. A birthday. The loss of a partner. A degree. A new exercise routine. Meeting someone.

What are the changes that have shaped your life? I am sure that we all have many, many answers to this question.

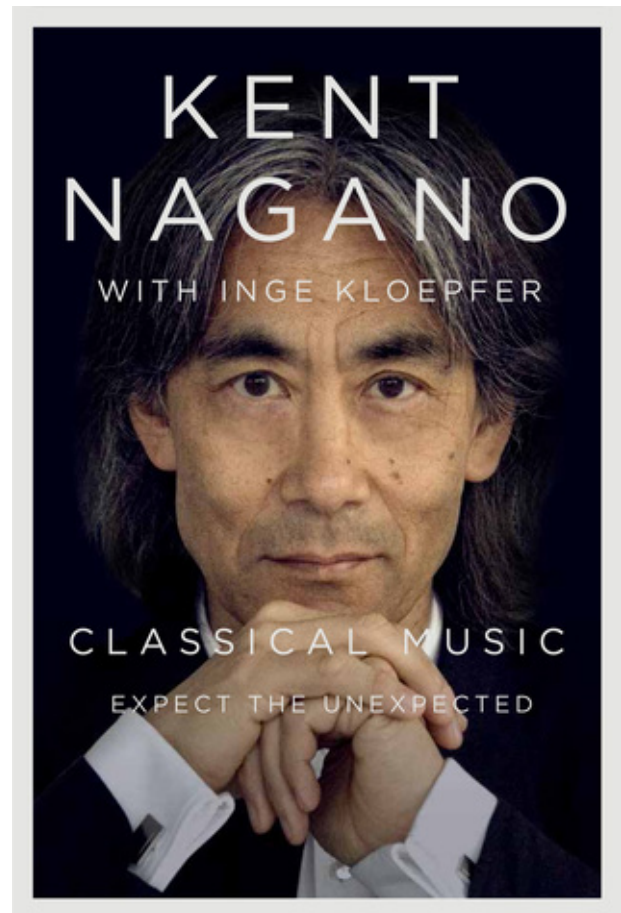
As I started reading Kent Nagano's autobiography, I was struck by the influence that a single teacher had on his life. Wachtag Korisheli was born in Tbilisi, Georgia, but immigrated to California after WWII. Professor Korisheli, as he was affectionately called, got his first teaching position at a elementary school in a small seaside town—and opened up the world of classical music to his pupils. For many, including Kent Nagano, that changed their life completely. His book conveys his compassion for music, but to meet him in person, as we had the pleasure on September 12, is to experience it first hand.

The evening ended with autographs and photos—and an elated audience. I would not be surprised if the life of many have been changed through Kent Nagano's teaching. Change brings more change.

Here is Marilyn's report of the evening:

On Thursday evening, in a private gathering at the Amerikazentrum Hamburg e.V., Kent Nagano generated a spellbound audience and creative atmosphere in a discussion of his autobiography *Classical Music, Expect the Unexpected*.

The moderator, Johanna Prinzessin von Sachsen-Coburg, accompanied the conductor and author through a passionate explanation of how his love and emotion of classical music grew. She took us through selected passages of his book, beginning with his childhood years. He grew up in the beautiful and natural surroundings of Morro Bay in California—no television, no stereo, just a piano and a compassionate music teacher. Princess Johanna navigated us through the political events in the 70's that led to his choice to study sociology and law, and his later decision to pursue a musical career. In his early years at the Orchestra symphonique de Montréal, he learned to bring classical music in a form in which people could identify. His several positions among others, included Music Director of the Opera National de Lyon, Music Director of the Los Angeles Opera and, presently, General Music Director of the Staatsoper Hamburg and Chief Conductor of the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg



Classical music is not just for the elite but for everyone, maintains the musician and conductor. It builds bridges and it is timeless. Composers wrote music for the people, meaning it is not confined by social structures, yet the privileged have also been entertained by it. Music is something so essential to our quality of life that at times it is worthy of sacrifices. Music is like nature; it can be overpowering and beautiful yet destructive at the same time. It is like love, which can be bitter or unrequited. For Kent Nagano, Bach is a perfect composer. He is a balm for the soul—Nagano plays him when he is melancholic, or when he is joyous. Bach has laid the groundwork for all subsequent composers, to either develop their own style, or to tear it down completely, as Arnold Schoenberg did later.

Kent Nagano was relaxed on this evening, clearly enjoying talking to fellow Americans. To the question, “What is your opinion of the acoustics at the Elbphilharmonie?” “We love it,” he answered “but it is brutal.” It forces the musicians to reach perfection and that is what is resonated in the music. He explained this by comparing it with his wife's Steinway (she is a concert pianist) and his Bösendorfer; one is brutally exact in its tone, the other mellifluous in its performance.

The Stairway to Rock n' Roll

by Beatrice King

One of the greatest turning points in my life was joining a rock band in high school. Throughout my early teenagerhood in Pittsburgh, most of my classmates listened only to electronic pop or terrible rap. I was not a fan of my generation's music and so I asked my parents if they could recommend a few bands for me. Iron Man by Black Sabbath quickly became my most listened to song on my YouTube channel. However, I specifically remember the first moment when rock n' roll changed my life. I was 15, sitting in study hall, browsing 'related songs' on YouTube when Stairway to Heaven by Led Zep- pelin popped up on my screen. At first, I hesitated because I thought it was some type of modern Christian rock, but with the click of a button and 8:01 minutes later, my life had completely changed.

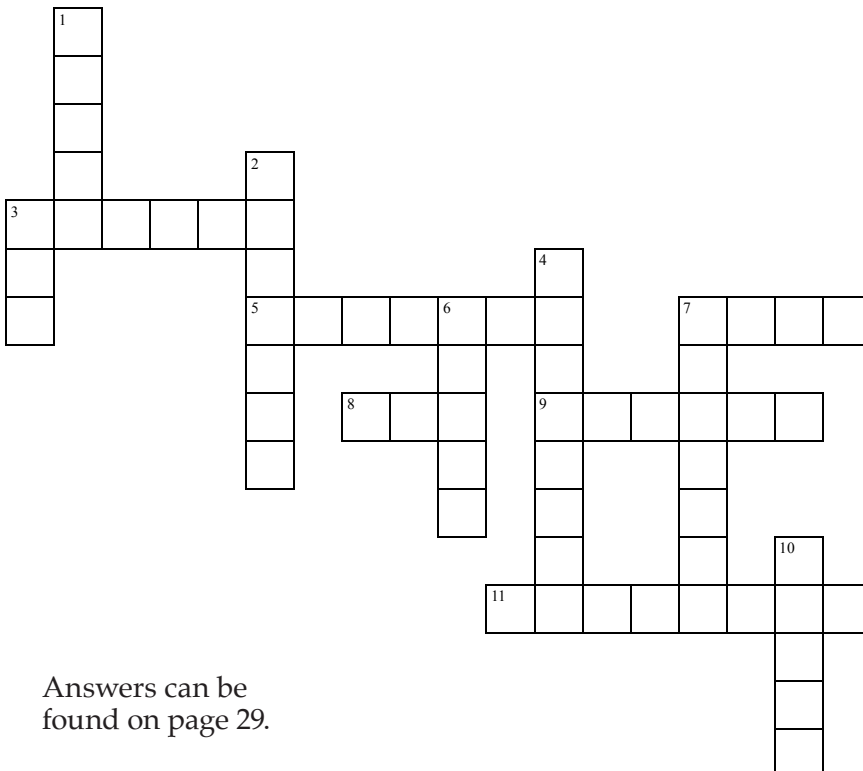
From that point on, the entirety of my high school experience revolved around Led Zeppelin and other classic bands of the 1970s. I joined multiple rock and alternative bands and played numerous con-

certs at the Hard Rock Café in Pittsburgh, as well as at street festivals, museums and parties alike. Rock n' Roll opened up a portal, which allowed me to escape the dullness of my classmates' frivolous, digitalized music and enter a world of heavy, dirty, physical music. Just as kids behaved 40 years before, heavy rock allowed me to rebel from my generation and experience a sliver of the unique Zeitgeist of the 1970s.



Atlantic Records, US promotional material, public domain.

High School Rock n' Roll Band



Answers can be found on page 29.

Across

- 3. where the band practices
- 5. the loudest band member
- 7. who are we?
- 8. vehicle for transport
- 9. a famous guitar brand
- 11. a type of guitar

Down

- 1. late night snack
- 2. the father of psychedelic rock
- 3. a small concert
- 4. a self-written song is a
- 6. what we don't ever have
- 7. the most made fun of in the band
- 10. old school listening

Change in Scenery

by Ulrike Cameron Henn

Sunrays are caressing my face as I hurry down the narrow cobblestone street on my way to class at the Centro Italiano in the historic district of Naples. I stop for a macchiato and cornetto at the corner bar and have a quick chat with Lorenzo, the always good-humored barista. A backpack with my school-books is slung over my shoulder; my heart is light with joy; I feel like a student again.

Both my parents died in 2014, just six months apart, as did two of my close friends. Their deaths devastated me and I was inconsolable for a very long time. Nothing seemed to help me out of my dark, mournful mood. I started to read my old diaries, trying to find ways that had helped me before to overcome crisis. One day I came across a passage I had written in 1983 while traveling to Italy when still living in the US: "On my way to Ischia: We are passing a small island called Procida. It looks like a big rock in the water—isolated, mysterious. There is a small port lined with a row of pastel-colored houses, just one road curving up to a castle on top. I would like to visit one day."

In November 2015 I was able to rent a tiny apartment in the basement of a house in Procida. Nothing fancy; on the contrary, rather ugly, and definitely uncomfortable. It was cold and humid; before going to bed, I had to dry my nightgown in front of an old-fashioned gas stove, my only means of heating.

However, taking long walks along the beach and through the tiny alleys of the island put me more and more at ease. I searched for all the locations where the movie *Il Positano*, Massimo Troisi's last film, was shot. I cried bitterly reading Elsa Morante's novel *Arturo's Island*, the coming-of-age story of a semi-orphaned boy in the years just before World War II on this remote island in the Bay of Naples.

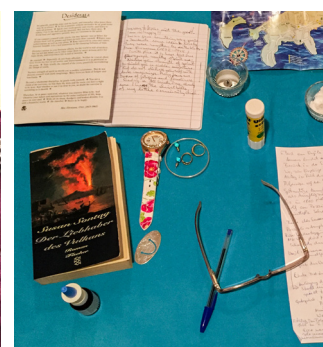
Every day I wrote for hours in my diary, trying to figure out where I was in my life, now that I was next in line, so to speak: where was I going? What



was important? When did I feel most content and at peace? I was really honest with myself, no matter how painful. I began to realize that for quite some time I had not been the creator of my life but that I was sitting on the fence waiting for life to happen to me. I was mentally and emotionally frozen!

When I returned to Hamburg for Christmas, I felt very optimistic that if I were to focus on mutual interests with my husband, I could find my way back. It turned out that he was quite happy to go hunting with his childhood buddies on the weekends, leaving not much room for me. I, on the other side, needed new challenges, needed to learn, and was itching to grow. The travel bug kept nagging.

The winter of 2016 I spent in Procida again. This time I found a beautiful apartment in the small harbor La Corricella where in winter you will hear nothing but the calling of the seagulls and the chatter of the fishermen. My family came for Christmas. We spent a profound few days, enjoying the special Christmas spirit of a presepe vivente, a nativity play staged by the people of Procida right in front of my apartment. My daughter stayed for only two





A Change in Weather

by Christine Riney

When I was growing up in South Florida, I didn't think much about the weather. It was sunny and hot or we had a thunderstorm and it was wet and hot. If we were really unlucky a hurricane came and it got really windy and hot. The only time I thought about being cold was when we went inside. Isn't that what sweaters are for...air conditioning?

Then we moved to Sydney, Australia and there were seasons, or so I thought. I learned to wear a jacket and realized the benefits of an outside sweater but that was about it. Next came London and then Hamburg and these two cities changed my view on weather forever. I am now obsessed with weather apps (who isn't!), have spent a small fortune on scarves and have owned and lost more umbrellas than any one person should.

I also have a clearer understanding of what my grandfather meant when he said "there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothes"—he grew up in Ireland. If I had grown up in either London or Hamburg, I fear my first words would have been, "What's the weather like today?" A phrase that pops into my head as soon as it leaves the pillow.

To be sure, the only thing that is certain about weather is that there will be some.

days, thus giving my husband and me enough time for long talks to figure out a way we both could live our passions and destiny without destroying our life together.

Today I live most of the year in an apartment in Naples. Every day I am amazed by the city's hidden treasures, its countless Baroque churches, its music, its superstitions, its museums, and its picturesque backstreets—all testimony to the long remarkable history of bella Napoli. Every day I cherish the openness, kindness, and passion of the Neapolitans.

Appendix: I would like to thank the members of the AIWC Naples (American International Women's Club), especially Tricia and her Italian husband Antonio for welcoming me with open arms and making my transition all the easier.

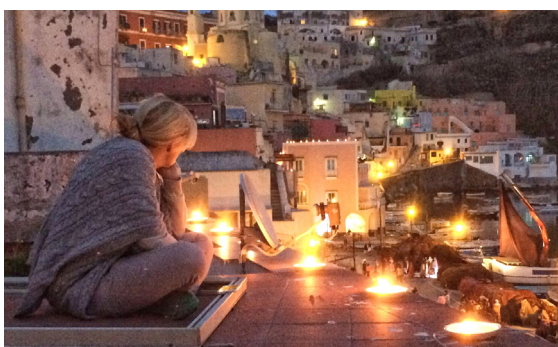
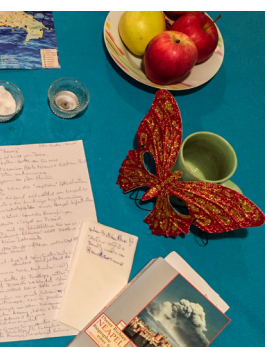


Photo credits: © Ulrike Cameron Henn



Get Up & Move!

The AWCH is getting up and moving! During spring and summer, we have enjoyed getting out and meeting more members, exploring new activities and different areas of Hamburg. We are busy making plans for autumn and winter. Keep an eye out in the AWCH Calendar, in the Newsletter and invitations to your inbox. If you have any suggestions or would like to organize something please let me know; Christine R. getup@awchamburg.org.



Canoeing

On the first day of summer and the longest day of the year, eight of us took to the Alster Canals for some canoeing and a real treat of Kaffee & Kuchen at Carola's. Thank you, Carola, John & Thelma!!



Walking and Running Groups

The Altona Walking Group keeps growing, as more and more members join the group to get to know this part of Hamburg on foot. We now have many new additional groups that meet regular in different areas of Hamburg to walk, run, or both. Join an existing group—or start your own!



Regular Events:

- **Altona Walking Group**, Fridays, 10 a.m.–12 noon
Contact Holly T., membership@awchamburg.org
- **Zumba Mondays**, 6 p.m.–7 p.m. Contact Anne-Marie S., activities@awchamburg.org
- **New* Stadt Park Walking/Running Group**, Wednesdays, 9 a.m.–10 a.m. Contact Andrea M., theatergroup@gmail.org
- **New* Alster Runs**, Wednesdays and Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Contact Carol H. currents-exec@awchamburg.org

Short and Sweet: News and Pictures from Our Activities



After Work Drinks...

had a wonderful summer evening on the Isekai! More wonderful evenings planned. For more info ask Jordan (afterworkdrinks@awchamburg.org).

The German Conversation Group...

is back! Next meeting will be October 8 at 11:00 a.m. Contact Regina for more information (german-group@awchamburg.org)



The Opera Club...

is getting ready for their next Opera in October—Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. For more information, contact Elizabeth (opera@awchamburg.org)



Movies at the Savoy...

is always a fun time. Contact Anne-Marie for information on the next film. (activities@awchamburg.org)

Art Club Events



Art in the Barracks

On Friday August 9, a number of us gathered at the Frappant Gallery for Contemporary Art, housed in the historical *Viktoria-Kaserne* in Altona. Monique Barnett, current award-winning Artist in Residence at Frappant, had invited us to her joint exhibition with two other artists, *Liquidity*. Many of us got to know Monique and visit the venue for the first time. And were quite taken with what awaited us.

The word *Frappant* means "striking," which this exhibition lived up to. As we know, contemporary art usually engages in critical commentary on modern social, cultural and political phenomena, employing non-traditional materials and techniques. Monique showed us into the first room, where her two co-artists, Ellen Pritzkau and Darya Shatalova had worked with mathematical notations and photos on glass and transparent, curved plastic sheets to carry out an ongoing dialogue of sorts. All of the pieces, some suspended from the ceiling, were in communication with one other, casting quite beautiful gossamer reflections on the walls, their multi-layeredness suggesting the complexity of actual dialogues. The free spaces between the installations through which the viewer moves were meant to represent the areas in communication open to interpretation. One issue of our times in the minds of the artists, perhaps, had been the disruption in forms of communication wrought by new technologies and social media on traditional, longer and more nuanced forms of dialogue, thus rendering it disjointed, lopsided. During the vernissage, the artists had apparently discussed the levelling effect that easy access to information today brings with it, thus undermining the uniqueness of the experience of living in a certain place and environment, which might also be impacting the quality of dialogue between people from different areas of the world.

The adjoining room is devoted to her installations and painting. Monique uses nautical maps, acrylic spray paint, acrylic paint, oil paint, graphite pencil, oil pastel, plastic sheeting and polyester tulle to create beautiful, delicate and thought-provoking installations. The device of the diorama is one she uses regularly. While we walked around to see them from different angles, which was fascinating, Monique answered our questions and explained her work. What moves Monique, a process-based artist, is the impulse to question and challenge appearance, assumption and the notions of permanence and certainty, a preoccupation with questions of surface and depth. In her quest to question what we think might be the "reality" of things or people, she puts things in different contexts and conveys a condition of constant flux and movement by the materials and techniques she uses. Hence, for example, nautical maps are rearranged to make new ones; a moving rectangular paper frame hangs suspended from the ceiling to capture the air or whatever it happens to frame, radiating impermanence; a spray-painted, hanging length of tulle, through which the viewer sees other artworks or other viewers, depending on where the viewer is standing.

"Maybe this is my answer to a painting's inability to be fluid," she says of her work at the Frappant gallery, in her interview in the brochure "Liquidity."

Monique also kindly offered to show us her studio, which was a couple of flights upstairs. There we could see the "tools of her trade" and her paintings of water in various shades of blue and green, which suggest movement, surface and depth, as she explains in the same interview. She told us how representations of celebrities in magazines had prompted her interest in the image of the person and the meaning of the element of water in their



Fascinating Street Art Tour in the Schanzenviertel!

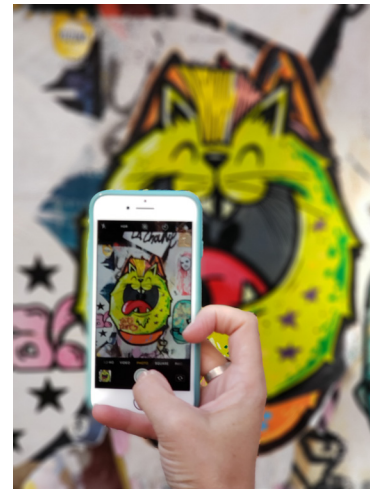
On a warm, sunny Sunday in August, 31 AWCHers with family and friends gathered to *Take a Walk on the Wild Side* and explore a cultural world foreign to most of us. Our lovely Swedish guide, Jessica, from Alternative Tours met us at the Sternschanze train station. In her native Sweden, there's a "zero tolerance" law for Street Art: removal within 24 hours. This was a surprise; many of us have lived here for so long that we're accustomed to streets filled with graffiti (lots of senseless scribble, too) to the point that we take no notice.

Wait a minute ... we're on a "Street Art" tour; how does this differ from graffiti? It doesn't. Writing or drawing on a wall or other surface without permission and within public view has been around since ancient Egypt.

Obviously, it's very controversial: spray-painting without permission is considered vandalism punishable by law, particularly gang-related territorial markings or "tags." However, there's an entirely new Street Art movement, where many artists express their political or social opinions in public places to

make an impact on society. Four artists of renown are the mysterious British 'Banksy', the Americans Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring, and Hamburg's ubiquitous OZ. Art from some of these artists now sell at auctions for enormous prices.

Wending our way through the Schanzenviertel we came to the Wall of Fame representing many artists and types of Street Art, including 3-D reliefs. Our final location was the Gängeviertel, also featuring Nacho, a South American artist and former surgeon. Interesting too is its proximity to Gänsemarkt: most of us have lived here quite some time but never knew it was there. Jessica expanded our horizons to be able to actually enjoy the art surrounding us, rather than seeing graffiti merely as rebellious statements. A tour I'd certainly recommend to anyone looking for an unusual perspective of Hamburg. (Shelly S.)



socio-political context. A series of "water" paintings had human figures made of brass wire mounted on them, to illustrate the fluidity of the characteristics of the human being in different contexts and at different times.

All in all, a very inspiring exhibition. One of the characteristics of good art, aside from its aesthetic qualities, is its quietly subversive nature, skill-

fully nudging the viewer to see beyond the obvious. Fascinating, too, the setting: how appropriate for a building once housing soldiers subject to the authoritarian, unrelenting and disciplinarian drill of the Prussian Army that brooked no doubt, weakness or dissent, to now be home to the works of questioning, irreverent and experimental artists like Monique. So glad to have gone along. (Palvasha v.H.)

Book Club: *Michelle and Believers*

The Great Believers

by Rebecca Makkai

Publisher: Penguin Books (June 2019)

ISBN: 9780735223530

Our new Book Club coordinator, Felicia S., hosted our June meeting to discuss Rebecca Makkai's latest novel *The Great Believers*. The story begins in 1980's Chicago, and vividly paints the devastating AIDS epidemic as seen through the eyes of Yale Tishman and his close-knit circle of gay friends and lovers, who slowly witness the ravages of the unknown virus. Fiona, the younger sister of Yale's good friend and one of the first victims of the disease, embraces these friends, caring for them when they cannot care for themselves—watching them die, one by one.

But this is only one of three stories that the book follows in a back-and-forth narrative. In a parallel storyline that takes place 30 years later, middle-aged Fiona travels to Paris to find her estranged daughter. Fiona's relationship with her daughter has always been difficult, in part due to the sacrifices she made, caring for the "lost generation" of gay men. She stays with an old friend from Chicago, Richard Campo, a photographer who made his name in the 1980's capturing in pictures the community affected by AIDS, reminding her again of the many losses. This storyline falls a bit short of its mark, with undeveloped characters (What is it with Jake Austen??) and gaps in the narrative. Nevertheless, the fictive Richard Campo with his collection of photographs is so convincing, I googled his name to find out where I could view his work. In the end Fiona confronts her past as being the only survivor with "the burden of carrying the memory" but learns to embrace her future with her reunited family.

The third story, which we learn is actually the original idea behind the book, goes back in time to WWI. The story is introduced by Yale's

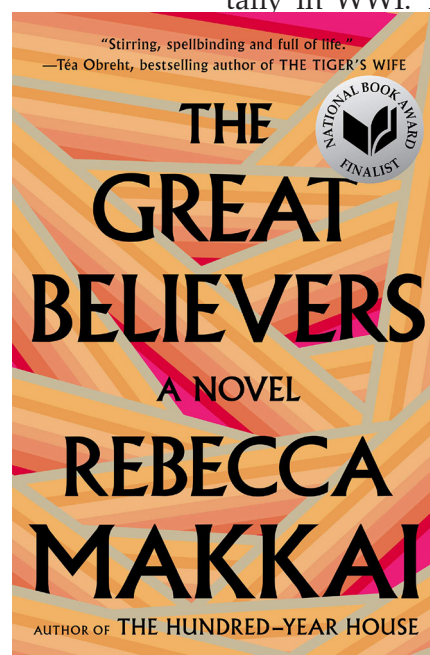


narrative, who is an assistant director at a university art gallery before he succumbs to the HIV-induced disease. Nora, Fiona's great aunt, wants to bequeath several high-profile pieces of art to the gallery. In her unfolding story, she reminisces about the famous artists she knew during the 1910's, who died suddenly and brutally in WWI. The tragic stories of this "lost generation" of the 1920's are indirectly paralleled with those of Yale and his friends, although at times the parallels are a bit muddled.

"And why the title?" we asked. This was answered beautifully by Palvasha v. H: "The horror of the AIDS epidemic hits the gay people in the 1980's at the time they are winning a sort of freedom through community life in much the same way as the calamity of WWII ends the jubilation and sense of achievement of the inter-war generation, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Believers*. Unlike that generation, however, the gay community and

their families have to suffer the trauma and heartbreak of social opprobrium, stigma and exclusion in addition to the agony of the AIDS epidemic."

Rebecca Makkai did a phenomenal job of capturing the emotions, the fears, the culture, and the challenges of the HIV-infected young people in the early days of the AIDS outbreak, but misses her mark when tying the different stories together. (Carol H.)





Upcoming Reads

September

The Overstory by Richard Powers

Winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

October

The Testaments by Margaret Atwood

The long-awaited sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*

Group meets on the third Wednesday of each month.

Contact Felicia at bookclub@awchamburg.org

Becoming

by Michelle Obama

Publisher: Crown Publishing Group (Sept 2018)

ISBN13: 9781524763138

The Book Club met on August 21 at our new member Shelley G.'s charming Studio 42 in Altona. We had read Michelle Obama's memoir *Becoming*—and, maybe for the first time ever, every reader present was praising the book. Interestingly, quite a few confessed they would not have picked the book had it not been 'required reading' but all enjoyed it.

The book is written in a very personal and personable style, with emphasis on Michelle Obama's own story and family, and not much on the political world. The first half of the book is written in great detail about Mrs. Obama's upbringing in Chicago, the fabric of her close family as well as her extended one. It offers an interesting perspective into Southside Chicago of the 60's and 70's—the schools, society, racial issues, changes in the neighborhood, education, health issues, childhood, coming of age—and yes, how she meets her future husband. Much of her (and their shared) story is well known, but Mrs. Obama offers insights and commentary that makes the book an interesting and worthwhile read.



The latter part of the book is a bit more disjointed and not as reflective—probably because the dust hasn't yet settled from the eight years in the White House. We all agreed that the one word that best describes Mrs. Obama is "gracious." There is commentary and opinions but neither a judgement on nor a critical word of the current occupants of the White House. She has had her own experiences with being endlessly discussed and criticized, and she is abstaining from doing this herself.

As a group we had an interesting discussion of the

difficult and somewhat ill-defined role of First Lady—what previous First Ladies have done, and how. Can we expect anything of them at all since they have not been elected and are not paid? Or is it a moral obligation to maximize your unique position and the platform given to you?

We all enjoyed the read and can highly recommend it. (Tine H.)

Stay Connected...

It is always exciting when AWCH „alumnae“ return to Hamburg to visit and so it was in late August when Jo Dahms, AWCH president from 1990-1992, was here and wanted to meet some of her old friends.

Jo currently lives in Austin, Texas and because her husband was coming to Germany to meet up with some of his former colleagues at 3M, she accompanied him. Becky Tan, Carol Battenfeld, Nancy Tilitz, Freda Pink and I met her for a cozy breakfast at Koppel 66 where we had lots to catch up on. Jo looks the same and is just as busy as she always was. Besides having been president of our club, she had been FAWCO Rep before that. She was also active at the International School which her three



Carol, Jo, Nancy, and Thelma (L to R)
Hamburg, 2019

children attended. Currently she is the secretary of the Spider Lake Association in Minnesota, and manages their database. She used to create the directory of the Lost Creek Garden Club. And in her spare time, she knits and quilts for Project Linus, providing blankets to kids in hospitals and such.

The morning was rounded off by a bit of music, as Nancy played Moon River and other favorites on Koppel 66's "open" piano. (Thelma F.)



Becky, Carol, Jo, and Thelma (B to T)
FAWCO Conference, Casablanca, 1993

AWCH 1990–1992

Jo Dahms served as AWCH president from June 1990 to April 1992, and thus her recent visit prompted me to review our club's activities back then. One of the regular events was a monthly luncheon on the second Wednesday of each month. Sites included the Marriott, Elyssee, Amerika Haus, Gino Carrone, Landesfrauenrat, Restaurant in Finnlandhaus, Röperts Hof Café, Peking Entenhaus, Schiffer Börse and many more.

The Moms' Group was especially active, meeting with young children every Tuesday morning. There was also an active Moms'-Night-Out. There were many monthly or weekly activities, some familiar, some perhaps new, such as tennis, book groups, art group, museum group, canasta, bridge, riding, swimming, quilting, welcome coffees, out-to-dinner, international dining, mixed doubles, and walkabouts to view different parts of Hamburg. The Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Group began as a club activ-

ity during this time, before becoming an independent chapter. Day trips were quite popular: porcelain factory in Ostfriesland, Christmas market in Lüneburg, Celle, Berlin, and Stade, as well as within Hamburg, e.g., Axel Springer Publishing House, Holstein Brewery, Hot Spice Museum, British Petroleum Refinery, a backstage tour of the "new" Flora Theater, etc.

We were already a member of the Landesfrauenrat, and, naturally, as members of FAWCO, we attended conferences in Vienna and Genoa, as well as the first Global Town Meeting in Paris. Twenty members took a trip to Egypt with the AWC of Düsseldorf and we hosted members of the AWC of Antwerp in Hamburg. The monthly publication, called "Newsletter," appeared in size A5 with front-page illustrations by Nancy Tilitz. We had an average of over 220 members and 12,000 DM in the bank and celebrated our club's 35th and 36th birthdays. Many thanks to past-president Jo Dahms. Come back and visit us again! (Becky T.)

Get Involved!

- Are you organized?
- Do you speak some German?
- Can you balance your checkbook?
- Do you like working in a team?
- Are you eager to become more active in club events?

The AWCH is looking for a new treasurer starting in January 2020!

Duties include:

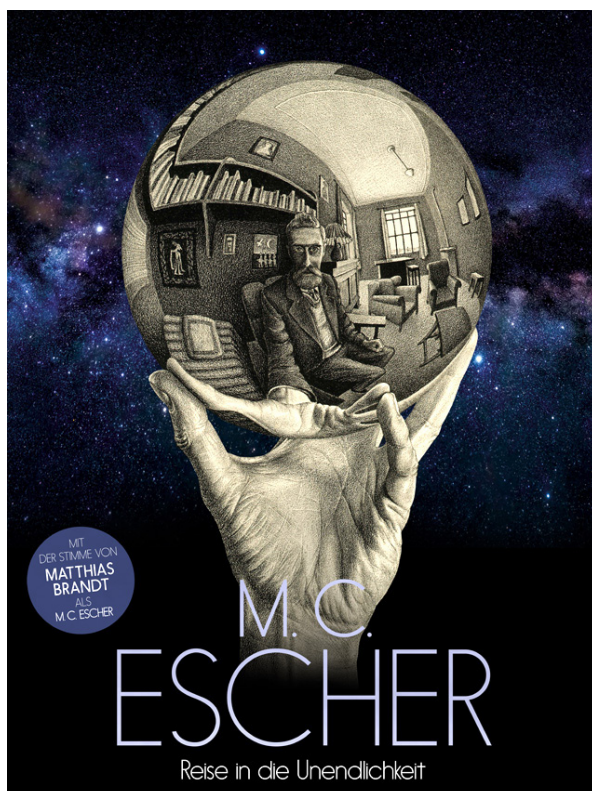
- Light bookkeeping using Excel
- Monitoring payments in and out of the club banking account.
- Maintaining files of legal documents
- Attending monthly board meetings
- Planning & organizing club events (as part of a team)

If you feel this is job may be right for you, but you are a bit nervous about accepting, rest assured that you have the help and resources of the previous treasurer as long as you need until you feel comfortable in the position.

Contact Holly T.
membership@awchamburg.org
or Tracy M.
treasurer@awchamburg.org

(other board positions also open!)

Film Reviews and more...



M. C. Escher – Reise In Die Unendlichkeit (Escher: Het Oneindige Zoeken) *****

Netherlands 2018

Opening October 10, 2019

Directed by: Robin Lutz

Writing credits: Marijnke de Jong, Robin Lutz

Principal actors: Documentary: George Escher, Jan Escher, Liesbeth Escher-Hogenhout, Stephen Fry, Matthias Brandt, Graham Nash

The Dutch graphic artist himself would approve the beauty and balance of **Robin Lutz's** documentary reflecting his meticulousness, exquisitely so in the realm of artwork. Structured around **Maurits Cornelius Escher's** life story (1898–1972) with accompanying archival material, including Escher at work and interviews, its primary focus—artwork—is unwavering with awe-inspiring cinematography and animation. Siblings **George, Jan, and Liesbeth Escher-Hogenhout** provide aspects of inner-family dynamics, thus expanding on Escher's accounts of the outside world he inhabited. An antidote from **Graham Nash's** (Crosby Stills Nash and Young) conversation

with Escher is most startling in its simplicity: "I'm not an artist, I'm a mathematician."

In San Francisco, California during the 1960s the Hippie movement reconnected to Escher's surreal work; adding psychedelic colors, endless quantities of products were marketed, albeit without Escher's knowledge. Raised and schooled in the Netherlands by caring and wealthy parents, art teachers' had an everlasting impact on Escher, as did Jutta Umiker when they met in Italy in 1923. Escher's personality, like his timeless artwork, was a force unto itself. In his own words (**Stephen Fry**, voiceover) taken from letters, diaries and notes, Escher describes his adventurous journey through life. This is demonstrated by a pictorial account of influences, and artwork: inspirational landscapes and nature studies dissolve into an Escher woodcut. Inert designs and/or drawings come alive shifting, scrabbling and changing position; there are clips from films that borrowed from his vision.

While moving the film forward, the many designs taking on a fantastical life of their own is thanks to gifted animators and **Mirage 3D VFX** (special effects). **Robin Lutz's** spectacular cinematography, **Moek de Groot's** concise editing, and **Bob Kommer Studios'** kinesthetic sound – all this with the most appropriately matched music makes one want to weep with joy.

Quite large, *Snakes*, 1969, represents everything M. C. Escher loved creating: interlocking patterns and symmetry shrinking to infinity that likely struck a premonitory nerve; the threefold rotational symmetry woodcut was his last. At some point, Escher remarks about his dream of making a film, and paradoxically, people finding it boring. It is fitting then, that Lutz has made Escher's dream come true, while proving him wrong, since nobody will leave this cinema bored. 80 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)

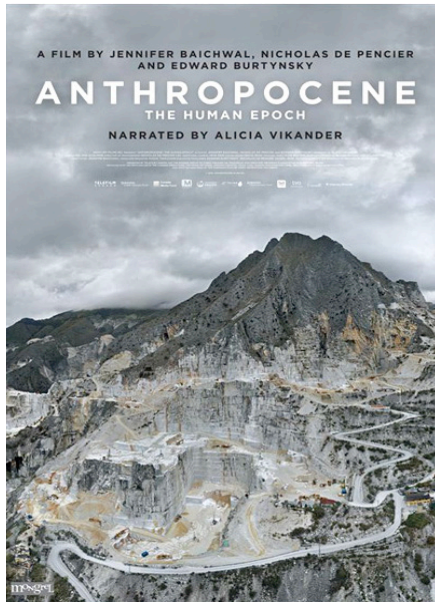
ANTHROPOCENE:**The Human Epoch ******

Canada 2018

Opening September 19, 2019

Directed by: Jennifer Baichwal,
Edward Burtynsky

Writing credits: Jennifer Baichwal

Principal actors: documentary
with Alicia Vikander

This is the final film in a trilogy of documentaries that includes *Manufactured Landscapes* (2006) and *Watermark* (2013) about the changing Earth. The content of this film is drawn from the idea that humankind has so profoundly changed the Earth that we are now in a new epoch, the Anthropocene Epoch, an epoch that began in the mid-nineteenth century and is defined by lasting human impact.

The Anthropocene Working Group has been studying human impact for almost ten years to support their position that the Earth has left the 11,700-year-old Holocene Epoch. This film documents many examples of human activity that have dramatically changed the Earth, perhaps forever. For instance, China has built concrete walls along 60% of the mainland coast. Oil refineries spread for miles across Texas and Russia, lithium evaporation ponds stretch across the Atacama Desert of South America. Moun-

tains of plastics, acres of devastated underwater reefs, and piles of elephant ivory are all stark images of what humans have done to the Earth. These extraordinary images presented from the ground up are shown without opinion: this is not a tree-hugger, save-the-environment kind of movie. Instead, it is just a vivid, vibrant, artful collection of facts on film. And the facts are quite damning.

Take a look at all three films and form your own opinion. Better yet, invite your family and friends to join you since we are all in part responsible for changing Planet Earth. (Mary Wienke)

Ein Licht zwischen den Wolken(A Shelter Among the Clouds,
Strehe mes reve) ****

Albania 2018

Opening September 19, 2019

Directed by: Robert Budina

Writing credits: Robert Budina

Principal actors: Arben Bajraktaraj,
Esela Pysqyli, Irena Cahani,
Osman Ahmeti, Bruno Shilaku,
Suela Bako

Besnik (**Arben Bajraktaraj**) lives with his extended family in an isolated village high in the mountains of Albania. He herds his sheep and, in his free time, sculpts beautiful artwork. Unusual is that Besnik comes from mixed religions: his deceased

mother was Catholic and his father is Muslim, which gives him an extended family from both religions. In the mosque, during prayers, he happens to peel off a bit from the wall, where he finds an unusual painting. It is a sacred Catholic image. The Muslims are shocked to find this in their mosque. Soon the community must face the truth: In 1470 this was a church, which the Catholics generously shared with the Muslims until they were pushed out and the church became a mosque. Besnik, with his dual-religious background, finds it logical to return to this former custom: share again. While the villagers argue, Besnik has his own personal conflict at home. His brother Alban (**Osman Ahmeti**), who moved out years ago, has returned with plans to stay and, as per his forceful personality, take over as head of the family. This disruption leads to the family dividing the house, and eating dinner on opposite sides of a wall.

Here, divisions are the topic—both within a family and within a community. Director **Robert Budina** said that he learned a true story from the 1400s about different religions sharing one House of God in Shkodra, Albania. Originally known as the Church of the Holy Stephanus, it became a mosque with the arrival of Sultan Mehmet Fatih and the change-over to the Ottoman Empire. Six days a week the Muslims prayed, and one day it was open to the Christians. Budina said he did not make a film about religion or history, nor about the role of Communism (and its influence on religion) in Albania, but, “I wanted to make a personal, intimate, subjective film about the personal relationships of a single person to his community, family, love, religion, God, and nature.” Nature! See the film for the gorgeous photography of beautifully isolated areas, and naturally for the talented Albanian actors, as well as the interesting music which fits well into this Albanian agricultural society. (Becky Tan)

Gelobt sei Gott (Grâce à Dieu)

France/Belgium 2018

Opening September 26, 2018

Directed by: François Ozon

Writing credits: François Ozon

Principal actors: Melvil Poupaud, Denis Ménochet, Swann Arlaud, François Marthouret, Bernard Verley



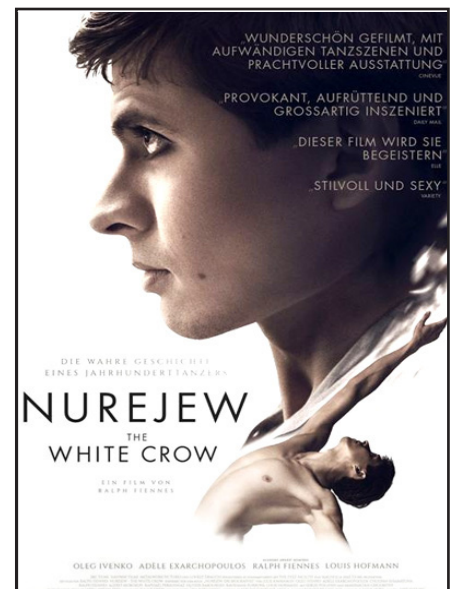
Forty-year-old Alexandre (**Melvil Poupaud**) lives in Lyon, France, with his wife and children, who remind him of his own childhood, something he has suppressed all these years. In the 1980s he experienced sexual abuse at the hand of a Catholic priest, Father Preynat (**Bernard Verley**), both in church and at Boy Scout camp. Learning that Preynat is still active in the church, he overcomes his original hesitation and writes to Cardinal Barbarin (**François Marthouret**), asking him to take action against Preynat's crime. After much dissatisfactory communication and discussion, Alexandre finally takes his case to court. This publicity attracts François (**Denis Ménochet**), who had similar experiences with Father Preynat. He determines that they need more witnesses in the case and establishes a website, La Parole Libérée, where he collects names and descriptions from 60-70 more men. One of them is Emmanuel Thomassin (**Swann**

Arlaud), who blames his failure to accomplish anything in life on his own experiences. Father Preynat admits to being attracted to young boys, but does not ask for forgiveness. Cardinal Barbarin does nothing, except transfer Preynat to other responsibilities within the church. Alexandre wants more than simple job relocation; he demands that the Church, all the way to Pope Francis in Rome, publicly recognize and condemn the crimes, as well as fire acknowledged pedophiles.

Director **François Ozon** contacted these three witnesses and they willingly shared all of their official transactions, as well as reactions from family members. It is a documentary, where actors have stepped in to tell the story in order to protect the participants. It did reach Rome and, since then, the Catholic Church has been more open when facing (and admitting) this problem. One hindrance has been the statute of limitations which eliminates the prosecution of any crimes older than 20 years. So far, the one conviction has been contested and is still up for decision. Ozon received little help from the Church, and, although much was filmed in Lyon, he had to go to Belgium and Luxemburg to film inside actual churches. Definitely see the film (winner of the Grand Jury's Silver Bear Prize at the 2019 Berlinale Film Festival) both for the excellent actors, and also in order to be aware of an event which is not yet solved and which will occupy our news coverage for many months to come. (Becky Tan)

Nurejew—The White Crow (**The White Crow**) ***1/2
UK | France | Serbia 2018
Opening September 26, 2019

Directed by: Ralph Fiennes
Writing credits: David Hare
Principal actors: Oleg Ivenko, Ralph Fiennes, Louis Hofmann, Chulpan Khamatova, Sergei Polunin



Some of Russia's best exports during the Cold War were its ballet dancers. Director Ralph Fiennes' capsule biopic is about Rudolf Chametowitsch Nurejew, who was the first dancer to defect from the Soviet Union in 1961. Based on Julie Kavanagh's book, *Rudolf Nureyev: The Life*, David Hare's screenplay focuses on three pivotal points in Nureyev's life: childhood, formative years, and early adulthood.

With an absent father, overburdened mother (Ravshana Kurkova) and three sisters, the young standoffish loner Rudi (Maksimilian Grigoriyev) is nicknamed "white crow." At 17, Rudolf (Ivenko) begins training at Leningrad State Choreographic Institute in 1955; arrogantly demanding a better teacher, ballet master Alexander Ivanovich Pushkin (Fiennes' portrayal is masterly) and Xenia (Khamatova) take special interest in him. Joining the Kirov Ballet under director Konstantin Sergeyev (Nebojsa Dugalic) in 1958, Nureyev's rebellious, nonconformist attitude almost costs him dearly—touring with the troupe in then Western Europe. In Paris, and under KGB scrutiny, Nureyev ignores rules and mixes with the natives, including Pierre Lacotte (Raphaël Personnaz) and Clara Saint (Adèle Exarchopoulos), whose friendships subsequently make the difference.

In his debut role, professional Ukrainian dancer Oleg Ivenko superbly portrays Nureyev: his innate passion, ballet skills, sensual beauty, madness, and character flaws. The film's alluring aspects are its worthy cast, and production values—Mike Eley, cinematography, Ilan Eshkeri, music. Editor Barney Pilling employs color sequences and flashbacks: the childhood phase is starkly black and white with tonal values; Nureyev's training phase is awash in muted ochre, and present-day Paris with pastel mixed colors. Differentiating between the two later periods is difficult, particularly with the many characters involved. Furthermore, the latter phases' use of massive architecture, doorways, and arches serving as thinly veiled analogies to the Communist mindset are not fleshed out, i.e. unnecessary. Notable sound design/camera angles attributing to pivotal phases conversely sometimes seem accidental.

The White Crow should pulsate simultaneously with Nureyev's sensuality and flamboyant *appétit de vivre*; equally, considering the dancer broke many ballet norms, temperament is missing. Rather, guided by Fiennes' reticence, with superfluous dramatizations, the lengthy film's nebulousness can be annoying. To the contrary, as an introduction to one of the 20th century's greatest ballet dancers, and synergy among artists, the film is marvelous. 122 minutes; Russian, English, French; German subtitles (Marinell Haegelin)

Skin ****

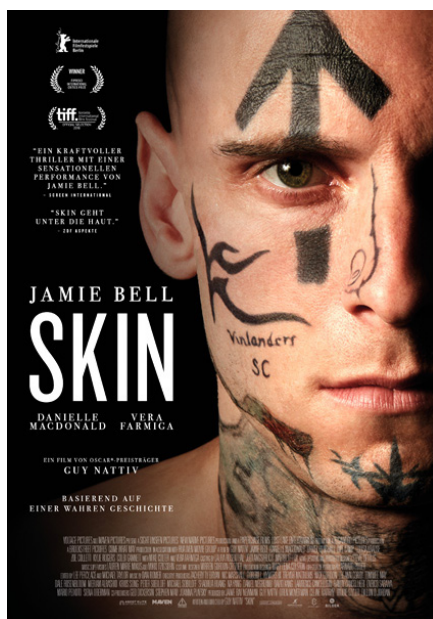
USA 2018

Opening October 3, 2019

Directed by: Guy Nattiv
Writing credits: Guy Nattiv
Principal actors: Jamie Bell, Danielle Macdonald, Vera Farmiga, Bill Camp, Mike Colter

The colors and designs of hate cover Byron Widner's (**Jamie Bell**) face and body, language,

temperament, and actions; *Skin* is loosely based on Widner's life. Israeli-born writer-director **Guy Nattiv** has crafted a no-holds-barred film about one racist skinhead's and white supremacist stronghold's credo and codes of behavior. Countless scenes feel heartbreakingly real: the anger, bullying, hate and hurt concealed by many guises, even though Nattiv circumvents fidelity to veracity.



Fred "Hammer" Krager (**Bill Camp**) and "Ma" Shareen's (**Vera Farmiga**) tight strictures maintain equilibrium within their unruly family. Acknowledgment of "Babs'" position in the hierarchy is his dog; Boss inadvertently becomes the catalyst of cracks to appear in Byron's armor. Attending a Nordic Fest, Bryon reacts to the Vikings' obnoxiousness by beating Slayer (**Daniel Henshall**) almost senseless. On the other hand, Bryon meets and is drawn to little Iggy (**Colbi Gannett**), mom Julie (**Danielle Macdonald**), and older sisters (**Zoe Colletti**, **Kylie Rogers**). Julie exudes kindness, and the family's civility viscerally affects Bryon, prompting his cautious pursuit. In parallel action, anti-racist activist reformist Daryle Jenkins (**Mike Colter**) of the Southern Poverty Law Center has encounters with the aggressive skinheads, and

is well acquainted with "Babs." Eventually, Bryon reaches out to Daryle. Time though does not stand still, or wait, for anyone.

Galvanizing the film is Bell's mesmeric performance, and the great cast parlays that momentum. **Arnaud Potier's** cinematography, **Dan Romer's** music, and **Lee Percy** and **Michael Taylor's** editing are stellar; noteworthy is **Stephen Bettles** and the makeup department's work, especially for their tattoos and hair artistry. Nattiv's first American short film *Skin*, won an Oscar® in 2018; this feature film, also titled *Skin* and released in 2018 has no correlation to the short. Alongside end credits, there are facts and photographs regarding Widner and Jenkins.

Radical purveyors of violence exist at every level. While *Skin* highlights the result of predators' indoctrinating damaged poor kids, the chilling 2018 documentary *Kleinen Germanen* (Little Germans) spotlights close relatives' pernicious influence on children through targeted propaganda. Both films are timely; both should be seen. They are abhorrent reminders that power abuse and acquiescence to passivity are dangerous. After all, colors and designs are transposable. 117 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)

Memory Games *1/2**

Germany | USA | Sweden 2018

Opening October 3, 2019

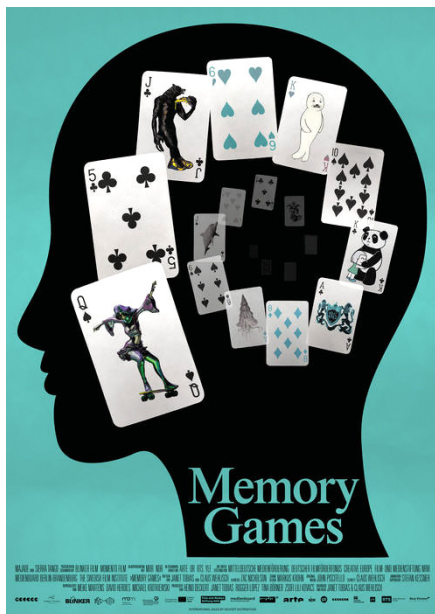
Directed by: Janet Tobias, Claus Wehlisch

Writing credits: Janet Tobias, Claus Wehlisch

Principal actors: Documentary: Yanjaa, Nelson Dellis, Johannes Mallow, Simon Reinhard

There are various memory enhancing games for toddlers through and into adulthood. None though, can compete with the memory games and competitions that include a world championship. Writer-directors **Janet Tobias** and **Claus Wehlisch** focus on four memory athletes:

mononymously **Yanjaa**, Mongolian, **Nelson Dellis**, American, and **Johannes Mallow** and **Simon Reinhard**, German. Each explains what compelled them to study the memory palace technique, a method to enhance memory using spatial memory, i.e. familiar objects and information, adapted from ancient Greeks and Romans. Trailing their development, we learn what associations and tricks each uses and how/why it works for them, what drives them, and side issues of concern. Yanjaa’s humor seeps through, as does Simon’s seriousness, while physical conditions are Nelson and Johannes’ concernment.



The CG illustrations are extremely clever and brilliantly executed. Production values are solid, even though Claus Wehlisch’s editing choices are not discerning enough. Salient points are raised but not explored, e.g., Yanjaa’s mention of competition organizers’ talk about “beauty contests” for female competitors. Three-time world memory champion **Alex Mullen**, American, and memory grandmaster, **Andy Fong**, Hong Kong, are skimmed over.

Still, *Memory Games’* perspicacity, information, and its mesmerizing illustrations make this documentary well worth seeing. The

memory champions are of the same mind about how having a healthy body and mind is important, and that memory makes life meaningful. Memory is, after all, to be human—“It’s everything, isn’t it.” English/German subtitles and German, 85 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)



Eine ganz heiße Nummer 2.0

Germany 2019
Opening October 3, 2019

Directed by: Rainer Kaufmann
Writing credits: Kathrin Richter, Jürgen Schlagenhof
Principal actors: Gisela Schneebberger, Rosalie Thomass, Bettina Mittendorfer, Matthias Ransberger, Franziska Schlattner, Felix von Manteuffel, Tristan Seith, Johann Schuler, Jorge Gonzalez, Hardy Krüger Jr., Günther Maria Halmer

A young woman named Lena (**Rosalie Thomass**), wearing a bikini, weaves out onto a field on a tractor; round and round she goes. “I want a baby,” she says. “I’m 30.” A young man rides by on a bicycle. Otherwise, void, emptiness, nothing. Where are we? This empty village is Marienzell in Bavaria, Germany. The residents are fleeing, due to lack of internet, although the remaining men in the village are digging a long ditch in order to lay down cables for connection

to the internet. Lena’s friends are Maria (**Bettina Mittendorfer**) and Waltraud (**Gisela Schneebberger**). Waltraud is a hairdresser as well as a barber and is married to Heinz. Maria works at the supermarket. Lena lives with Will and when they argue, she walks out the door, dragging along their pet pig. All are preparing for the event of the year called “Mein Dorf tanzt” (my village is dancing.) Obviously, this is a dance contest and the girls practice with the help of actor **Jorge Gonzalez**, who arrives from Berlin in a Mercedes. They call themselves the High Speed Ladies. Their competition is the wife of the town mayor, Moni (**Franziska Schlattner**), who leads a group proudly dressed in traditional Bavarian dirndls.

This is a sequel to the film that appeared in 2011, and was quite successful in Germany, both based on the book by **Andrea Sixt**. The German population, now eight years later, will happily watch this film, too, and identify with the cast. Marienzell has definitely not improved its critical situation since the original came out, but the inhabitants enjoy life all the same. It’s small-town, country life, facing the same basic problems of anywhere else in the world. (Becky Tan)

Answers to crossword puzzle:

drummer, the loudest band member
original, a self-written song is a electric, a type of guitar
Gibson, a famous guitar brand
garage, where the band practices
gig, a small concert
van, vehicle for transport
Hendrix: the father of psychedelic rock
vinyl: old school listening
band: who are we?
bassist: the most made fun of in the band
money: what we don't ever have
pizza: late night snack

Big Art Museum Birthdays

by Holly Todd



This fall art season is one of big birthdays in Hamburg!
Each of these institutions is celebrating with special exhibitions:

Hamburger Kunsthalle: 150 years

Our venerable Hamburger Kunsthalle has turned 150 years old—its original building where the entrance is located today opened on August 30, 1869. The section with the rotunda closest to the train station was finished one hundred years ago in 1919 making this is a double anniversary of sorts. Four exhibitions honor these milestones: a documentary exhibition tracing the history of the museum and three other exhibitions focusing on very different collection highlights. As an inspired birthday present, the museum's "Friends" society (*Freunde der Kunsthalle*) sponsored the digitalization of ca. 1000 of the museum's works so that you can now visit your favorite pieces online at <https://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/sammlung-online/suchen> (very helpful in writing this review!).



Enduring. Controversial. New. Looking back at 150 years.

(Beständig. Kontrovers. Neu. Blicke auf 150 Jahre.)

Until November 10

Look for festive confetti painted on the floor to find this anniversary exhibition, which begins by telling us that the Kunsthalle was founded because an important collection, including the Leonardo drawings shown in June this year, was given to the city on the condition it be housed in a worthy building. From here a time-line leading the viewer past the earliest photo of the museum and through the daring acquisitions and controversial tenures of various directors, the architectural additions, the visits of illustrious artists and other VIPs and various groundbreaking and blockbuster exhibitions up until today. Four guiding themes are addressed: "Showing and Not Showing" (*Zeigen – Nicht Zeigen*), for example, focusses on shifting taste and values over time as reflected in the selection and installation of works acquired and exhibited at vari-

ous points in the museum's history. "Having and Not Having" (*Haben -- Nicht Haben*) addresses spectacular thefts and the confiscation, deaccessioning and destruction of major works during the Third Reich as well as the efforts made to prevent and recover those losses. You can also find out about the ongoing restitution to the rightful owners of Nazi-looted art acquired by the museum after World War II. An interactive display, devoted to the donors and sponsors who have supported the museum, calls attention to women whose names do not appear on the donor plaques though they were the driving forces in acquiring and/or donating works of art or others whose considerable independent contributions were simply relegated to their husband's or father's names.

Falkenberg Collection: 25 years

Installations from 25 Years of the Falkenberg Collection

Nov. 29, 2019-May 24, 2020.

25 years ago, Hamburg lawyer Howard Falkenberg acquired his first work of contemporary art and began amassing the provocative collection that is now open to the public at the Phoenix-Halls in Harburg. To honor this anniversary, the collection's most memorable installations by artists including Olaf Breuning, Jimmie Durham, Mark Dion, Thomas Hirshhorn, Jon Kessler, Jessica Stockholder, Diane Thater, Cosima von Bonin, Franz West, Mike Kelley, General Idea, Erwin Wurm and others will be on view together for the first time together this winter.



Unfinished Stories.
Geschichten aus der Sammlung
(Stories from the Collection).

Until August 30, 2020

While the previous exhibition satisfies our curiosity about a local institution that many of us have grown to love, this one unsettles us, posing provocative global and existential questions. It is up to viewers to answer these questions or, as the show's title suggests, "finish the stories" for themselves. Quite a few center on family as the focus of our "most formative social experience." Gerhard Richter, for example, literally blurs the boundaries between the private and public spheres in his Madonna-like, intimate, painted photo images of his wife and child, *S. with Child* of 1995, while Paul McCarthy addresses the taboo of familial child molestation in his disturbingly ritualistic video *Family Tyranny / Cultural Soup* of 1987. With his jigsaw puzzle of a family photo of the Nazi torturer Klaus Barbie with his family, Felix Torr s-Garcia's photograph not only drastically exposes the discrepancy between idealized outward appearances and brutal reality, but also cleverly symbolizes how easily the bonds between human beings can fall apart into chaos.



Relationships between couples are targeted here as well. In her performance video *Breathing In, Breathing Out* of 1977-78 Marina Abramovic creates a brilliant metaphor for destructive symbiosis, when she and her partner, with their noses blocked, breathe by exchanging carbon dioxide in a prolonged kiss that only ends when they pass out. But the show is not only about human relationships. Titling another video in which the artist compulsively brushes and styles her hair, *Art Must be Beautiful, Artist Must be Beautiful*, 1975, the artist explores both the restrictive and harmful nature of popular ideals of beauty to women as well as the elusive boundary between high art and popular art. These themes are also addressed in pop artist Tom Wesselmann's blown-up cut-out silhouette, *Great American Nude, No. 65* of 1965-66. The challenges facing women and women artists today are addressed by Anette Messager in her embroidered collection of misogynistic "proverbs" (1974) and Maria Lassnig in her twisted and fragmented oil *Self-Portrait as a Prophet* of 1967. In another section of the exhibition Andy Warhol's painted silkscreen portrait of the native American activist Russell Means of 1976, Duane



Maria Lassnig (1919–2014), *Selbstportr t als Prophet*, 1967, Oil auf Leinwand, Hamburger Kunsthalle,   Maria Lassnig Stiftung,   Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk, Foto: Elke Walford

Hanson's acrylic true-to-life *Homeless Person*, 1991, or David Hockney's *Doll Boy*, 1960-61, are devoted to the topics of racial, economic and sexual exclusion and marginalization. Cady Noland's *Untitled* found chain-linked fence of 1994 is placed to create more of a dead end than a barrier, perhaps informed by and definitely evoking the controversy surrounding Donald Trump's border wall today.

Not everything in the exhibition has a social message. A number of works invite visitor participation while others deal with the visible processes of making of art—Richard Serra's *Measurements of Time/Seeing is Believing*, the monumental ridged landscape created on site in 1996 when the artist splashed molten lead into one edge of a room and let it harden into long wedges, has been made accessible again. All in all, if you want to learn about what international artists have been thinking about for the past 50 years, this is the place to do it. Filling the entire basement of the Galerie der Gegenwart, it is a "best of" show of an excellent collection and a great overview of art from the 1960s into the 21st century.



Tom Wesselmann (1931–2004), *Great American Nude No. 65*, 1965-1966, Acrylfarbe auf Baumwolle, Hamburger Kunsthalle,   The Estate of Tom Wesselmann / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2019,   Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk Foto: Elke Walford

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996) "Untitled" (Klaus Barbie as a Family Man), 1988, Mixed Media, Hamburger Kunsthalle,   The Felix Gonzales-Torres Foundation, Foto: Lance Brewer



**Rembrandt. Masterpieces from the Collection
(Meisterwerke aus der Sammlung)**

Until January 5, 2020

Need a break from large-scale confrontative contemporary art? Duck into the Harzen Gallery (Harzen-Kabinett) next door named for Georg Ernst Harzen (1790-1863), the man who "forced" the city to build the Kunsthalle. Having given us a brief glimpse in June of the very rare Leonardo da Vinci drawings—four of nine in German collections—that Harzen gave to the museum, the Kunsthalle is now sharing another superlative cache of old master art, most of which, again, was donated by Harzen. Along with many other European museums the Kunsthalle is honoring Rembrandt (1606-1669) 350 years after his death—yes, yet another anniversary! Owning almost all of Rembrandt's 350-plus masterful etchings, they are showing the crème de la crème: around 70 exceptionally well preserved and high-quality impressions. If you have never looked closely at Rembrandt's etchings, do it now. These works may be small and black and white but they are anything but boring. Indulge your eyes on incredibly sensitive, finely drawn evocations of people and landscape. A great improviser and pioneer of etching, Rembrandt remains one of the most creative etchers ever so be sure to notice his expressive use of saturated black lines, mysterious smudged deep black shadows, translucent greys created by fine cross-hatchings as well as the white of the paper itself to mention just a very few of his experimental techniques many of which he worked out in self-portraits. Some of these



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (1606–1669). Die drei Bäume, 1643, Radierung, © Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk, Foto: Christoph Irrgang

are tiny. You may be just as surprised as Rembrandt to see that the original of the exhibition's poster image of the artist widening his eyes in astonishment measures barely 5 x 4 ½ cm. You can take a closer look back home by zooming in on any of these images at the museum's digital "Sammlung-online" mentioned above.

It is worth it to visit the small room upstairs, a kind of satellite of the exhibition, where the tactile luminosity of the museum's two fine, small early oil paintings demonstrate the artist's mastery in this medium as well. A painting by Rembrandt's teacher, Pieter Lastmann (1583-1633) and a handful of other related etchings are also shown here. Informative wall texts in English on Rembrandt's biography and subject matter are scattered throughout the exhibition.



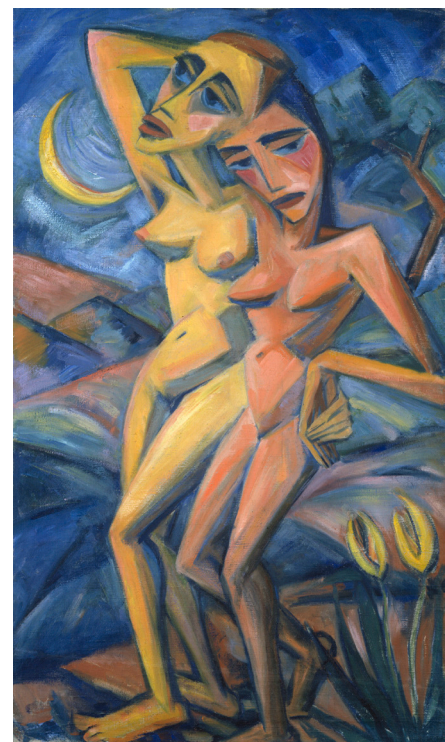
100 Years of the Hamburg Secession

Until January 5, 2020

And another anniversary! Founded 100 years ago in 1919, the Hamburg Secession was a group of artists, architects and writers who joined together to create a vibrant

art scene in this no-nonsense mercantile city until they disbanded in 1933 under Nazi pressure. The Secessionist works in this show are not conventionally grouped in single space, but rather scattered throughout the museum's galleries of classic modern art next to works by artists including Max Liebermann, Paul Klee and Robert Delaunay. Look for conspicuous white wall labels with text to locate these "encounters." Some pictures hang next to older works from the collection or by artists that/who influenced their development. Others reflect similar concerns to neighboring works by better

known artists. Many, like Karl Kluth's *Nude on a Red Sofa* of 1933 or Dorothea Maetzel-Johannsen's expressionist *2 Nudes with Crescent Moon*, painted in 1919, here juxtaposed respectively with paintings by Munch and the Brücke artists, hold their own in this company. Those AWCH members who enjoyed the tour of the Anita Rée exhibition in the Kunsthalle last year, will be happy to find several works by the artist here. Rée's enigmatic *White Nut Trees* is hung next to a painting by Salvador Dalí!



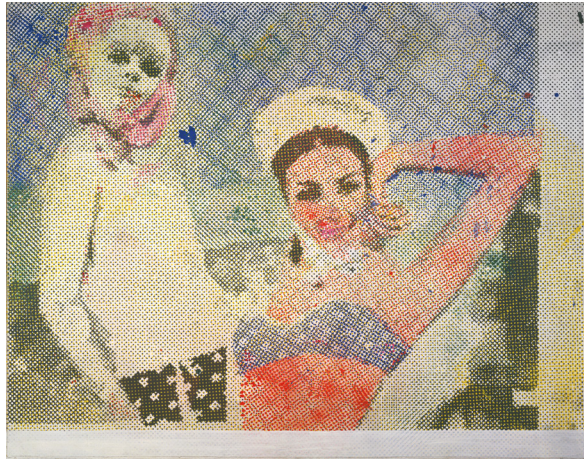
Karl Kluth (1898–1972), Akt auf rotem Sofa, 1933, Öl auf Leinwand, © Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk, Foto: Elke Walford

Deichtorhallen : 30 years

30 Years Deichtorhallen Hamburg

October 31, 2019-January 5, 2020

This show will be a documentary overview in photos, posters, guestbooks and catalogs of exhibitions on art and photography of the 20th and 21st centuries shown in this space since the Deichtorhallen first opened their doors 30 years ago. The exhibition will be sponsored by the Körber Stiftung (Foundation), which also paid for the original renovation and transformation of the former wholesale flower market built on the site of the medieval town gate near its dike and then donated the twin exhibition halls to the city of Hamburg.



Sigmar Polke, *Freundinnen*, 1965/66. Öl auf Leinwand, Sammlung Froehlich, Stuttgart, © The Estate of Sigmar Polke, Cologne / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2019

Baselitz, Richter, Polke, Kiefer: The Early Years of the Old Masters

September 13, 2019 – January 5, 2020

The exhibition looks at the early work of four German artists who have achieved wide international renown and, as one of them, Georg Baselitz, described it, developed ways of making art that circumvented what at the time was widely perceived to be a dichotomy between abstract capitalist art and realist socialist art. Presumably this is why the organizers of the exhibition describe it as a celebration of 30 years of German unity, even though the works exhibited were mostly created in the 1960s or early 1970s, decades before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Also, all of them except for Anselm Kiefer more or less grew up in East Germany but ended up making art in West Germany. In Baselitz' case, the show will concentrate on the artist's development of a gestural, figurative (as opposed to abstract) expressionism mostly before he developed his signature device of painting upside-



Gerhard Richter, *Schwimmerinnen*, 1965. Öl auf Leinwand, Sammlung Froehlich, Stuttgart, © Gerhard Richter 2019



down to emphasize the artifice of painting. Gerhard Richter began literally blurring the distinction between realist representation and painting for its own sake in his earliest experiments with painted found photographic images. These belonged to the "capitalist realism" invented by Richter and Sigmar Polke as students, a commerce- and mass culture-based counterpart to the social realist art propagated in the Eastern Bloc. Polke's wittily subversive paintings and photographs question aesthetic taste and influenced many younger artists including Julian Schnabel and David Salle in the US. Anselm Kiefer, born among the bombed ruins of World War II, also began mixing broken glass, metal, lead, straw and other "debris" into paint to create intimidatingly large, heavily crusted charred looking "landscapes" in which he is addressing German cultural myths that were abused by the Nazis and considered taboo after the war.

Anselm Kiefer, *Wege*, 1977-1980. Öl und Holzschnitt auf zwei Leinwände aufmontiert, Sammlung Thaddeus Ropac, London, Paris, Salzburg. Photo: Charles Duprat, © Atelier Anselm Kiefer

AWCH at the New Bucerius Kunst Forum in November

While other Hamburg art institutions are celebrating big birthdays this year, the Bucerius Kunst Forum (Art Forum) has had a new birth, or really a re-birth, in a brand spanking new home. Curious? Join us in a special evening tour in November to see *Amerika! Disney, Rockwell, Pollock, Warhol*. These four 20th-century artists have fundamentally shaped the world's image of America from positions outside of or directly in opposition to traditional notions of high art. Watch for the event details in our newsletter or website and join us for an in-depth look at these amazing artists.



Dorothea Maetzel-Johannsen (1886-1930), *Zwei Akte mit Mondstichel*, 1919. Öl auf Leinwand, Dauerleihgabe der Stiftung Hamburger Kunstsammlungen, © Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk, Foto: Elke Walford

Theater in Hamburg

Eerie Surroundings Yield a Terrifyingly Shrouded Enigma

by Marinell Haegelin

*The Woman in Black,*a thriller adapted by Stephen Mallatratt
from the novel by Susan HillThe English Theatre of Hamburg
with Paul Glaser directing

Angus Villiers-Stuart

Germany's oldest professional English language theatre commences Season 2019-2020 with a ghostly mystery-thriller. Arthur Kipps, intent on purging a soul-disturbing experience, has written his version of the story to perform. Arthur has hired a young actor, who decides to cast himself as young Arthur, while Arthur plays others involved, in addition to narrating his ordeal. They then commence rehearsing: Thirty-years ago, the junior solicitor proceeds to a small market town, to close the recently deceased Mrs Drablow's estate. Enroute he meets Samuel Daily; Arthur senses the local's uneasiness in response to queries about Eel Marsh House and securing transportation there. In the cemetery, Arthur notices a woman shrouded in black flit nearby. Procuring passage to the Drablow abode, as Keckwick's pony-and-trap rolls through foreboding marshland Kipps becomes aware of the eerie surroundings of the strangely situated and far-flung property.



Left, Séamus Newham and Angus Villiers-Stuart

The Actor becomes more ruminative whilst immersing himself in Arthur's ghost tale. Unconcerned anything's amiss, exploring the house Arthur discovers an unexplainable locked door that's troubling. Examining client's papers further, Arthur finds long-ago correspondence between Mrs Alice Drablow and a mysterious woman. And so, the terrifying truth, and curse emerge. After rehearsing, the Actor and Arthur identify an enigma too terrifying to ponder.

A Scarborough, England theatre manager's budget allowed just enough to quickly stage a Christmas ghost story in 1987. There was £1,000 for sets and costumes, and enough for four actors. Resident playwright-actor-television screenwriter Stephen Mallatratt suggested Susan Hill's 1983 same-titled best-selling horror novella. Mallatratt brilliantly masterminded adapting *The Woman in Black* as a play within a play needing only two speaking actors, a small crew, and sound effects. First performed during



Left, Séamus Newham and Angus Villiers-Stuart

December 1987, the play moved to Lyric Hammersmith in 1988, and to London's West End in 1989 where it's played since, making British theatrical history as one of its most popular plays.

Paul Glaser, the multi-talented director and Managing Director at the theater, said technical aspects were challenging. A minimal stage setting, props—an oversized trunk, unnerving visual effects—an empty rocking chair rocking, and the sound effects—ticking clock, trains, howling winds, bloodcurdling cries—commingle to pique audiences' imaginations. Compiling the effects was demanding; throughout rehearsals, Glaser was constantly fine-tuning effects to accommodate, correspond with, and intensify onstage action. Technical manager Heiko Böttner is meticulously on cue, and was applauded by all. Glaser also composed the music, matching and bridging onstage activities.

The London thespians concur two-character plays are rare, hence demanding, especially when timing is critical throughout. Angus Villiers-Stuart / the Actor revealed the tonal nuances of his character's slide into madness, accompanied by denial, was challenging to work around. The play's premise—a play within a play—creates a duality in the characters, i.e. reality within an alternative reality. Angus' role is dialogue-intensive and rehearsals were strenuous; his familiarity with Hill's book and the 2012 film helped. Angus looks forward to exploring Hamburg, and impressed the English Theatre was mentioned first as a top Hamburg *Kultur Angebot* (cultural recommendation).



Left, Séamus Newham and Angus Villiers-Stuart

Séamus Newham / Arthur Kipps biggest challenge is numerous costume changes—for six personas—along with switching accents and body language. Oftentimes he walks offstage as one character to return onstage within seconds as another; multiple rehearsals were necessary to coordinate with sound effects. His godsend with the many quick changes is Rebecca Delmas, stage manager. Additionally, Séamus is impressed with the professionalism shown by the entire English Theatre staff. As for the woman in black? In passing, she murmured once everyone knows her actions are steeped in anguish, they'll understand. Otherwise...

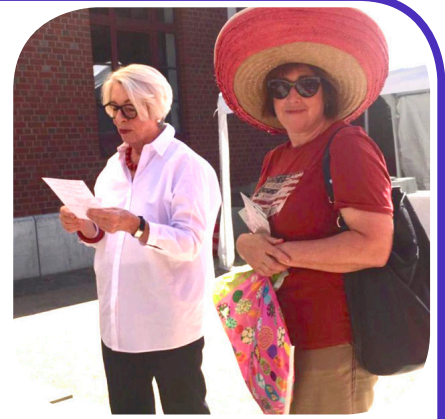
With its stark, scaled down set, unexpected shifts, and clever dialogue, *The Woman in Black* stirs a cauldron of trepidation, disquiet, and appreciation in audiences. The playwright's spine-tingling twist at the end tests believability. See this fun and fearsome ghost story and decide yourselves.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK, a thriller by Stephen Mallatrat and Susan Hill premiered on September 5, 2019 and runs through November 2, 2019. FUNNY BUSINESS, a farce by Derek Benfield will premiere November 14, 2019 and runs through February 1, 2020

Evening and matinee performances; tickets available at the theatre or online: www.englishtheatre.de. The English Theatre of Hamburg, Lerchenfeld 14, 22081 Hamburg, Tel: 040-227 70 89, U-Bahn Mundsburg.

Join the AWCH Theater Group for the performance on September 28.
Contact Andrea M.
at theatergroup@awchamburg.org

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Summer



Highlights



American Women's Club of Hamburg, e.V.

