

# AWCH CURRENTS

## FEATURING

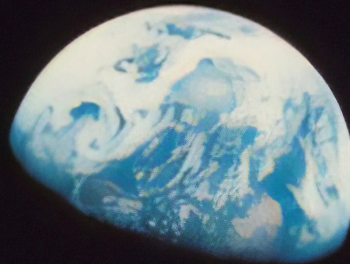
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ENDING  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## NEW COLUMNS

MEMBER IN BUSINESS  
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## SPECIAL THEME

DECADE FOR  
ACTION



THE AMERICAN WOMENS CLUB OF HAMBURG, e. V.

Oct. - Dec. 2020 - Vol. 36, No. IV

[www.awchamburg.org](http://www.awchamburg.org)



# Editorial

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“FIGHT FOR THE THINGS THAT YOU CARE ABOUT, BUT DO IT IN  
A WAY THAT WILL LEAD OTHERS TO JOIN YOU”

- Ruth Bader Ginsburg -

Dear *Currents* readers!

We are excited to present the December edition of *Currents* with its special theme **Decade for Action**. What inspires people to take action, specifically action for good? If there is a silver lining to any of the horrors of this past year, it's that more people are stepping up to bring about a better world. Between the social unrest, the political upheavals, and the pandemic, there has never been more need.

The AWCH is already deeply rooted in activism. We take this issue's title from the UN's own [Decade of Action: 10 Years to Transform our World](#) through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which the AWCH is an enthusiastic supporter. Many of our articles specifically discuss and/or support certain SDG goals; therefore, next to each article, we have added the correlating SDG goal(s).

On November 25, we opened the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence with an inspiring survivor's presentation, one that would likely resonate with the residents of the 5. Hamburger Frauenhaus, a worthy recipient of the AWCH's patronage for the past two years. Our current FAWCO Target Project is, of course, the elimination of FGM, and we run other numerous charitable giving projects. As we say goodbye (and good riddance) to a tumultuous 2020, we want to welcome the opportunities that the future has to offer.

In this edition, we highlight the wide range of activism within the club, from the best Ham-

burger Hacks for local holiday shopping to a zero-waste recipe in our Beyond Hamburgers column. Our Environmentally Mindful team provides tips and tricks for a low/zero-waste holiday season. The Film Group recommends kid's movies that cover the topic of climate change. Have you seen *Stolpersteine* on the streets of Hamburg? Well, our activism column, Keeping Current, can tell you the history behind these important pieces of our heritage. Finally, the Book Club provides reviews for their most recent reads covering women's rights.

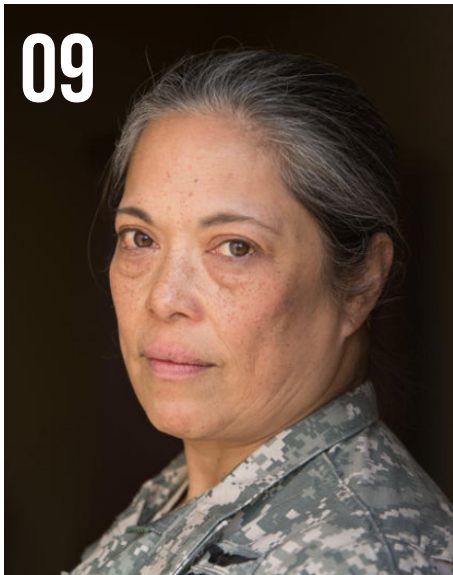
Our members have provided personal accounts of their own activism, including the driving force behind the From the Heart Pillow Project, the opportunities for volunteering in the AWCH, and a closer look into particularly relevant SDGs. And let us never forget the unifying theme behind all of this: kindness—for others, for the earth, and for ourselves.

The AWCH board is happy to introduce two new initiatives: Member Spotlight and Member in Business. If you would like to advertise your business in *Currents* or have an idea for a new column or article, please send us an email!

For any questions, please email us at:  
[currents-exec@awchamburg.org](mailto:currents-exec@awchamburg.org)

Regards,  
Beatrice K. and Mason Jane M.  
Co-Editors

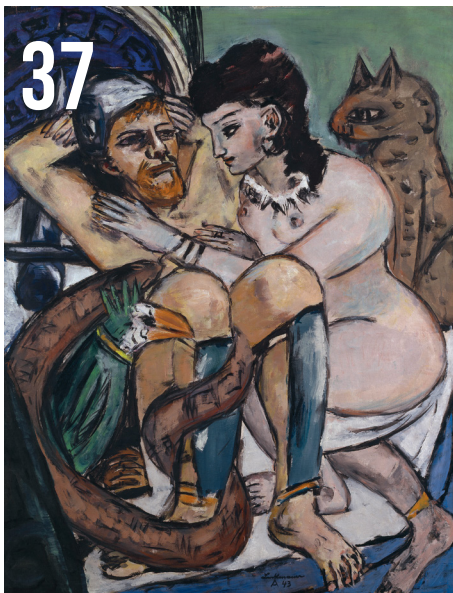
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**FEATURING:** INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



**SPECIAL THEME:** DECADE FOR ACTION



**ART IN THE CITY:** MAX BECKMANN

Bildnis einer Rumänin (Bildnis Frau Dr. Heidel), 1922. See full citation on p.37.

# INSIDE THIS ISSUE

## OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2020

### AWCH NEWS & EVENTS

- 4 President's Message
- 5 An Important Statement from the Board
- 6 FAWCO
- 8 LFR & the International Day of Ending Violence Against Women
- 10 New AWCH Guidelines
- 11 Catching the Rain for a Better Future
- 12 From the Heart Pillow Project
- 13 Bike Tours in Hamburg
- 14 Honoring Taiwan Day & Member in Business
- 15 Member Spotlight
- 16 Keeping Current

### SPECIAL THEME: DECADE FOR ACTION

- 20 17 United Nation Goals
- 22 How to Create a Circular Economy
- 23 Paris Agreement
- 24 Climate Policy in the USA
- 25 SDG 16: Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions
- 26 My Activism is Volunteering
- 27 Kindness

### CLUBS WITHIN OUR CLUB

- 28 Book Club
- 30 Environmentally Mindful

### IN HAMBURG

- 32 Art in the City
- 36 Beyond Hamburgers
- 37 Hamburger Hacks
- 38 Film Group



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# President's Message

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Happy Holidays, Ladies,

As we approach the end of 2020, I think about all that has happened and start making plans for the upcoming year. Now more than ever I find that it's the perfect time to pause and take a breath. That said, I know that I will not be able to move forward without making time for a critical component of growth: reflection. The habit of reflection is a huge deal, especially since we've been living in a time of uncertainty, constant change, and the "new normal." Regardless of the challenges of 2020, I learned a lot, and I would only be cheating myself if I did not also reflect on this year's accomplishments that I can carry forward to the new year.

As I reflect on this past year, I find myself asking the following questions:

1. What is the most important lesson I've learned this year?
2. What challenges did I overcome?
3. How did my relationships (family, friends, work) evolve?
4. What did I do for my physical and mental health?
5. What am I thankful for this year?

And, looking ahead, I also ask myself:

1. What is my purpose next year?
2. How will I make next year matter?
3. How will I help others?
4. How will I take care of myself?
5. How will I improve the environment?

I hope you carve out some well-deserved time for yourself to reflect on how resilient and incredible you are.

Speaking of incredible, the AWCH has soldiered on through 2020 without ignoring our philan-

thropic nature. Did you know that the term "philanthropy" was coined in the fifth century BCE and meant "love of humanity?" Today, philanthropy means generosity in all its forms to help make life better for other people. I am grateful that I am on the board this year, as it has allowed me to witness the AWCH's philanthropy firsthand, and I am looking forward to an exciting overview of our club's engagement at our virtual AGM in January.

When I vacate my presidential position at the AGM, I will be able to dedicate more time to FAWCO's SDG Awareness Team, whose mission is to raise awareness of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while focusing on four overarching themes related to FAWCO's Global Issues: Education (SDG 4), Health (SDG 3), Climate Action (SDG 13), and Gender Equality (SDG 5). The SDGs are an incredibly powerful step toward building a better world for our and future generations, and they are easy to apply to your daily life and habits.

We must invest in our future today, and the AWCH is committed to ensuring that we all can participate in the SDG efforts to create a healthier, more sustainable, more equitable world.

Thank you for trusting me to be the board president this year, as it has been an eye-opening, challenging, and extremely rewarding journey, and I am truly grateful for all your support.

With gratitude,  
Julia R.  
AWCH president



# An Important **STATEMENT** From the Board

## **COVID-19 Regulations from December 1, 2020**

Hamburg tightened its coronavirus regulations in December to further reduce the critical number of infections in the city and to avoid a resurgence in the end-of-year holiday season. The new rules apply from December 1 to December 20, when the Hamburg Senate will reconvene. To make holiday planning easier, the senate has also announced a temporary relaxing of the rules for the period from Christmas to New Year's Day.

**Most private meetings of more than five persons from, at most, two households are now prohibited.** All measures to contain the virus may change on short notice. You can read the current Hamburg guidelines for containing the coronavirus in detail in German [here](#). This page is always updated to show the current regulations. In English, a shorter version is available [here](#).

We would ask you to respect these guidelines when planning activities for yourself and the club, for your own safety and that of others.

### **Rules for Events and Activities**

The general rule for any meetup is to follow the German "AHA" rule: **avoid** physical contact with persons outside your own household and maintain physical distancing of 1.5 meters unless circumstances prevent it. Practice strict **hygiene**: wash and disinfect your hands and contact surfaces often, and sneeze into your elbow. Wear a mask ("Alltagsmaske") in all designated spaces; **this now includes the space in front of stores and in parking lots.**

Curfews and place restrictions may apply to all types of events.

### **Rules for Private Events and Meetups**

All private events and meetings, both indoors and outdoors, **are now limited to five people from, at most, two households.** Adequate ventilation is essential for indoor safety. This rule includes private meetups in spaces like parks.

Extended families, including patchwork families, are exempt from this rule. There are also a few exceptions, like birthday parties for children under 12.

### **Rules for Restaurants, Cafes, Bars, and Clubs**

These are now closed; restaurants and cafes may offer food to go.

### **Rules for Commercial/Public Events (sports, religious or political events, cinemas, theaters, concerts, etc.)**

These venues are currently closed.

### **Exceptions for Christmas and New Year Holidays**

From **December 23-January 1** more family members and close friends can meet up. There is a limit of **10 people from, at most, four households**; children under 14 are exempt from the count. It is recommended that people self-quarantine several days before the holiday meetup to avoid passing on an infection. Hotel stays are possible for, at most, two nights for family visits.

This year there will be no public fireworks shows. Private use of fireworks is allowed but may be prohibited in certain areas.



# FAWCO

# Istanbul Convention

A Primer for Action

BY SUE ENGLAND, MUNICH IWC, AND KAREN CASTELLON,  
AWC BERLIN AND HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM CHAIR

The cause of our time: ending violence against women.

The convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence is called the Istanbul Convention. It was agreed to in 2010 and came into force in 2014.

Quick facts about the Istanbul Convention: it is the most comprehensive international human rights treaty on violence against women and domestic violence.

It is a legally binding instrument

that explicitly defines Violence Against Women (VAW) as a human rights violation and a form of gender-based discrimination, with a strong emphasis on prevention, criminalizing the perpetrators, and offering survivors' rights.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in early 2020 that he was concerned about “setbacks to women’s rights, alarming levels of femicide, attacks on women’s rights defenders, and the persistence of laws and policies that perpetuate submission and exclusion.” Violence against





women and girls, he said, “is the most widespread human rights violation.”

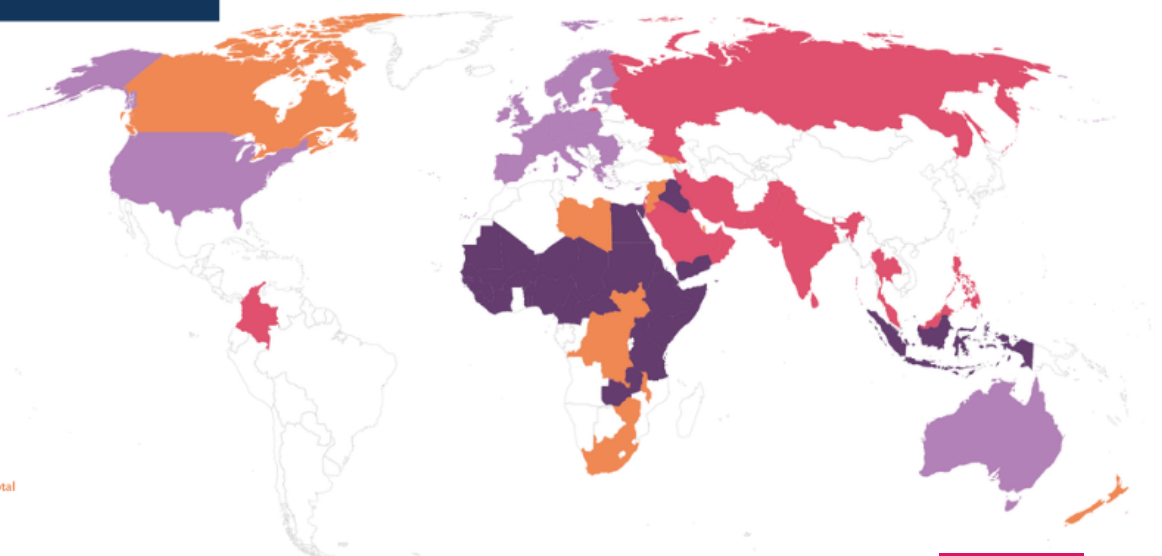
Violence against women is now called the “shadow pandemic.” It is time for “peace in the home,” says the United Nations.

[Here](#) is an easy-to-read primer on the Istanbul Convention (literally—there are three illustrated sentences per page).

## FGM/C IS GLOBAL

FGM/C is present in at least 92 countries around the world.

-  **CATEGORY 1**  
Countries with nationally representative surveys on FGM/C
-  **CATEGORY 2**  
Countries with indirect estimates on FGM/C
-  **CATEGORY 3**  
Countries with small-scale studies on FGM/C
-  **CATEGORY 4**  
Countries where media reports and anecdotal evidence refer to occurrence of FGM/C



Source: FGM/C: A Call For A Global Response (2020) Equality Now, End FGM EU Network, US End FGM/C Network





# FGM Update

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

BY CHRISTINE R.



# HOPE FOR GIRLS & WOMEN

Tanzania

On March 11, a global pandemic was declared, and the impact on the most vulnerable has been severe. The impact on those most vulnerable to FGM—WORLDWIDE—is heartbreaking.

Schools closed globally, which resulted and will continue to result in an increased exposure to human rights abuses, including female genital mutilation.

Per the UN Population Fund (UNFPA): “Due to pandemic-related disruptions in prevention programs, two million FGM cases could occur over the next decade that would otherwise have been averted.”

While schools were closed, COVID-19 directly impacted the girls served by our project in the following ways:

- A closure of schools resulted in an extended cutting season, making girls at home more vulnerable to undergoing FGM.
- Overcrowding at the safe houses.
- Postponement of community-

based education/awareness raising activities, including alternate rites of passage.

- Limited law enforcement.
- Closure of businesses and markets and financial difficulties, forcing parents to marry off their daughters.
- A reduction in funding generated and received.
- The potential that re-educated cutters returned to cutting.

What can we do?

- We can continue to raise funds and support the FAWCO Target Project SAFE (Safe Alternative for Female Genital Mutilation).
- \$5 will pay for an initial health check for a girl who seeks protection from FGM.
- \$60 will pay for reconciliation between a girl and her family.
- \$60 will pay for one counseling session per girl.
- \$125 will pay for three days training for awareness educators
- \$165 will pay for community sensitization per village or school program.

Our first ever AWCH Online Auction has raised €2,400. Thank you all for your donations of items to auction and the generous donations of our bidders!

We won't stop there. We have 2021 to

support the Target Project SAFE.

If you want to get involved, let me know. Christine, [fawcorep@awchamburg.org](mailto:fawcorep@awchamburg.org)



BY CAROL H.

The various women's clubs in Hamburg joined forces on the International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls on November 25 with a wide range of activities. The day kicks off the UN System's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which ends on Human Rights Day on December 10. "More than ever, we need to shake up our society and our politicians to make domestic violence visible, to fight it, to prevent it, and to stop it," says Christiane Klappert, board member of the Landesfrauenrat. "For many women, home is not a safe place—and corona-related restrictions are making it impossible for them to leave their own four walls."

The current figures from the Hamburg prosecutor's office show that from March to July of 2020 more than 2,900 cases of domestic violence were investigated. In comparison, the total number of cases during these months in 2019 was 2,300. "This is 600 cases more than last year and an average of more than 19 cases per day," says board member Annika Huisinga, who also heads the newly-formed LFR group Violence Against Women.



All over Hamburg, LFR member clubs use both analog and digital approaches to highlight violence against women. In addition to the AWCH's digital talk (see accompanying article), the LFR sponsored

a digital workshop with practitioners and social workers from counseling centers. The Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) Hamburg raised the flag "No to Violence Against Women" in front of their building, which will be on display at city hall all year. In addition, they collected donations for 24/7, the coordinating office for the six Hamburg women's shelters.

The five Zonta Clubs in Hamburg organized "Orange your City" on a UN Women's initiative, in which various buildings in Hamburg were illuminated orange to "bring light into the darkness of violence." A well-attended demonstration was also held on Jungfernstieg, which was supported by many women's alliances in Hamburg.

The LFR, representing 60 women's club members in Hamburg, demands an effective political strategy that considers both prevention and victim support for all kinds of sexual and gender-specific violence. Violence against women is a problem for our society as a whole, and everyone must work together toward solving it every day of the year.

## ! STOP ! Häusliche Gewalt



Internationaler Tag  
gegen Gewalt an Frauen  
25. November 2020  
18:00 – 20:00 Uhr  
Online

! STOP !  
Häusliche Gewalt

Photo by T. Hillermann from LFR on Nov. 25, 2020 at the „Orange My City“ demonstration.  
Graphic from ISTOP! Häusliche Gewalt campaign from LFR





The AWCH was excited to kick off the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence on November 25 with a powerful virtual presentation and Q&A with Lt. Col. Celia FlorCruz, retired, of the US Army. She was an engaging and inspiring guest as she shared with us her experience as a victim, survivor, and leader.

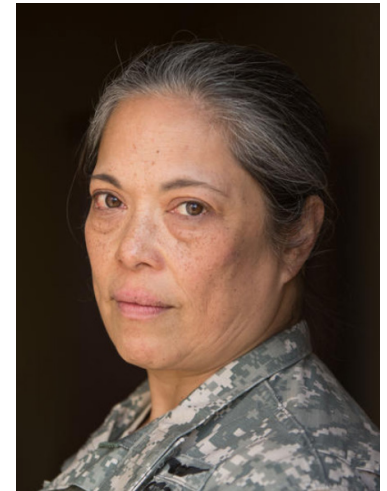
According to the World Bank, one in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence in her lifetime, and this occurs in developing and developed countries alike.

The 16 Days is the longest-running international campaign to end violence against women, and it initially connected gender-based violence (GBV) with human rights by being scheduled during a period of several related campaigns, such as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on Nov. 25, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day on Nov. 29, World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, and International Human Rights Day, in conjunction with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on Dec. 10. Individuals, civil society, grassroots organizations, UN agencies, and governments join together to demand accountability for the protection of women and girls during this two-week period.

Every year, the 16 Days Campaign introduces a new theme which focuses on one particular area of gender inequality and works to bring attention to these issues and make changes that will have an impact. The UN is supporting the campaign with their 2020 theme: "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!" The color orange symbolizes a brighter future, free of violence, and also serves as a means of demonstrating solidarity. These buildings around the world were lit up on Nov. 25: The parliaments in Bangladesh, Liberia, and Morocco; Rio's iconic Corcovado; the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City; La Scala in Milan; the city hall in Bogota; the National Theatre of Algiers; and Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa. Here in Hamburg, over 30 buildings were lit up, and I think the Elphi looked particularly warm and elegant!

Photo by Micheile Henderson from Unsplash

SDG 5 calls for the elimination of gender-based violence in its many forms. As global citizens, we must join together to protect women and girls to ensure they can fully participate in society. Failure to protect women threatens future generations, as children who grow up in households with violence are more likely to perpetuate violence.



Lt. Col. Celia FlorCruz, retired, US Army

How can we help create a safer environment for everyone? By speaking up and starting the conversation about the issue, seeking out education about GBV, sharing available services on social media, and donating to local shelters. The AWCH has been supporting the 5. Hamburger Frauenhaus for the past two years, and there are six other women's shelters and a total of 226 places in Hamburg seeking help. In addition, the Hilfe-telefon line is available 24/7 by calling 08001166016.

Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation that's been perpetuated for decades. It's pervasive, but it's not inevitable, unless we stay silent. Make it your business, because ending violence against women is everyone's business.



# AWCH ENVIRONMENTALLY MINDFUL GUIDELINES

BY CHRISTINE R.

## PURPOSE

Sustainable guidelines help us to assume responsibility for the impact that we have on our society and the environment.

Our groups, activities, events, meetings, and communications should keep these guidelines in mind when planning and undertaking any ventures.

## REDUCE

Avoid creating trash wherever possible by buying products with the least amount of packaging materials.

Think before products are purchased for use at AWCH events and activities: check AWCH's inventory at DESY before purchasing any new items.

Can the club borrow, rent, or make it? Check clothing swaps, online/retail second-hand shops, and Flohmarkts.

Ask members on our Facebook page or WhatsApp what they can lend.

Ask members to bring their own refillable water bottles to events.

## RE-USE

Avoid single-use items. Think about ways to reuse what is purchased.

Wherever possible, replace disposable products with reusable ones (fabric napkins, plates, cutlery, batteries, ink cartridges, coffee filters, etc.).

Purchase decorations that can be used year after year for events such as Thanksgiving, Halloween, and the Fourth of July.

## RECYCLE

Make an effort to recycle items (paper, glass, metal, and plastic). Ensure that what you bring to an event is recycled, either at the event or by bringing it home with you and putting it in the recycle bin.

## GO PAPERLESS

Don't print single-use items. Instead, utilize online tools and resources (Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive).

Where printing is needed, print documents on once-used paper and/or bleach-free, recycled paper with the highest post-consumer waste content available (that is, made from materials collected from previous products). Use FSC certified paper.

AWCH board meetings: refrain from printing documents. Instead, use a computer, iPad, or projector. AWCH board members should make digital the norm and print only when necessary.

AWCH events, activities: go digital (e.g., The Vagina Monologues used a digital ticketing process instead of asking each guest to print out a ticket).

Mailings/print magazines, i.e., *Currents*: use sustainable printers (e.g., dieUmweltDruckerei), and use FSC certified paper.

## TRANSPORT

Encourage members to lower commuter emissions by taking public transportation or carpooling where possible. For events further away, consider train vs. plane/car travel and compensate CO2 where possible (e.g., atmosfair.com).

Set up a WhatsApp group to see who is going to an event and how a carpool can be organized.

## SUPPORT REGIONAL

Work with and support local businesses that have sustainable goals.

Cater or book at restaurants and event locations that have and follow their own sustainability goals.

Use food services that deliver local produce.

Source prizes and gifts from local businesses.

If you have any suggestions or want to join the Environmentally Mindful Team, email us at [environment@awchamburg.org](mailto:environment@awchamburg.org)





# CATCHING THE RAIN FOR A BETTER FUTURE

BY ULRIKE H., CAROL H., AND CAROL S.

Our virtual Awareness Evening on October 26 was a great success! The evening was designed to give an update on the various AWCH projects that we have initiated with the Nandanvan Trust, headed by Robert d’Costa, in Maharashtra, India. The trust uses watershed projects (“catching the rain”) to support the ecological, economic, and social transformation of desertified areas outside of Mumbai—allowing tribal families to remain in their homelands in an environment that can economically support them. The AWCH has given support to this organization since 2010. In the last three years, our nominations of Nandanvan Trust projects for

FAWCO Development Grants have been awarded three times. These Development Grants have helped the tribal villagers, together with supervisors from the Nandanvan Trust, to build an open well, a kindergarten building, and to plant 1,500 trees in re-greened areas. Together, these single projects cumulatively provide the infrastructure necessary to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the transformation project—and a brighter future for the tribes of the area, the poorest of the poor in India.

On the evening, we heard Ulrike’s first-hand account of her

travels to the area, saw pictures of the various projects we have supported, and viewed the latest videos of the village of Hazarwadi, where our support has made the largest impact. Robert d’Costa and his assistant, Joseph Savari, made a special appearance (through video) to thank us again for our continued support. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss future projects in the area. Through donations and a raffle, we were able to raise over €700 for needed supplies for the kindergarten that was finished this spring. Evenings like this bring these far-away projects a little closer to home.



Photos provided by Nandanvan Trust

## FROM THE HEART PILLOW PROJECT WINS A €1000 AWARD!

BY TRACY M.

The From the Heart Pillow Project (FHPP) won an award from the ECE Projektmanagement GmbH & Co. KG, a German company located in Hamburg. ECE develops, implements, rents, and operates shopping centers.

One of our members, Nina Thimm, treasurer 2007-2009, works for ECE in their offices in Poppenbüttel. She became aware of their internal competition “Du und Dein Ehrenamt,” which draws attention to employees’ important volunteer commitments and contributions to society in local sports clubs, theater organizations, social clubs, and other similar institutions.

Nina felt the FHPP was worthy of ECE’s support, so in February she submitted the application that she and I worked on. In the last week of August, the awards were announced, and the FHPP won one

of five prizes, each worth €1000!

Part of the application was to explain why we do what we do: “We are a group of English-speaking women dedicated to raising awareness about breast cancer patients and supporting their need for comfort and well-being during a difficult medical period.

“We sew colorful heart pillows and drainage bottle bags for breast cancer patients, which are given to them after their operation. The surprising side effect of the pillow with its very special shape is that it fits ideally under the arm, takes the pressure off the surgical scar, and thus relieves wound pain. The drainage bottle bags give the patients confidence to walk the hospital halls without the embarrassment of the unpleasant wound discharge bottles hanging on their side. Both the pillows and



bags cheer the patients immensely.

“And the emotional aspect is also important to us: the pillow is also a gift from heart to heart and gives a little comfort and strength from woman to woman/man. They are a gift, a symbol of warmth and humanity, of hope and confidence, and are intended to show the women and men concerned that “You are not alone!”

Those of us involved in the AWCH’s FHPP are surprised and honored to receive such an award. How will this prize money help us? We are now able to purchase more fabric and filling for future working bees and finally treat our sewing machines to a spa treatment!

A special thank-you to Nina and ECE for helping our project thrive.



Photo of Jess M., Tracy M., and Susans.-W. Photos of Ohlsdorf bike tour also provided by Tracy M.



## DISCOVERING HAMBURG BY BIKE

BY CAROL H.

Motivated by the Get Up & Move campaign initiated by FAWCO Representative Christine R. last year, AWCH members got on their bicycles and started exploring Hamburg this fall.

Our first Discover Hamburg bike tour was in September. Starting the tour by crossing underneath the River Elbe via the newly-renovated, historic St. Pauli Elbtunnel (1911), we biked 25 km through Hamburg's bustling port, Europe's third largest. Our tour passed old port buildings and water locks, granaries and refineries, modern container terminals, drawbridges, and vacated villages. A highlight was visiting the MS Uferpark, a temporary art exhibition by

MS Artville. We ended the tour in Finkenwerder with lunch before taking a ferry back to Landungsbrücken. This is a great way to explore the "other side" of Hamburg. A special thanks to Carola A., who initiated the bike tours and was instrumental in planning the route (and reminding us to bring masks, share telephone numbers, and to bring an air pump.)

The second tour was organized by Melanie M., who promised to give us an "insider tour" of the Ohlsdorf cemetery (see Tracy Moede's article below for details). Melanie promises to repeat the tour in spring when the rhododendrons are in bloom!



Photos by Holly T. and Carol H.

## PORN STAR TO CHANCELLOR, ALL ARE WELCOME

BY TRACY M.



On October 10, under the guidance of member Melanie M., we biked through the Ohlsdorf Cemetery, the world's largest rural cemetery and the fourth-largest cemetery in the world, where 230 gardeners take care of graves and gardens. We actually only saw a small bit of the park's 388 hectares, which is equal to 543,417 soccer fields.

Melanie, who lives just outside the cemetery gates, gave an enlightening and personal tour, as her family has had a plot here since 1923. We were able to gain not only a new perspective on such an expansive green space but also learn more of the history of the cemetery and its designers and famous inhabitants. We visited,

among others, the Garten der Frauen, memorials to Hamburg firefighters and victims of world wars, the Muslim cemetery where all graves face Mecca, and the butterfly garden.

About 40% of all burials in Hamburg take place here, and among the notable residents are famous Hamburg actors Hans Albers, Heinz Erhardt, and Jan Fedder; Helmut Schmidt, the chancellor of West Germany (1974-1982) and his wife, Loki Schmidt; Carl Hagenbeck, inventor of the modern zoo; and Carolin Wosnitza, infamous Hamburg porn actress.



## HONORING TAIWAN DAY

BY TRACY M.

Rachel C. and her husband Mei-shun L. opened their home to AWCH members for a couch concert commemorating Taiwan National Day on October 10, known as “Double 10 Day.” It is a day when Taiwanese pride takes precedence over everything else, and Taiwanese people both at



Photos by Tracy M.

home and abroad celebrate. And, like holidays around the world, there's always something interesting to do.

Rachel, an accomplished guitarist and enthusiastic singer, entertained a small group with her renditions of “oldies but goodies,” including songs from Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Denver, Simon & Garfunkel, Frank Sinatra, Queen, and Johnny Cash. Rachel began learning on a ukulele and has now included American Western and electric guitars, saying, “YouTube is a good teacher.”



The evening included a delicious meal with Taiwanese specialties prepared by Rachel and her family. Social distancing and mask-wearing were obligatory, and the buffet Mr. L. set up was an architectural masterpiece! The festivities were capped with Stella K., Rachel, and her husband singing *Shanghai Bund*, a famous Cantonese song.

## Member *in Business*

GULIN Z.



Gulin Zois is an AWCH member who designs handmade silver jewelry in her home-based workshop. Her pieces are sold in her Etsy store, [GulinZoisJewelry](#).

**Q:** Where are you from, and what brought you to Hamburg?

**A:** I'm from Izmir, Turkey, which lies on the Aegean coast. We moved to Hamburg in 2012 for my husband's job.

**Q:** You studied chemical engineering, then moved into jewelry making. What inspired you to change focus?

**A:** I originally studied chemical engineering, but never liked it. I think I've always been an artist and a maker. I've always felt the need to express myself and the world I see around me in a



creative, artistic way. After moving to Hamburg, I started a course in goldsmithing and fell in love with it. I knew I had found my passion.

**Q:** What inspires your jewelry?

**A:** I find inspiration in nature, things like flowers and leaves. Simplistic geometric shapes are also a design focus for me.

**Q:** Who is your typical customer?



**A:** Most of my customers are women buying for themselves or gifts.

**Q:** What's your favorite part of designing?

**A:** The thought that when someone wears a piece of jewelry that I have made and it makes them feel special or more beautiful is a pretty fantastic thing. I think for me this is the favorite part of designing and creating.

Gulin's handmade silver pieces are sold in her Etsy store, [GulinZoisJewelry](https://www.etsy.com/shop/GulinZoisJewelry).



Photos by Gulin Z.



**Q:** Introduce yourself! Where are you originally from in the world? Who's with you on your Hamburg adventure? Where do you live in Hamburg?

**A:** Hi everyone, Beatrice here! I'm originally from Pittsburgh and now live in Rahlstedt with a very handy engineer from Berlin.

**Q:** What brought you to Hamburg, what are you doing in Hamburg now, and how long have you been here?

**A:** After my bachelor's, I moved to Hamburg in May 2019 and am now starting my MA in International Business and Sustainability at the Universität Hamburg.

**Q:** Why did you join the AWCH and what clubs are you in as part of the AWCH?

**A:** I discovered the AWCH while searching for American companies in Germany and joined the club as soon as I arrived in Hamburg. Now I am the Executive Editor of our magazine, *Currents*, an activity coordinator for Environmentally Mindful, and I enjoy crafting with the ladies at Stitch 'n' Bitch.

**Q:** What's your favorite place or thing to do in Hamburg?

**A:** Walking through the older neighborhoods in different seasons and



## Member *Spotlight*

BEATRICE K.



admiring the architecture and greenery Hamburg has to offer.

**Q:** What's your favorite thing to get or do in Hamburg that you can't find "back home?"

**A:** The perks of being a student here in Germany are fantastic, such as receiving a semester HVV ticket, no tuition, government support for student jobs, and the Erasmus+ program!

Photos by Beatrice K.



# KEEPING *Current*

OUR ACTIVISM COLUMN

## STOLPERSTEIN: STUMBLING BLOCK—SOMETHING THAT CAUSES DIFFICULTY OR HESITATION

by Carol H.



A photo of Lea Heymann (Steindamm 38, unknown year) given to her daughter Hilda. In family possession and published by permission.

Yes, pause a moment. We know the staggering number of people victimized by the Nazi regime, but the Stolpersteine give us names. And, if we take the time, we can

begin to see faces and hear stories—lest we forget.

The name Lea Heymann was suggested to the AWCH by Susanne Rosendahl, a graphic designer who took two years off to research the biographies of 366 victims of the National Socialist era. Her next step was to find sponsors for the Stolpersteine, a project initiated by the Cologne artist Gunter Demnig to commemorate the victims of this incredible breach of human rights. “The granddaughter of Lea Heymann lives in California,” Susanne Rosendahl wrote, and the 2019 board agreed to sponsor the Stolperstein using money donated by AWCH members after a tour of the historic Grindel area.

The Stolperstein to Lea Heymann was laid without ceremony at

Großneumarkt 38 in Hamburg-Neustadt in March of this year. It was the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I had no access to the biographies that Ms. Rosendahl had compiled. I googled the internet, translated Hamburg registries of births, marriages, and deaths, joined Ancestry.com, wrote several letters to Jewish Heritage Societies in California, and finally...

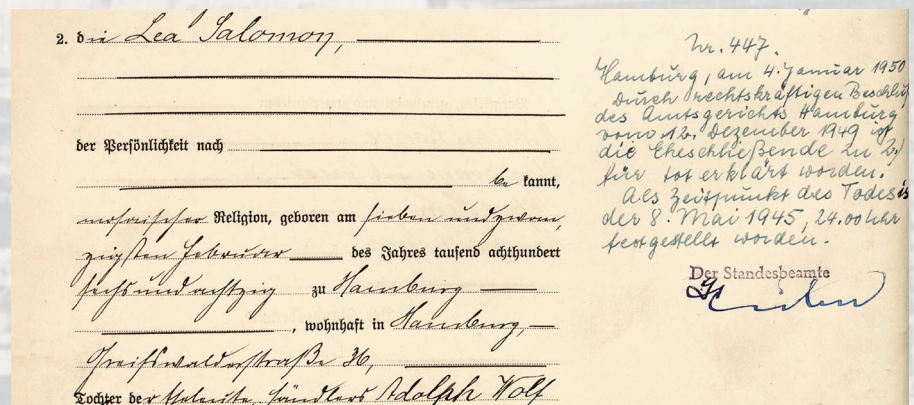
Message in my inbox: “Hello, Carol, yes, Lea was my great-grandmother, and Hilda was my grandmother... my mother is going to be so happy about this... she has a lot of information about my grandmother.”

“It was actually my grandmother’s birthday today.

“She would have been 100.”



Stolperstein Großneumarkt 38 for Lea Heymann in Hamburg-Neustadt. Photo: Pauli-Pirat. (CC BY-SA 4.0)



Lea's marriage certificate.





Image from Grossneumarkt with Schlachterstraße leading to St. Michaelis Church (ca 1910). The Marcus-Nordheim Stift was located on Schlachterstraße, which was destroyed in the 1943 bombings. Bildarchiv Hamburg (BA 7370)

Lea Salomon Heymann, born in 1886 in Hamburg, was the youngest daughter of the Altona merchant Adolph W. Salomon and his wife, Sophie. Lea lived with her sister Rosa in St. Georg before she married Paul Heymann—a merchant, hairdresser, and translator—in 1919. The couple had three children. In 1924, they took over the management of the Marcus-Nordheim Stift from her parents. Located in Hamburg-Neustadt, it provided low-income housing for many Jewish families. Hitler came to power in 1933. Arrests, discrimination, and expulsions from school and work became commonplace for the family. In 1938, together with husband and baby, Lea's oldest daughter, Hilda, immigrated to Shanghai, one of the few places still accepting Jews without visas. In Shanghai, Hilda and her husband received letters from their families in Hamburg. Lea's granddaughter sent me copies of the letters to translate: the mood was tense, the family wrote of "getting by," friends were "no longer here," many uncertainties but always hope "auf ein Wiedersehen." The letters stop.

In November 1941, Lea Heymann, her husband Paul, and their daughter Wilma (age 14) were deported to the Minsk ghetto. Lea's two sisters, Fanny and Rosa, were deported one month later to Riga "voluntarily," accompanied by their nephew Alfred (age 17), Lea and Paul's only son. Lea's granddaughter told me that her mother, Hilda, clung to the hope for many years that her mother and siblings were still alive. However, in December 1949, after persistent inquiries, a Hamburg court officially declared Lea Heymann dead; date and time of death were noted in the margins of her marriage certificate: "May 8, 1945, midnight"—the day World War II ended in Europe. More likely, if she survived the hunger and cold or rampant infectious diseases in her first year at the Riga work camp, she was killed in 1943 before the ghetto was closed (age 57).

Lea's granddaughter told me she was in Hamburg 10 years ago to



Image from Grossneumarkt with view toward St. Michaelis Church (1906); Bildarchiv Hamburg (AA 1055)

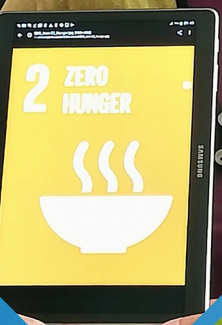
trace her family's history. At the time, she could find no one to help, no information.

Through the work of volunteers behind the Stolperstein project, we can now put stories, places, and photos together with victims. My telephone conversation with Lea's granddaughter ended in tears and a genuine thank-you to the club for sponsoring the Stolperstein.

My sincere thanks to Joana M.-O'N. for initiating the project, Carol S. for arranging the Stolperstein sponsorship, and the many members who contributed. Lea's birthday is February 27—a good time for the missed dedication.

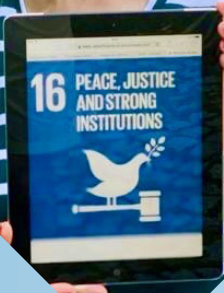
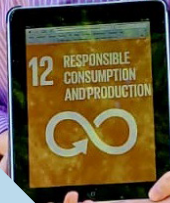
Background image from Neustadt, 1907. Schlachterstraße as viewed from Mühlenstraße. The Elbstraße (now Neanderstraße) goes off to the left. Bildarchiv Hamburg (AA 9957)





DECADE FOR





# ACTION





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## THE DECADE OF ACTION ON 17 UNITED NATIONS GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BY MARY FRANCES L.

For more than four months, the AWC Hamburg participated in FAWCO's invitation to raise awareness of the UN SDGs. Did you notice? Members took pictures in their gardens during lockdown and described their connections to one of the goals. We remarked on how doing this work, IN Hamburg and worldwide, is really nothing new to many of our members. The point is the connectedness, how each goal overlaps with

others. We were on Instagram, Facebook, and our regularly emailed newsletter. Did you see any of your friends? Do you feel more aware now?

The awareness campaign came at the end of the first five years of the 15-year plan to improve life everywhere, for everyone. With 10 years left, it's time to focus on what we can actually do. We combined a celebration of Hamburg

Climate Week with the SDG milestone and held an online Filmfest. In the project MY World 360, grassroots organizations around the world were supplied with equipment for filming, in augmented or virtual reality, in order to present their projects. We traveled (safe from the coronavirus) to Brazil, India,



## THE GLOBAL GOALS



These images are from the UN's SDG website. With their permission we are allowed to use these images, however they would like to state: "The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States."





California, and Uganda to see what is being done now. Grab your tablet (or whatever you use for the internet) and dance around the room to [this video!](#)

Here in our corner of the world, we have been active, too. Members have taken walks to pick up trash, had a walking tour of organic and fair-trade shopping sites in Eimsbüttel, met online to see how the Catching the Rain project in Maharashtra, India, is progressing, despite drought and COVID-19. More heart pillows and bags were sewn for breast cancer patients. We support the fight against discrimination in, among other ways, the Stumbling Blocks (Stolpersteine). The 17 Goals are divided into 169 (!) subgoals, so there really is something for everyone. And yet, I encourage you not to completely focus on one issue.

Look and see how “your” interest affects and is affected by the other SDG areas.

The FAWCO Book Club recently read Barbara Kingsolver’s book *Flight Behavior*. I enjoyed reading it a few years ago and heard even more this time with the audiobook. Vividly, the reader is shown the incredible view of an Appalachian forest suddenly covered with monarch butterflies. In just as much detail, layer after intersecting layer is revealed of Della Robia’s struggles with education, gender, poverty, health, life on land, infrastructure, clean and affordable energy, responsible consumption, and decent work for economic growth. And yes, there is an end filled with hope.



We have worked for “development” and “sustainability” for decades, and many mistakes have been made along the way. Yet we can fill the UN Decade of Action with our action and with our HOPE.\* I’m looking forward to seeing what we do with our combined strengths and talents.

(Yes, the reference to our Target Project is intentional.)

[Click here](#) to see an earth temperature timeline.



# HOW TO CREATE A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

BY CALLIE R.

Have you ever heard of a circular economy? It is a hot topic in the world of sustainability, something everyone should know about. The idea is that everything produced should go back into the production cycle at some point, and the collection of all raw/virgin material should stop. This includes the tapping of raw materials such as mining for rare metals to produce cell phones, as well as growing and picking cotton. The world's population is rapidly growing, along with its amassing waste and pollution. The current system of starting production from new won't sustain us much longer.

Each production cycle needs to be rethought in the design phase, and ways found that the product can either be made from recycled goods or easily collected and recycled after its usage. One scheme is called "eco-design" and means that the product is meant to last forever and can be easily repaired (if need be) over and over again. A second solution is only making exactly what is needed or ordered. For example, Teemill produces t-shirts for companies right when they are ordered in order to prevent an excess supply of clothing that will never be bought or worn. In addition, this company allows for customers to return their shirts when they are done wearing them, and they reuse the shirts to make new shirts. This is possible because the shirts are made of 100% cotton. Blends are harder to break down because, for example, cotton and polyester require two different means in order to break them down for reuse.

The best way you can live a "circular" life is by doing the following. First, research a few of your favorite clothing companies and see what they're doing to produce sustainably, and then make a pact with yourself to only shop at companies that are transparent (they list their factories on their websites) and actively devoting themselves to producing sustainably (they are part of a campaign, e.g., Clean Clothes Campaign, Fair Wear Foundation, Cotton for Africa,

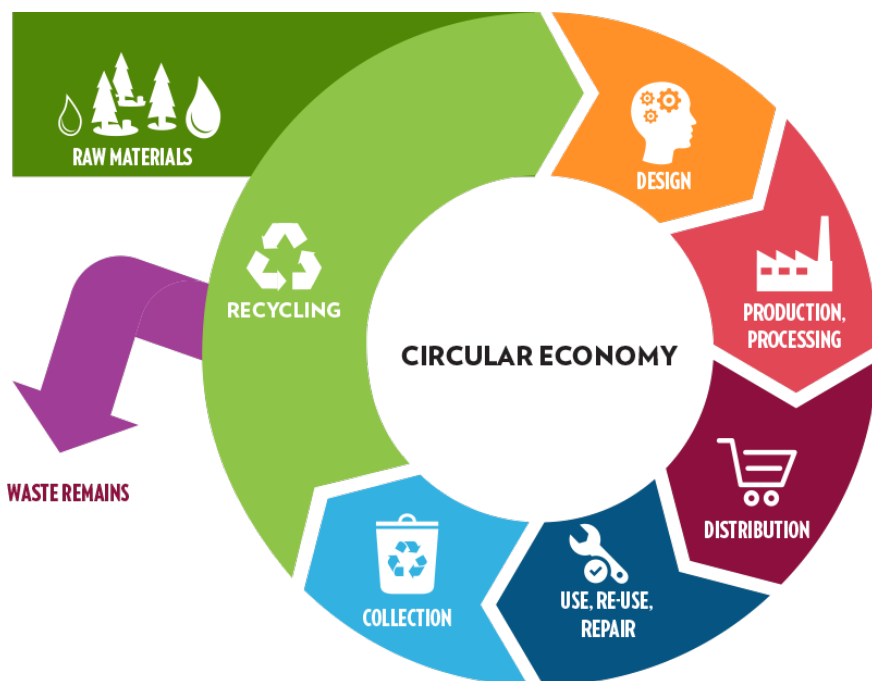


Image from SRIP Krozno Gospodarstvo, [srip-circular-economy.eu](http://srip-circular-economy.eu)

etc.). Also, when you buy your clothes, try to buy non-blends and then donate them, sell them, send them back to the company, or recycle them when you are done wearing them. The best thing you can do is buy second-hand clothing. If you are against buying second-hand, make sure you are buying clothes that have a long life span and that are worth repairing and donating.

Remember to recycle your electronics as well. Not disposing of your electronics properly leads to massive amounts of e-waste and contamination! In addition, recycling/selling back your electronics can allow for phone companies to repurpose the rare metals inside! *Business Insider* has reported that Apple recovered \$40 million in gold in 2015 through recycling iPhones and computers.

The change starts with you—so hold yourself accountable! The earth and factory workers around the world will thank you for it.





# PARIS AGREEMENT

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIGGEST CLIMATE POLICIES TO IMPACT OUR FUTURE

BY BEATRICE K.

### Main Goals:

- To bring nations together to fight climate change
- To keep global temperature rise well below 2°C (above pre-industrial levels)
- To pursue measures to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C
- To strengthen all countries' abilities to combat climate change through mitigation of emissions and transparency

While the Paris Agreement won't "solve" climate change, its goal of keeping the global surface temperature rise below 1.5°C is ambitious. Every five years, members of the agreement will meet, assess collective progress toward goals of the agreement, report countries' actions against climate change, and adapt national plans. Each country's plan ranges in scope and ambition, but the Paris Agreement provides templates to measure progress against climate change ([read template here](#)).

[Click here](#) to read the full Paris Agreement.



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## COP21 MAJOR OUTCOMES

5 Key Elements of the Paris Agreement

- Every 5 years countries **STRENGTHEN CLIMATE ACTIONS**
- ADAPTATION** is a central pillar to help world's most vulnerable
- LONG-TERM GOAL** to achieve net zero emissions
- ENHANCED TRANSPARENCY** to ensure commitments are met
- CLIMATE FINANCE** to support developing countries

10,000 New Climate Initiatives

- 187 COUNTRIES** shared national climate action plans
- 127+ MILLION HECTARES** of degraded land in Africa and Latin America to be restored
- 400+ CITIES TO SET TARGETS** that could cut urban emissions in half
- \$1T IN SOLAR INVESTMENTS** to be mobilized by new global alliance
- 114+ COMPANIES** will use Science Based Targets to set emissions-cutting goals
- 20 COUNTRIES** to double clean energy R&D

These substantial climate actions will transform the world and drive us toward a safer, climate-resilient future.

WRI.ORG/PARIS

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Image from the World Resources Institute, [www.wri.org.cn/en/resources/data-visualizations/cop21-major-outcomes](http://www.wri.org.cn/en/resources/data-visualizations/cop21-major-outcomes)



# CLIMATE POLICY IN THE USA

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIGGEST CLIMATE DEALS LIKELY TO IMPACT OUR FUTURE

BY BEATRICE K. AND MASON JANE M.

In many countries, the climate crisis is finally being treated as what it is, a crisis. New Zealand has declared a climate emergency and states that their govern-

ment will be carbon neutral by 2025, and the country will follow by 2050. China has also declared that it will reach carbon neutrality by 2060, which is a huge undertaking for one

of the world's top carbon emitters (accounting for 28% of carbon emissions). However, we must be wary because, since the Paris Agreement holds no binding contracts with countries, governments can pull out of their so-called "climate action plans" at any time. Yet with more countries pledging carbon neutrality in the coming decades, you might wonder where the United States stands on this issue. Well, here are some of the energy goals being discussed at the national level:

### Clean Energy Revolution

#### Main goals:

- Re-enter Paris Agreement
- Net-zero emissions economy-wide by 2050
- Zero-carbon electricity emissions by 2035
- 50% reduction in building emissions by 2035

The Clean Energy Revolution is a top-down government effort to confront the climate crisis and supported by President-elect Joe Biden. In essence, the idea is to connect our economy and environment. The proposed budget is \$1.7 trillion, which is to be raised through taxes. The plan aims to revolutionize the energy industry by creating jobs in the renewable energy sectors, cutting emissions by developing wind and solar fields, and implementing energy-storage technology to balance grid electricity supply. While re-joining the Paris Agreement on Day One shows great initiative, critics claim that setting targets as far out as 2035 and 2050, while possibly realistic for the economy, are not ambitious enough for a crisis plaguing our world every second.

### Green New Deal USA

#### Main goals:

- Global net-zero emissions by 2050
- Global reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 40 to 60% above 2010 levels by 2030
- Promote soil carbon storage through increased protection and restoration of threatened ecosystems

The Green New Deal (GND) was introduced to the House of Representatives in 2018 but was not passed. While the estimated cost of this plan is set at

a staggering \$93 trillion, this is the most ambitious plan to date for the United States in the effort to combat climate change. Per some accounts, we do not have longer than 2030 to drastically reverse the damage already inflicted on our planet. Some speculate that this ambitious plan might resurface in coming years.

### American Conservation Coalition (ACC)

#### Main goals:

- Global net-zero carbon emissions by 2050
- Develop and commercialize emissions-reducing technologies
- Modernize infrastructure to improve efficiency and reduce emissions
- Pursue natural solutions that store carbon
- Engage with partner nations to reduce emissions globally

The ACC is a student-initiated organization founded in 2017. It is changing the narrative on

conservatives and climate change and encourages young party members to have a voice about this issue and take action.

#ClimateEmergency is a trendy twitter handle that severs the boundary of politics and climate activism. Major US parties are finally





coming together to combat climate change, as this crisis touches every aspect of our environment and pushes the resources of our planetary boundaries. One major development includes

the Climate Solutions Caucus, formed in 2019, consisting of a bipartisan senate that acknowledges that Congress must play a vital role in combating climate change.



## SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE, STRONG INSTITUTIONS

BY PALVASHA H.



So, what moves me to support SDG 16 is a strong belief in empowerment worldwide for all, especially for the most vulnerable members of society, through the existence or establishment of and respect for the rule of law. Much like the eminent founder of the UNDP's Human Development Index, the Pakistani scholar Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq, I believe the measure of a country's success lies not only in its GDP figures but in its performance in the fields of universal education, equality for women, poverty, health, human rights, and other similar indicators of the quality of life. The 17 interconnected SDGs are the continuation of the endeavour to meet the political, economic, and environmental challenges facing our world.

societies where they have very limited or no access to justice! Good governance is another example: how to encourage accountability, fair elections, and an end to persecution in the developing world when these can come under attack even in developed countries? Here it is important to remind ourselves that a) the SDGs are not just aimed at developing countries, and b) that the only way to achieve worthwhile goals is to remain undaunted and to persevere.



Is human behaviour to be explained solely or mainly in terms of self-interest? Or is concern for the well-being of others, be they family members, friends and colleagues, fellow-citizens, or generally people anywhere an equally strong, natural motivation for people's thoughts and actions down the centuries?

I think it is very important to acknowledge the philanthropists in ourselves who would like to see others enjoy the same level of empowerment we do, for "doing good" is a question of doing what is right: everyone is entitled to their human rights, wherever they might be in the world; oppression and injustice have no place in enlightened societies.

The SDG 16 goals are ambitious: to reduce all forms of violence, conflict, and the illicit arms flow, and to encourage good governance in developing countries and their participation in global good governance. Take the problem of violence against women and children: as we are aware, this is sadly prevalent today even in the most advanced societies with intact institutions of justice; how much more of a tall order it is, then, to address violence against women and children in developing



16-8



# MY ACTIVISM IS VOLUNTEERING

BY TRACY M.



Though volunteering and activism are often regarded as separate spheres of activity, both are motivated by the desire to bring about change in local environments and communities.

I have been volunteering for the past six years as an organizer for the AWCH From the Heart Pillow Project. Susan S.-W. has been by my side since the beginning, and Jess M. has recently joined us. Together, we coordinate the planning of the Working Bee sessions, contact with and delivery to the Maria

Helios Hospital, and the purchase of all the supplies needed for such a large undertaking. We have about 15 “bees,” as we like to call ourselves, who actively participate by cutting, sewing, ironing, stuffing, and hand-sewing the pillows and cutting and sewing bags. We donate an average of 150 heart-shaped pillows and drainage (Redon) bottle bags for breast cancer patients annually at no cost to the patients or hospital.

In 2015, I began volunteering on the board of the FAWCO Foundation. We specifically aid scientific, educational, and charitable programs, and additionally support the rights of women and children throughout the world by offering Development Grants. These grants fund projects that can make an immediate impact and lead to success for the people they support.

That is the What. What is the Why? I believe human beings are hard-wired to give to others. The benefits of volunteering are enormous and fulfill our

need to give. This helps people in need, worthwhile causes, and the community, but the benefits are even greater for me as a volunteer. It provides me a sense of purpose and connects me to others. Being active in the From the Heart Project has specifically helped me counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety caused by the pandemic in 2020. It keeps me in regular contact with others and helps me develop a solid support system.

Volunteering also makes me happy by bringing fun and fulfillment into my life. I like knowing that even a small amount of effort on my part can make a big difference to others.

Volunteering and activism are infectious—they quickly rub off on others who see the positive influence and wish to take part. I have found my niche: have you found yours?



Tracy M. with the FAWCO Foundation Board in 2018. Other photos also provided by Tracy M.





# KINDNESS

BY JENNY M.

Watching a tv advertisement gave me the inspiration for an article for this month's *Currents*. The ad has no words, and I forget what it's for, but it shows a lonely old woman who has her front door decorated by a neighbour and a broken window latch mended by a teenager while she's out shopping. While watching it, that phrase from the '90s popped into my head: "Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty."

Yes, this has been a year of horror, but it can also be defined as one where ordinary people have shown extraordinary kindness toward others.

The events of the last two years have meant a move from dear Hamburg—home for 20 years—to Brexitland. British homes are the smallest in Europe, and I've had to give away many things

acquired over the years. Two lovely ladies were kind enough to help, Shelly S. from our club and Anja D., a colleague from the International School. Both ladies are organizers and internet-savvy, and they soon found new homes for everything. Two more kind ladies from our club, Tracy M. and Jess M., took away books for their local library and scooped up fabric for the heart pillows they make as they left. These were random acts of kindness which I won't forget.

Our members give generously for many causes, as do the parents, teachers, and pupils at the International School, but I have a suggestion for an easy, all-year act of kindness. The British supermarket chain Sainsburys has large cardboard boxes at the checkout for customers to fill with food. It's in Sainsburys' interest, of course, as they sell more food, but

it means that there is a steady supply of food for homeless shelters. This is such an easy way to show kindness that I'm surprised that other supermarkets haven't tried it.

Baking cookies for neighbors isn't my thing (they'd be fed to the dog) but I can knit. So during lockdown and dreary winter, I'm making hats and mittens for children in homeless shelters. A tiny gesture, but one that will help keep them warm. The small things we do for others are helping us cope with this vile year, and we'll keep on doing them for as long as there is a need. Best wishes for 2021, everybody.



Photo by Jenny M.



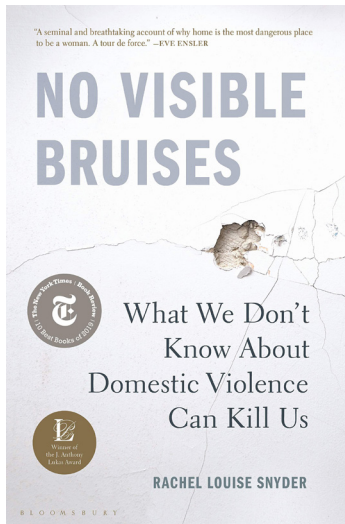
# BOOK REVIEWS

from our Book Club

## *No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence*

### *Can Kill Us*

By Rachel Louise Snyder



ARTICLE BY CAROL S.

The Book Club had originally planned to read and discuss *No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know about Domestic Violence Can Kill Us* by Rachael Louise Snyder in April in commemoration of International Women's Day on March 8 due to its call to action to highlight gender inequality and violence against women. This meeting was postponed because of the pandemic until November, but it was also a very fitting read to raise awareness for the global 16 Days Campaign and the UNiTE Campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence that kick off annually on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and run until December 10, Human Rights Day. The World Health Organ-

ization labels violence against women "a global health problem of epidemic proportions," and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime concluded "the home the most dangerous place for a woman to be" with 50,000 women around the world killed in 2017.

*No Visible Bruises* is a nonfiction book about domestic violence in the United States, and it is extremely well-researched and well-written. This extraordinary book has won several prizes, including the Hillman Prize for Book Journalism, and was named one of the 10 Best Books of the Year by several publications, including the *New York Times* staff critics, and it deserves all the honor!

The first part of the book is the powerful story of Michelle and Rocky that debunks the myths that perpetuate abuse. In the second part, the author interrogates the abusers, showing that they aren't always the rageaholics that one imagines, and investigates the possibility of their changing. In the third part, she follows and interviews the people on the frontlines of domestic violence and domestic homicide. Snyder's genius shows in her weaving of the stories with facts and analysis. She changes your awareness of domestic abuse (or intimate partner terrorism, as she

prefers to call it) and gives you insightful takeaways on the Violence Against Women Act, danger assessment tools, the significance of guns in domestic homicide, the therapy programs for abusers, the need for the cooperation of social services and law enforcement, the need for women's shelters and transitional housing, and why evidence-based prosecution is so important.

People shy away from talking about domestic violence, but Snyder convinces us that it's time for the conversation—it can save lives.

.....  
**Comments:**

A gripping book that is "written for the layperson, the one who knows nothing but assumes everything." Highly recommended for women and men (young and old). —Carol H.

*No Visible Bruises* shines a flashlight into some of the corners of the issue of domestic violence, an important subject that often remains in the dark due to shame and/or fear...Snyder's writing style in this moving reportage is as gripping as fiction, as intimate as a memoir, and a very informed telling of an unfair and unbalanced crisis of American family life. —Venita K.



# Girl, Woman, Other

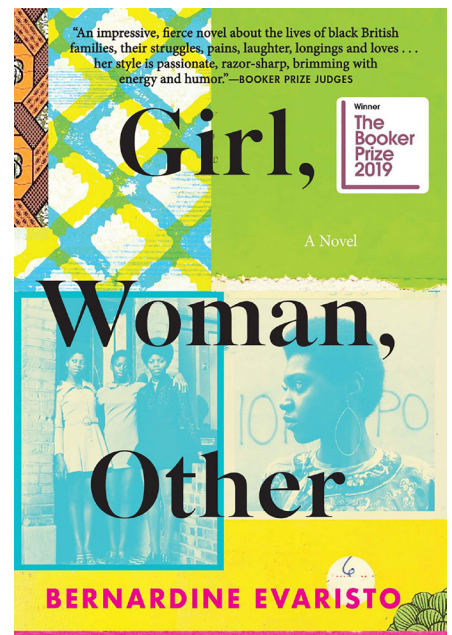
By Bernadine Evaristo

## ARTICLE BY CAROL S.

*Girl, Woman, Other* gives voice to 12 women as each comes to grips with her life as determined by the intersectionality of her race, sexuality, class, cultural background, and the times. There are 800,000 Black British women, each with her own story, and Evaristo wanted to include as many as possible in her novel, exploring their invisibility and heterogeneity. She decided that the maximum possible was 12, and she presents them in groups of three—most in London, two in rural England. We meet them one by one along with their friends and sometimes with their families and learn about their struggles as well as their love and joy. These protagonists aren't presented in first person but you experience them as such because of the characterization used in theater writing. The characters present themselves in one way but other characters expose them, often with a great sense of humor. The easy flow of Evaristo's fusion fiction (hint: there are no periods) makes this book very readable as the protagonists slip from the past to the present and into the unconscious. This is also a novel of inclusivity, and the dedication sets the tone: "For the sisters & the sistas & the sistahs & the sistren & the women & the womxn & the wimmin & the womyn & our brethren & our bredrin & our brothers & our bruvv & our men & our mandem & the LGBTQI+ members of the human family."

Bernadine Evaristo was born in 1959 in London to a white English mother and Nigerian father into a world of dualities. She joined a theater group at the age of 12 and thrived on slipping into many characters. She studied drama, wrote plays, and went on to found the Theatre for Black Women with two friends. The theater disbanded, but she continued writing, with her focus on the African diaspora. Mass migration to Britain started only after World War II, and Evaristo is second generation. There were no books about Black British females when she came of age, and her writing underpins her assertion that "we are here and this is who we are."

Evaristo was awarded half of a Booker Prize for this novel, and the other half went to Margaret Atwood for *The Testaments*. The AWCH Book Club will go with the opinion of Ron Charles in the *Washington Post* that *Girl, Woman, Other* is "a truly fine novel that deserves all the glory." She is proud that she is the first Black woman to receive this prize. Her protagonist Amma is semi-biographical, and it took both of them 40 years to achieve recognition—Amma for her play *The Last Amazon of Dahomey* and Evaristo for *Girl, Woman, Other*. Both were part of the 80s Black feminist countercultural community in London. Evaristo has written eight novels and published numerous articles, essays, and reviews in prestigious British publications. She has been an activist for 25 years advocating for the inclusion of writers of color under her motto: "If you have a platform, share it with others."



## Comments:

It seems to be a book which works its magic over time. I find myself thinking about the characters now and again, which I haven't experienced in a long time. I found it an honest portrayal of very different women and their triumphs, as well as their struggles. She left no topic untouched. —Julie N.

The lighthearted flow of the fusion prose-poetry makes this book, with its very sober and relevant theme of discrimination and oppression, an excellent read. —Carol H.



Photo by Carol S.

# ENVIRONMENTALLY MINDFUL

## OUR RECENT ACTIVISM

BY BEATRICE K., SHANAN R., JULIA R. JEZELLE R. AND CHRISTINE R.



Our Environmentally Mindful (EM) team has been busy this autumn with protests, walking tours, trash pick-ups, and more! Members protested at the Global Climate Strike on September 25 with over 16,000 other Hamburgers and millions across the globe calling on political leaders to take action against the rising temperatures and ecological disasters. Twelve members attended the Hamburg Filmfest to see *I Am Greta*, a remarkable documentary about how the Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg took the world by storm and inspired others to stand up for climate justice. We also held our first zero-waste walking tour in October. We visited three local zero-waste businesses in Eimsbüttel: the grocery store Bio.lose, the vintage shop Fabulously Old Things, and Monger Store & Deli. While we toured each store, the owners explained their green business practices, what inspired them to take action, and goals for the future. Stay tuned for walking tours in your neighborhood, and if you would like to recommend shops or host a tour, please let us know!

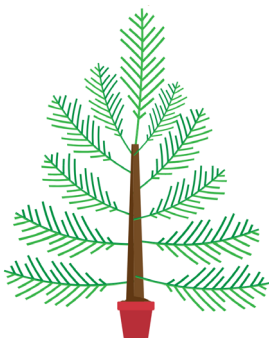
We are constantly trying to spread the word about environmental activism, no matter how large or small. Every month, we will host an AWCH Müll Pick-Up Weekend, where members can walk around their neighborhoods, collect trash, share their progress on our EM Facebook page, and even sometimes vie for a prize. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook for weekly updates of our "Tips for Tuesdays." Each month, one of our members dedicates a zero-waste theme. October was zero-waste kitchen, November was zero-waste Thanksgiving, and December is zero-waste clothing and holidays. Let us know if you would like to host an event or activity!



[EM\\_awchamburg](#)



[Environmentally Mindful Forum](#)



Potted Christmas tree, so you can plant it outside in the spring.



DIY garland and ornaments. Use dried oranges and cinnamon sticks tied with string for a rustic aesthetic.

### Zero-Waste Christmas

SDGs 11 & 12

1

2

3

4

DIY body scrubs (sugar, salt, oil, coffee grounds)



DIY decorations. Tie a bow to leftover dried cinnamon sticks and pinecones and attach to presents, garlands, tree decor, etc.





## Podcast Recommendation: How to Save a Planet

BY SHANAN R.

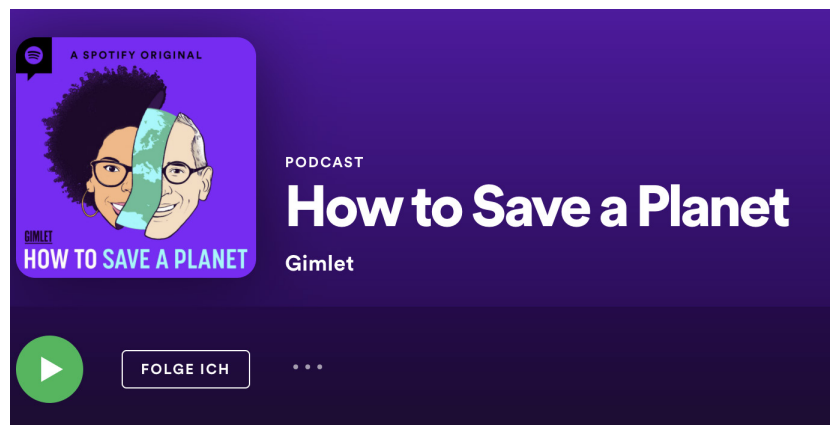
**Language:** English

**Available:** wherever you get your podcasts

**Catchphrase:** Earthlings, we've got work to do.

**Hosts:** Alex Blumberg, co-founder and CEO of Gimlet Media, and Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, scientist and policy nerd

**Best listened to:** when taking long, meandering walks, hoping the baby will keep sleeping



In the words of the host himself (Alex Bloomberg), “What do we need to do to address the climate crisis and how do we make those things happen?”

With 10 episodes created so far, I find that this podcast provides great information on multiple areas of climate change. The stories and information they report on are full of scientific data but easy to understand and apply to daily life. The episodes are filled with interviews from those in the field or those who have personal experiences, with the effect being a well-rounded reporting on the topic. In a time where climate change discussions and facts can feel overwhelming and bleak, this podcast contains laughter and jokes and helps me to feel more knowledgeable about the data surrounding climate change. The episode I like the best is “Fighting Fire with Fire,” as it relates to a current event that is close to my heart, the terrible fire season happening now in Colorado. At the end of each episode, the hosts ask their guests, “How screwed are we...and what can we actually do”—so take those action points and get to work on saving the planet!



Wrap gifts in fabric scraps or old newspapers that will be recycled anyway, or decorate your own scrap paper.

5

6



Give the gift of experiences (art class, a trip to the zoo, spontaneous coffee meetup, craft night, treasure hunt, etc.) instead of buying a new item.



7

8

Purchase pre-loved gifts (eBay, Facebook selling groups). Or purchase from companies that focus on sustainability, such as [B Corp companies](#).

More ideas for you:  
[Click here!](#)



# Art in the City

by the Art Group

## Exhibitions at the Deichtorhallen

BY SHELLY SCHOENESHOEFER

Not only did the pandemic have an economic impact around the world, but this year's election had us all hanging onto the edge of our seats, hoping for a different future for America. So when the second lockdown was announced, Carol B. and I took the chance to go to one last art exhibition at the Deichtorhallen before it was too late. I desperately wanted to see this exhibition and hope that it will be extended so you will have the chance, too.



Photos by Shelly Shoenshoefer

## HAMBURGER KUNSTHALLE



Sol Calero (\*1982). Casa de Cambio, 2016. Art Basel Statements, Basel. © Courtesy die Künstlerin, ChertLüdde, Berlin und Crèvecoeur, Paris. Foto: Andrea Rosetti

**MAX BECKMAN**  
**FEMININE-MASCULINE**  
until January 24, 2021

**THE ABSURD BEAUTY OF SPACE**  
**SEVEN ARTISTS VS. UNGERS**  
until March 7, 2021

**BACK THEN HAS ALWAYS BEEN NOW**  
**PAINTING SINCE 1947 RECONSIDERED**  
until September 5, 2021

**EIGHT CENTURIES OF ART**  
**PERMANENT COLLECTION**  
until December 31, 2023



### **MATT BLACK: AMERICAN GEOGRAPHY**

This powerful exhibition started off as a documentary in which he travelled over 100,000 miles on Greyhound buses and, in the end, made it through 46 states. Matt Black (1970) concentrates on themes such as migration, poverty, and vast landscapes, and he searched for locations where the poverty was over 20%. The black-and-white images will strike a chord with you if you come from these areas that he focused on. I looked at photos from Arizona, New Mexico, and California, and although the landscapes were familiar to me, the photos gave them a whole new meaning. The works are extraordinary in that they convey a message that undeniably shows the truth of the social landscapes.



### **JERRY BERNDT: BEAUTIFUL AMERICA**

Much of photojournalist Jerry Berndt's (1943-2013) documentation was done in the years 1960-1980. With a skeptic's eye, he loves America in a new way. The photos are filled with protest, innocence, and the wealthy vs. the poor, and we are always aware that a political conflict is just about to explode. His photographs sometimes look mundane, but on closer observation we see, through his cynical lens, just what he thinks about America and its problems. His work takes us through the Vietnam War protests, the War on Drugs, the Cold War, and the nuclear power plant protests.

### **#PROTESTSGOVIRAL: BILDER DES AKTIVISMUS AUF INSTAGRAM**

This is a compilation exhibition based on a current hashtag selection of social and political current events such as #BlackLivesMatter and #RemoveTrump. This project links the work of the two photographers Jerry Berndt and Matt Black.

#### **MATT BLACK**

**AMERICAN GEOGRAPHY**

until January 3, 2021

#### **#PROTESTSGOVIRL**

**PHOTOS OF ACTIVISTS ON INSTAGRAM**

Until February 7, 2021

#### **WILLIAM KENTRIDGE**

until April 18, 2021

## **MUSEUM FÜR KUNST UND GEWERBE**



Anna Banout (\*1993), Objekt #7, © Kinga Budnik/Anna Banout

### **LOOTED ART**

**PROVENANCE RESEARCH ON THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MKG**

no end date announced

### **THE LANGUAGE OF FASHION**

no end date announced

### **SYRIA 2087**

**FOSSILS OF THE FUTURE**

until April 25, 2021

### **SUSANNE KRIEMANN**

**RECONSIDERING PHOTOGRAPHY: UNDERBRUSH**

until January 31, 2021

# Georges Braque

BY HOLLY TODD

Dreaming of Paris during the pandemic? The Bucerius Kunst Forum has come to the rescue and brought Paris to Hamburg in the form of an exhibition conceived by and largely drawn from the Pompidou Centre. Its subject, the modernist French painter Georges Braque, has been overshadowed by his more flamboyant contemporaries, above all Pablo Picasso, with whom he worked closely early in his career. Without a doubt, Picasso was more daring and inventive than Braque over the long term and the content of his art more gripping. During their close collaboration from 1909-1914, however, which lay the groundwork for Picasso's further development, Braque seems to have been the more open-minded and innovative. It is definitely worth taking a closer look at his art, and we can be grateful to the Bucerius for making him the subject of another of its popular small, well-staged retrospectives, the first major show of the artist's paintings in Germany in 30 years.

The son of artisans in Le Havre, Braque originally came to Paris in 1900 to complete an apprenticeship as an interior decorative painter. Braque had studied artistic painting evenings at the Academy of Fine Arts (École des Beaux-Arts) in Le Havre, but in Paris he met artists working outside the academy. He painted and exhibited with the Fauve painters who abandoned modeling and one-point perspective in favor of unrestrained strokes and flat swaths of pure color. In 1907, Braque discovered the work of Paul Cézanne, who had died a year earlier. Under the latter's influence, he began covering the surfaces of his paintings with loose facets of color, giving his pictures a sense of undulating relief without depending on a coherent illusion of volume or space. This is what Braque brought to the table when he met Picasso, who had similarly been striving to give his paintings a stronger physical presence by borrowing the aggressive frontality, extreme geometric simplification of form, and disregard for consistent figure-ground relationships of some African masks and figures. The result was Cubism.

The exhibition traces Braque's Cubist development before World War I from early monochrome "analytical" dissection of form into multiple fragmentary views to the "synthetic" building up of form with flat-colored or textured planes. After the war, his subject matter becomes more recognizable and decorative and, thereafter, undergoes only slight variations. In the 1930s, under the influence of Surrealism, inanimate objects morph into one another and take on human qualities; during World War II Braque's pictures become darker and starker. Perhaps reflecting his artisan background, Braque remained a painter's painter throughout his life, rarely straying from his preferred still-life subject matter, but within that neutral framework constantly exploring and refining pictorial form. Wandering through an exhibition of paintings by Braque is a great and quiet pleasure for anyone who simply enjoys the sensual possibilities of colored paint applied to a rectangular flat surface. Let's hope that the Bucerius will be allowed to reopen its doors before the loaned pictures have to be returned to Paris.



Georges Braque: Le Guéridon rouge / Das rote Tischchen, 1939-1952, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris. Schenkung Madame Georges Braque, 1965  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020. © Foto: Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI / Georges Meguerditchian / Dist. RMN-GP



Georges Braque: Les Poissons noirs / Schwarze Fische (Detail), 1942, Collection Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris Schenkung des Künstlers, 1947. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020  
© Foto: Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI / Philippe Migeat / Dist. RMN-GP



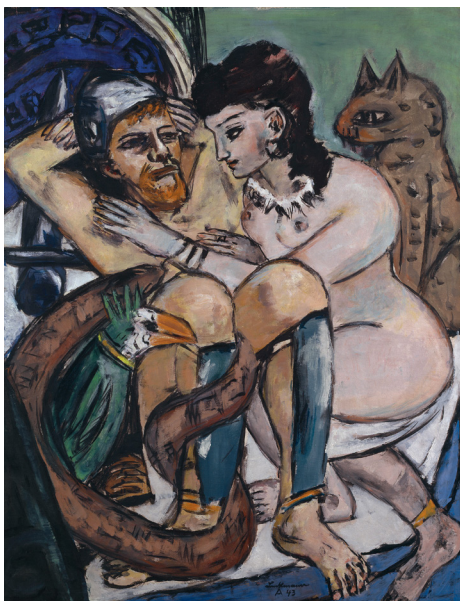
# Max Beckmann: Feminine–masculine

BY HOLLY TODD

Max Beckmann manhandles the figures he paints. With unflinching black outlining, he locks them into shallow, cramped spaces in painfully squeezed, awkward poses. Seldom appearing without a tie, grim-mouthed and fixing the viewer squarely with deep-set eyes, it's easy to think of Beckmann as a very male artist. The current exhibition at the Kunsthalle shows that, in his own person and in Beckmann's art, gender is, in fact, highly ambiguous.

Beckmann was raised by women after his father died when he was 11. That the resolute Beckmann look stemmed from a woman, his mother, is evident in the first of several portraits of increasingly emancipated women wearing their hair shorter, baring more arm and leg, smoking cigarettes. Many of these depict Beckmann's second wife, Quappi. His early, poetic *Self-Portrait with Soap Bubbles*, ca. 1900, shows a delicate teenager dreamily gazing after bubbles. Reality kicked in when Beckmann served as a paramedic in World War I. His firsthand encounter with the horrors of war triggered a nervous breakdown and left him with a sense of his fellow humans as hapless performers and helpless observers in an irrational, carnival-like world. Back home, the forced powerlessness of women waiting for husbands, fathers, and sons who would never return from the battlefield helped to fuel this view, expressed powerfully in his *Women's Bath* of 1919. Elsewhere, Beckmann portrays men as victims of powerful women like Delilah or Calypso. Power vacillates, but everything is more or less overtly sexually charged. A male vampire ravages a female victim while a heavy-limbed Adam cradles a tiny Eve near his ribs in a rare sculpture. Here, the paradisiacal snake slithers up between Adam's legs. Other painted scenes are clearly post-coital, with men sinking, spent, into pillows or a bathtub, while their female partners stretch and caress themselves. Stroking a hand with violet flowers is a way of depicting a male sitter's homo-

sexuality, while phallic, slippery fish, a traditional symbol of sexual freedom, literally pop up in his pictures. These were the 1920s and '30s, when Berlin had a Museum of Sexology, and the spreading knowledge of



Max Beckmann (1884–1950). *Odysseus und Kalypso*, 1943, Öl auf Leinwand, 150 x 115,5 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020 © Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk. Foto: Elke Walford



Max Beckmann (1884–1950). *Bildnis einer Rumänin* (Bildnis Frau Dr. Heidel), 1922. Öl auf Leinwand, 100 x 65 cm. Dauerleihgabe der Stiftung Hamburger Kunstsammlungen. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020. © SHK / Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk. Foto: Elke Walford

Freud and Jung and non-Western cultures was eroding traditional gender concepts and sexual behavior and fueling fascination with androgyny and a strong desire for emancipation. Beckmann's paintings reflect a notion, popular at the time, that every human being unites varying degrees of feminine and masculine elements. This, the exhibition shows us, makes Beckmann so relevant for our own time.

Loans from as far away as St. Louis augment the museum's own substantial Beckmann collection. However, Beckmann's iconic *Self-Portrait in Dinner Jacket* of 1927 could not travel, due to the pandemic. Once so highly esteemed that it hung in its own hall in the National Gallery in Berlin, the picture was deaccessioned under the Nazis, eventually ending up in the USA. A virtual version of the exhibition permits you to see this painting along with the others, complete with labels and wall texts and audio commentary (in German). Zoom your heart out and visit as often as you like for free at <https://digitalekunsthalle.zdf.de/beckmann/index.html#tp0>

# Beyond Hamburgers

## ZERO-WASTE STIR FRY

### INGREDIENTS:

#### SAUCE

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup mirin
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon coconut sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

#### STIR FRY

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 4 cups various chopped vegetables—whatever you find in the fridge!

**PREP TIME:** 10 minutes

**COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

**SERVINGS:** 2-4 people

**PREPARED BY:** Julia R.B.

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine sauce ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.
2. Heat the pan on high and add the coconut oil.
3. Add leafy veggies to the hot pan. Stir it around until wilted. Remove and set

- aside.
4. Add more coconut oil to the pan if necessary, add the other veggies, and stir fry until tender-crisp.
5. Add the wilted greens.
6. Add the sauce and stir for a couple of

- minutes until thickened.
8. Serve over rice. Sprinkle toasted sesame seeds and a little sesame oil on top for a burst of umami!

### STORY BEHIND THE RECIPE:

I often find myself scouring the internet for new and delicious recipes to make for my family and friends. While I have created some memorable (and not so memorable) meals, leftovers somehow inevitably find their way into the fridge or freezer. As I become more aware of my personal impact on the environment, I am committed to practicing a zero-waste lifestyle in all aspects of my life, including while I'm cooking. What is a zero-waste recipe? Zero-waste recipes refer to eating with the aim of sending as little as possible to landfill, and I have discovered that a quick and healthy stir fry is my "go-to" recipe when making a zero-waste meal.

Many other recipes work well for zero-waste recipes by using up leftovers you have on hand. These include soups, quiches (with or without crust), pot pies, and empanadas, to name a few. I've made empanadas out of leftover roasted potatoes and peas and served them with a plain Greek yogurt and the last-of-my-fresh-herbs-from-the-crisper sauce, and

they were pretty delicious! Also, don't get me started on slightly overripe apple hand pies. I mean, who doesn't love a hand-held pie? When you use what you have on hand to make meals and steer yourself to a zero-waste lifestyle, you get creative, which leads to more fun in the kitchen and, in the long run, it saves you money AND the planet.

What can go into a stir fry? EVERYTHING! Do you have one green onion or two mushrooms? Slice them and toss them in. Wondering what to do with a small head of broccoli in the crisper or a handful of spinach? In it goes. If you eat meat and you have bits of meat in the refrigerator, throw them in, too.





# HAMBURGER HACKS

## DISCOVER THE SECRETS OF HAMBURG

For each edition, we ask members to share their secrets for fun activities, where to find the best prices, and much more. If you would like to share some of your best life hacks for living in Hamburg, please send us an email and we will highlight your recommendation in an upcoming *Currents!*

### Litil

Described as a colorful design market, this is your local handmade market, open for you six days a week!

A collection of all things handmade by six local artists, illustrators, and graphic designers, including: stationary; original artwork; postcards; stickers; hand-bound notebooks; journals; photo albums; one-of-a-kind children's soft toys, rattles, and other accessories; knitted goods; housewares; bags; and other clothing accessories.

.....  
Kleine Rainstraße 6,  
22765 Hamburg  
Mon-Fri: 11am–6pm  
Saturdays: 11am–5pm  
Prices: \$-\$\$\$  
[litil-hamburg.de/](http://litil-hamburg.de/)



### Fabulously Old Things

Re-homing with love, this vintage clothing shop in Eimbüttel also stocks pre-loved hats, scarves, shoes, bags, vintage glassware, unique coffee tables, and other incredible vintage pieces in near-new condition. Sourced all over Europe and sold here at extremely reasonable prices. Have a browse and

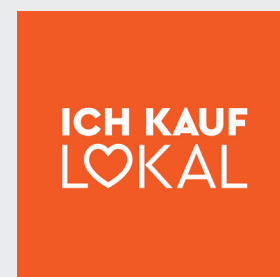
help re-home something pre-loved this Christmas instead of buying new. They don't make them like they used to, which is why these pieces have stood the test of time.

.....  
Schopstraße 26,  
20255 Hamburg  
Tue-Fri: 11am–6pm  
Saturdays: 10am–5pm  
[goo.gl/maps/ZDN9ES5aCK2dJbrp6](https://goo.gl/maps/ZDN9ES5aCK2dJbrp6)

### Ich kauf Lokal

This unique shop, right on the doorstep of Quickborn Bahnhof, just opened in November 2020. It's filled to the brim with local handmade goodies from all over Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, including goods made by our very own Stella K-R. Favorites include body lotions, handmade soaps, children's toys, artwork, Christmas decorations, wallets, purses, bags, candles, coffee beans, and loads more! Shop local this Christmas and support the creatives in your community.

.....  
Bahnhofstraße 8,  
25451 Quickborn  
Mon-Fri: 10am–6pm  
Saturdays: 10am–4pm  
Prices: \$-\$\$\$  
[www.ichkauflokal.de](http://www.ichkauflokal.de)



### 's Fachl Hamburg

This shop has a very unique approach—any artist who makes a product to sell can rent a Fach (box) here and sell their wares. This means that there can be new and interesting things here every time you visit! With over 100 designers and artists in-house, the handcrafted wares here are many! You will find

jewellery, socks, clothing, unique artwork, local honey, handmade soaps, body lotions, Hamburg souvenirs, and everything in between! Something for every price point, and you will directly support the local

artistic community here in Hamburg. Another incredible one-stop shop when looking for stocking fillers, Advent calendar goodies, or larger birthday/Christmas present ideas!

.....  
Bahnenfelder Str. 79,  
22765 Hamburg  
Mon-Fri: 10am–7pm  
Saturdays: 10am–5pm  
Prices: \$\$-\$\$\$\$  
[www.fachl.at/de-at/](http://www.fachl.at/de-at/)

# Film Group



As the coordinator of the Film Group, I hope you will enjoy reading the reviews our members have written for upcoming film releases. The pandemic continues to present unique challenges to the operations of the Film Group and to the film industry as a whole. Due to the ongoing situation in Germany, there is a strong likelihood that the lockdown may be extended, and cinemas may not reopen in December. The release dates listed here in *Currents* reflect the current hopes of the industry, but if the lockdown is extended, expect December releases to be pushed back to sometime in 2021.

On the topic of the Decade of Action, I have also compiled a few children's films with themes of environmentalism which I hope you will watch and discuss with your family. It is my

hope that, as we reflect in this issue of *Currents* on the topic of activism and bringing about a better world, this list will encourage you to use the medium of film to help inspire the younger generation on the topic of climate change and the environment.

Film can be a powerful tool for change, but we are living through unprecedented times, where art in all of its forms is struggling to survive. Please consider supporting your local independent cinemas, galleries, and artists through donations, gift certificates, and activism as we try to ensure that the art community continues to survive and thrive through these difficult times. (Rose Finlay)

## WATCH AND DISCUSS:

KID'S FILMS WITH AN ENVIRONMENTAL THEME



### WALL-E (2008)

Earth is a wasteland of trash, and humanity has left it behind to travel on space cruise ships while they wait for it all to be cleaned up. After years of neglect, WALL-E is the last cleanup robot still operational. When another robot, EVE, shows up looking for signs of life, WALL-E shows her a plant he has found, which leads them both on an adventure into space where their actions will determine the future of humanity.

With topics of consumerism and the consequences of global waste at the fore, WALL-E is a great conversation starter. A beautifully rendered film by PIXAR, it might be a little slow for younger audiences, but it has emotional depth, which makes it a favorite for most ages. Recommended for ages 5+



### Happy Feet (2006)

Mumble is an Antarctic penguin who can't find his "heart song," a song used to find a mate. Instead, he is talented at tap dancing, but the other penguins don't appreciate his skills. Convinced that his tapping has caused a recent shortage of fish, Mumble is kicked out of the community. He goes on a quest to discover

the real reason for the lack of fish, making friends along the way. With themes about accepting differences in others and the environmental impact of over-fishing and pollution, **Happy Feet** is a great film with a feel-good message. Also, there are lots of toe-tapping tunes. Recommended for ages 7+.

### Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (1984)

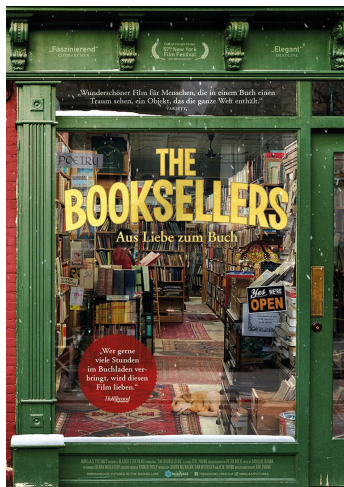
An animated classic by Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki, which takes place 1,000 years after an apocalyptic war has destroyed most of civilization. The surviving inhabitants are faced with a great enemy, the Toxic Jungle and its insects, which threaten to exterminate the last of humanity. Nausicaä tries her best to find a way for humanity and the jungle to

coexist, but she is faced with many challenges. A complex and beautiful tale, there are many great conversations to be had with your children on a variety of topics such as environmentalism, the cycle of violence, and balance between humans and the natural world. Recommended for ages 9+.





# Film Reviews WINTER 2020



**The Booksellers** (Aus Liebe zum Buch) \*\*\*\*  
USA 2019, documentary  
Opened October 29, 2020

Directed by: D.W. Young  
Writing credits: D.W. Young  
Narrated by: Parker Posey  
Featuring as themselves:  
Fran Lebowitz, Gay Talese

Attention, book lovers! This documentary will take you into the world of antiquarian, rare, and collectible books and the eccentric, fascinating, intellectual, and obsessed hunters and gatherers who are part of this world. At times nostalgic and melancholic, it takes us to the New York Book Fair at the Park Avenue Armory and into the antiquarian and used bookstores which have unfortunately become fewer and fewer. Argosy and The Strand are still around (Argosy, New York's oldest independent bookstore, can only afford its Midtown location because its six-story building is owned by the three daughters of the owner), but the struggle, first against the big bookselling chains like Barnes & Noble (now themselves ailing) and then against new technologies, has wiped out many of the small bookstores. However, here we see the true bibliophiles who never give up chasing their next big find. We get a glimpse of the auctioneering world of books, quite different from the world of fine art. And yes, the auctioneer, quite the cliché, is clad in tweed and sports an old-fashioned waxed mustache in Hercule Poirot style. And we visit a bookseller in his warehouse in New Jersey, where 300,000 volumes of rare books are stocked next to stuffed sea gulls and a masonic throne.

An important point made is that, whatever the collection, no matter how many first, second, or third editions or rarities, it is always unique, and the goal is to archive it as such, so that after the death of the collector, it can be made available to a broader public.

It is encouraging to see that many women are part of this fascinating world, getting more recognition than pioneers Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern who, in their time, were denied membership at The Grolier Club, North America's oldest bibliophilic club. Equally encouraging is

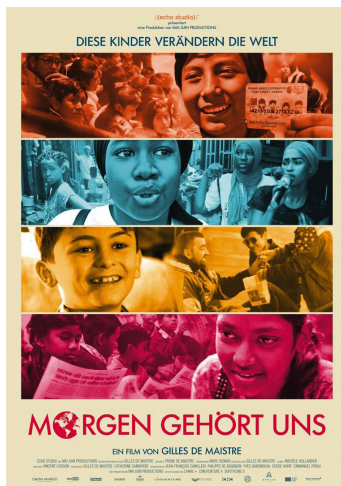
to see that a "younger" (not yet white-haired) generation is developing, young readers and collectors whose love for books and their role in preserving cultural knowledge and human history is undaunted.

Although this documentary is set in the New York book world, it is obvious that it can be translated into any other country. A must-see for any bibliophile. 99 minutes (Ulrike Lemke)

Second Opinion of **The Booksellers** (Aus Liebe zum Buch) \*\*\*\*

Booksellers sell books in bookstores and "transmit the ability to appreciate books," but what is the future of the culture of books, considering that "we owe to literature who and what we are?" In New York City in the 1950s there were 368 bookstores; today there are only 79. We visit several NYC stores, including The Strand, which is the last of the 48 bookstores originally situated on Fourth Avenue. It is now facing bankruptcy, due to COVID-19. We see Argosy Book Store, the oldest in Manhattan, founded in 1925, which specializes in antique books and first editions. A first edition of Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale* still brings a high price. We see a first edition of Edgar Allen Poe's *Tamberlane and Other Poems* from 1827. We learn how books were produced with "dust" jackets.

What is the influence of the internet or large chain bookstores on buying books? Today, many people no longer browse for hours, comparing and looking for the perfect book. They walk into a chain bookstore, pick up a bestseller, and leave again. Nowadays, collectors of old or first editions have less trouble finding a "rare" book. Even if only a few first editions are available, one can find them quickly online. The internet has flushed out the word "rare"; editions can be found online without having to search in bookstores. And then there is Kindle and online reading. The film reminds us of the Nazis burning books in the 1930s. Throughout this excellent and informative film, 48 bookstore owners, readers, authors, and other experts report on the situation of bookstores in New York City, which also mirrors similar difficulties in many other parts of the world. Naturally, as a dedicated reader, I will always hold on to books, read books, appreciate books. My daughter-in-law just published her ninth book on Amazon. Will it be sold in a bookstore? A good question. (Becky Tan)



## Morgen Gehört

**Uns** (Demain est à nous)

\*\*\*\*

France 2019

Opened December 3, 2020

Directed by: Gilles de Maistre

Writing credits: documentary

Principal actors: documentary with eight children from six countries

The title translates to “tomorrow belongs to us,” and in this case “us” are children between the ages of 10 and 13. **Jose Adolfo** founded a bank for children in Peru when he was only seven. Children collect paper and plastic and sell it to his group, which puts their money into a bank account, to which they have access. **Aïssatou** from Guinea works to prevent young girls from being forced into marriage and helps those who are married move into a safe home. **Arthur** from France paints pictures and sells them to buy food, clothing, and blankets for homeless people sleeping on the street. **Heena** writes for a magazine in India called *Balaknama*, which means “the voice of the children.” It aspires to enable street-working children to attend school to learn to read and write. **Jocelyn, Kevin,** and **Peter** support children who are working in mines in Bolivia. If this cannot be prevented due to extreme poverty,

they should at least expect better working conditions and secure wages. **Khloe** helps in Los Angeles. The film opens with young Jose Adolfo on his way to Stockholm where he is competing for the Swedish Children’s Climate Prize (2018).

Director **Gilles de Maistre** has been photographing children worldwide in horrible environments of poverty, hunger, slavery, imprisonment, and street life for 30 years. He was most impressed by children who, although underprivileged themselves, help others. All of the children in this film do something concrete, something practical. He said that these children don’t say, “I’ll solve the problem of starvation.” Instead, they go out and organize food for 10 people in their neighborhood. De Maistre said, “For me, they have an aura of genius, mercy, and strength.” Their parents, often illiterate and unschooled, are often quite surprised to have such extraordinary, dedicated youngsters. After accepting this reality, they support their offsprings’ endeavors as much as possible. Towards the end of the film, **Greta Thunberg** appears. According to Gilles de Maistre, Greta Thunberg says, “The world is in danger. The planet is in danger. Do something.” She tries to mobilize but makes no attempt to solve the problem herself. The children in the film DO something, even if it just benefits three people. Definitely see the film, which will probably be shown not only in cinemas but in schools or for organized groups. You will leave the cinema impressed, and asking yourself, “What concrete thing have I done to help someone?” Perhaps there is hope for the future if we all follow this example. (Becky Tan)



**Was Geschah mit Bus 670?** (Sin Señas Particulares, Identifying Features) \*\*\*\*1/2

Mexico/Spain 2020

Opened December 10, 2020

Directed by: Fernanda Valadez

Writing credits: Astrid Rondero, Fernanda Valadez

Principal actors: Mercedes Hernández, David Illescas, Juan Jesús Varela, Laura Elena Ibarra, Ana Laura Rodriguez

*Mit Bus 670?* unflinchingly confronts a reality that for most people is barely comprehensible in the abstract.

What happened to their sons? Two months earlier, the best friends and neighbors left their rural homes in the land-locked state of Guanajuato, Mexico, for work in the United States. Their mothers know they took a bus to the border. Now, filing a report with authorities, Magdalena (**Mercedes Hernández**) and Chuya (**Laura Elena Ibarra**) are persistent; their sons cannot be dead because Chua’s son phoned before embarking, although the youths have not contacted them since. The officer taking their report gives them a thick binder with photos of unidentified bodies found in the past two months. One of the mother’s trepidatious angst is replaced by desolate grief, but for the other, her journey to hell is just beginning. Rather than live in limbo, Magdalena follows Jesús’s (**Juan Jesús Varela**)

The opening fog-wrapped sequence is a portent that there are no easy answers to what happens, while establishing the tone and central point of the film. Instead, *Was Geschah*



route. Along that path, she meets two other individuals: one (**Ana Laura Rodriguez**) shares her sad experience and gives advice; the other (**David Illescas**) accompanies her wary descent, and, for his kindness, earns just recompense.

**Fernanda Valadez** and **Astrid Rondero** have crafted a gut-wrenching drama, intertwined with rich Mexican folkloric interpretation. The film depicts honestly how raw and unnaturally cruel survival can be—it is not for the weak of heart. **Fernanda Valadez's** supple direction and the outstanding cast's unaffected characterizations bear witness to the script's soundness. **Claudia Becerril Bulos's** excellent cinematography creatively shifts then diversely positions visuals that often juxtapose the beauty of nature with human exploitation. The editing (**Susan Korda, Astrid Rondero, Fernanda Valadez**) is captivatingly fluid, sound design's (**Omar Juárez Espino**, supervising) native and natural

rhythms encapsulate, and music (**Clarice Jensen**) compellingly amplifies.

Celluloid interpretations and perspectives of US–Mexican border conflicts have varied greatly over the years: from Orson Wells's *Touch of Evil* (1958); *The Border* (1982), with Jack Nicholson; Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic* (2000); and Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006), to earthier film versions like *Sicario* and the documentary *Cartel Land* (2015). Valadez's cinematic net is not as wide, yet more heartbreaking by concentrating on the plight of disappeared young adults. Among its many awards, *Was Geschah Mit Bus 670?* won the 2020 Sundance Film Festival's Audience Award and World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award. 97 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)



**The Secrets We Keep** (Schatten der Vergangenheit) \*\*\*\*  
USA 2020  
Opened December 3, 2020

Directed by: Yuval Adler  
Writing credits: Yuval Adler, Ryan Covington  
Principal actors: Noomi Rapace, Joel Kinnaman, Chris Messina, Amy Seimetz

and Annabel and their dog Max also has a problem: her husband has disappeared; the police are looking for him.

History, which Maja had suppressed for 15 years, is revealed in flashbacks, “memories of a memory,” until “all of a sudden, your past is here.” Maja is not above torture to force a confession from her prisoner, whom she calls Karl. Lewis attempts to keep a reasonable footing throughout this unbelievable situation. Rachel, who meets Maja through their children playing together, has no knowledge of Maja's actions.

It is 1959 and Maja (**Noomi Rapace**) lives with her husband Lewis (**Chris Messina**) and their small son Patrick (**Jackson Dean Vincent**) in a suburb in the USA. Maja is an immigrant from Romania who met her husband in Europe while he was serving in World War II. One day, while sitting in the park with Patrick, she sees a man who seems familiar. In fact, she is so sure that he abused her and killed her sister Miriah in a Nazi concentration camp that she kidnaps him and brings him home to her basement, all tied up to be questioned. This kidnapping required massive strength, and, in the end, her husband, rather surprised to see a stranger in the trunk of his wife's car, decides to stand by her for further disclosures. He slowly learns about his wife's past experiences, which explain her nightmares and need for psychiatric support, of which he, even as a medical doctor, was unaware. The stranger (**Joel Kinnaman**) denies all accusations, claiming he is Thomas Steinmann from Switzerland. Rachel (**Amy Seimetz**), who lives nearby with her small children Tommy

This film is excellent due to the talented actors, especially Noomi Rapace who carries the story, smoking throughout. The viewer becomes integrated into the storyline, deep in concentration, wondering: how will it end? This is not always entertaining or even easy; it is serious, heavy, accompanied by background music that is ominous, even scary. Since opening in other countries, there is a discussion over similarities to Roman Polanski's film *Death and the Maiden* and possible copyright problems. It is amazing how well director **Yuval Adler** projects the 1950s through fashion (Maja likes hats), cars, old television shows, etc. The film ends at an Independence Day party, July 4, 1960. (Becky Tan)



**Hope Gap** (Wer wir sind und wer wir waren) \*\*\*\*  
UK 2019  
Opening December 10,  
2020

Directed by: William  
Nicholson  
Writing credits: William  
Nicholson  
Principal actors: Annette  
Bening, Bill Nighy, Sally  
Rogers, Josh O'Connor

Hope Gap is a fitting title for the well-worn story of a couple breaking up after three decades of marriage. Grace (**Annette Bening**) is unaware that her husband Edward (**Bill Nighy**) is plotting to leave her for another woman. She needles him, cajoles him in a merciless manner trying to awaken him from his passive indifference. She only wants to get some reaction from him. Grace has obviously always been the driving force in their marriage. She's extroverted, intelligent, charming, and always has lines of poetry to quote for any occasion. Edward, a meek, ineffective man, is a teacher who drones on about Napoleon's retreat from Russia to his captive students. Yet his mind is elsewhere; he has fallen in love with the mother of one of his students, Angela (**Sally Rogers**). He plucks up all his courage and leaves their very comfortable home in picturesque Seaford where he and Grace had had a seemingly perfect life.

Grace flounders. She sees Edward as a mirage sitting at his familiar desk. She patiently sits on the stairs of their home waiting for his return. She buys a new puppy, calls him Edward, and commands him to "sit" and "stay." Months after Edward has left, she slyly slips into Edward and Angela's very modest home to confront Edward. Angela proves she now has filled the gap and has quite effectively taken over Grace's domineering role. She signals to Edward to be silent and recites proudly (as though well-rehearsed), "I think there used to be three unhappy people, and now there's just one." And Grace is desperately unhappy.

But, if truth be told, there are two unhappy people. Jamie (**Josh O'Connor**), their beloved adult son, gets caught in the middle of the breakup. He has learned to hide his vulnerability beneath charming cheerfulness. The film flashes back as he recounts his happiest childhood memory when he would swing between his two parents walking the scenic route near Seaford to Hope Gap. He now has to buttress up his mother and listen to his guilt-ridden father trying to explain it all.

Cinematographer **Anna Valdez-Hanks** captures both the subtle hues of the English seaside and the artistry of every gesture, word, or silence of the characters. *Hope Gap's* cast is brilliant, though some British critics thought Bening's English accent rather odd. **William Nicholson** inexplicably pretty much portrays the betrayed woman's perspective rather than the betrayer's. It's almost impossible to get past Edward's enigmatic hollowness to empathize with him. At times Nicholson alternated to the son Jamie's point of view, but never let the pain get too close to him. Maybe that was intentional. 100 minutes. (Pat Frickey)

Second Opinion of **Hope Gap** (Wer wir sind und wer wir waren) \*\*\*1/2

Introducing the eponymous cove where his parents took him as a child, Jamie (**Josh O'Connor**) makes an astute observation that resonates as the family's crisis unfolds. The rift between Grace (**Annette Bening**) and Edward (**Bill Nighy**) is acutely obvious within minutes of meeting them. Grace is vivacious, loquacious, and forthright; Edward is reflective, staid, and disengaged. By the time grown-up Jamie, their only child, arrives on Saturday, the prevailing uneasiness is palpable. Sunday morning, Grace leaves for a while, which gives Ed the opportunity to make Jamie his (reluctant) confidant and accomplice. Returning, Grace's relief that Ed is communicating turns to disbelief as the gist sinks in; after learning about Angela (**Sally Rogers**), she pugnaciously takes a stance. During the subsequent tempestuous weeks, Jamie's allies, Jess (**Aiysha Hart**) and Dev (**Ryan McKen**), listen, offer encouragement, and pose tough questions to him. In the end, being Ed's go-between and Grace's buoy forces Jamie to find his voice on several topics that surprisingly results in expanding a number of individual horizons.

Theater veterans Bening and Nighy's conveyance of the profound minutia of a 29-year marriage's binding entanglement's disintegration is awesome to observe, just as O'Connor convincingly portrays their bemused, angry son while his life's foundations unravel. Writer-director **William Nicholson's** somewhat biographical screenplay's humor, resentment, resolve, goodwill, and hope demonstrates a mature equilibrium. **Anna Valdez-Hanks's** cinematography, **Alex Heffes's** music, and **Pia Di Ciaula's** editing largely magnify the film's multifarious intertwining themes.

*Hope Gap* is tough yet straightforward; most people will relate to its point of view at some level. Angela makes a shrewd comment near the end: "There were three unhappy people and now (there is) only one." Study each character's face while she says this; how an audience member interprets that will depend on which prism she or he looks through. (Marinell Haegelin)





**Der Boandlkramer und die Ewige Liebe \*\*\*\*\***

Germany 2020  
Opening December 17, 2020

Directed by: Joseph Vilsmaier  
Writing credits: Marcus H. Rosenmüller, Ulrich Limmer, Michael Bully Herbig  
Principal actors: Michael Billy Herbig, Hape Kerkeling, Hannah Herzsprung, Josef “Seppi” Staber, Sebastian Bezzel, Rick Kavanian

In Bavaria “Boandlkramer” is a word for “death.” The film opens with Boandlkramer, i.e., Death (**Michael Billy Herbig**) sitting on a wagon pulled by two horses, driving through the woods. He has just picked up more coffins containing corpses; he will bring them to hell, which is his version of paradise. He hoped to bring 12-year-old Maxi (**Josef Staber**). Luckily, Maxi recovers; no need to be driven to the afterlife. While waiting unseen at Maxi’s bedside, Boandlkramer also observes Maxi’s mother Geti (**Hannah Herzsprung**). She

had been planning to marry someone (we see her in a bride’s dress on the way to the church), but the ceremony was interrupted by Maxi’s need for care. Boandlkramer falls for her. He makes a deal with the devil, Lucifer (**Hape Kerkeling**), to give up his job and return to earth. As a result, no more people die, which creates total chaos among the population.

This is described as a “black comedy,” and it is hilarious, with amazing characters (including God) in different costumes, all set in a beautiful environment in and around Grongörgen, Bavaria. It is a sequel to *Die Geschichten von Brandner Kasper* (2008), based on an original story from 1871. It is supported by wonderful music, including Geti playing the violin. One lesson is that “laughing is the key to love.” This is my favorite film of 2020, and I look forward to seeing it again. One problem, however, is that the text is spoken in a Bavarian German accent, which is often difficult to understand, even for native German speakers. Sadly, director **Joseph Vilsmaier** died February 11, 2020, at age 80, too soon to experience its opening in December. (Becky Tan)



**The Nest (Alles zu haben ist nie genug) \*\*\*½**

USA 2020  
Opening December 17, 2020

Directed by: Sean Durkin  
Writing credit: Sean Durkin  
Principal actors: Jude Law, Carrie Coon, Oona Roche, Charlie Shotwell, Michael Culkin

The trailer pulls an interesting bait-and-switch. You’re certain you’re in for a horror movie, what with the somber piano opening that builds to a crescendo of fast cuts and tortured strings, and then there’s the familiar premise: an attractive family is moving into an ancient crumbling mansion of vast, echoing rooms and looming shadows where the towering windows admit only grayish half-light. “Something doesn’t feel right,” says the mom. No kidding.

is that it’s all a sham, their lives. Rory (**Jude Law**) made a heap of money many years ago, but he’s been frittering it away ever since; his wife, Allison, gorgeously portrayed by **Carrie Coon**, allowed him to move her into this massive stone pile despite her strong suspicion they were actually broke. They lie to themselves, to others, and to their kids, but now Rory’s options are drying up, and his desperation has become an embarrassment. He’s unraveling and his wife is done—done with him, and done with making nice in public. It’s a hard and sad thing to watch, particularly as it’s so beautifully filmed and played.

They are, all the same, a pretty unlovable couple. Rory is flagrantly vain and shallow, but Allison isn’t a lot better. She was long complicit in her husband’s fake-it-till-you-make-it delusion of vast, cultured wealth; her disdain for Rory’s fakery is not based in moral superiority but is simply because it isn’t working any more. The fate of her beloved horse is awful, but it’s just as bad that she lavishes more affection on it than on her own children, who are themselves in deep crisis. All the same, as everyone’s chickens come home to roost and the family crumbles, she will prove the stronger. 107 minutes. (Mason Jane Milam)

The mansion is cold and imperious and not a nest by any stretch—there is no coziness or even safety here simply because they can’t afford the place. The horror of this movie

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