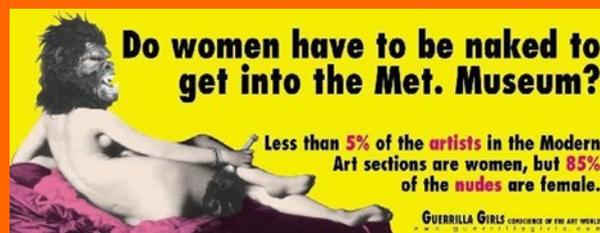
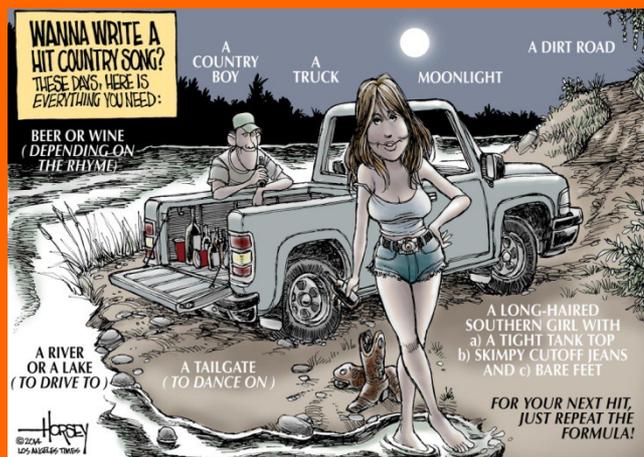


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VISITING LONDON? BY CHRISTINE BORSCH

Tired of paying high entrance fees, typical tourist attractions, traffic jams and noise? These are good reasons to make an excursion to Isabelle Plantation in Richmond Park.



After being regular visitors to Richmond Park for some years, one day, a friend lead us to a seemingly unremarkable, fence-enclosed hollow, which we, to that point, had dismissed in favour of the wide expanse of impressive parkland populated by deer and many other wildlife species. Located in Richmond Park (the second largest enclosed

urban Park in Great Britain with nearly 2360 acres) Isabella Plantation is a hidden treasure without the so often unappealing high price tag attached to things special and traditionally British.

We were received by an almost unreal seeming profusion of blossoms in a kaleidoscope of colours. Boasting magnolias, camellias, daffodils and bluebells, joined by 15 varieties of Azaleas and 50 different types of Rhododendron, spring is the highlight of the year with a display of flowers and blossoms to rival any firework. The colourful display starts in late winter with the flowering of the impressive heather garden. Later in the year, irises lilies and guelder roses, present added interest. One can admire many trees and shrubs showing coloured and textured bark, berries or coloured foliage. The plantation is run on organic principles and offers guided tours all year round to observe the attractive nature and wildlife.

In 1831, an area called Isabella Slade was fenced off under Lord Sidmouth, the then park deputy ranger of Richmond Park. The 42 acres of the formerly boggy land were planted with oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees and named Isabella Plantation. Later, in the 1950s, George Thomson initiated the changes leading to the present form of the garden.



On the Royal Parks Website where Isabella Plantation has a link under Richmond Park attractions, it is modestly mentioned as “an ornamental woodland garden”, a rather technical sounding description for the rainbow of colour, bloom and abundance the Plantation displays during springtime. It has a variety of vistas and differently themed areas with streams, ponds, clearings and small woodlands, intersected by footpaths bordered by mature camellia, rhododendron and azalea bushes. It is a perfect place to have a picnic, play a game of badminton, read, paint, enjoy the rich flora and fauna or see children dipping their feet into one of the many streamlets or ponds. Having visited Isabella Plantation many times, it represents some of my favourite and most vivid memories of England. It never stopped to amaze me and is definitely a place worth visiting over and over again.

Access to Isabella Plantation, soon to be improved, together with its unobtrusive location, is most likely the prime reason for its relatively late rise to fame. Broomfield car park is the main point of approach for vehicle owners; while those relying on public transport can take Bus 85 K3 from Putney Station towards Kingston to enter the Park by Ladderstile gate, following the path on the right, towards Broomfield car park. There, across the road, downhill, you will find the entrance.

Henry the 8th Hampton Court Palace, Ham House and Bushy Park or the Borough of Richmond are in the vicinity of Richmond Park and worth exploring. All of them are picturesque, historical and interesting sights and experiences. The interactive map of Richmond Park <http://www.royalparcs.org.uk/parks/richmond-park/map-of-richmond-park> offers ideas about the surrounding areas and layout of the park as well as traffic connections to Richmond Park, a worthy destination in itself. Exploring Richmond Park by bicycle is a popular pastime and a good way to see more of this impressive National Nature Reserve. So check the weather forecast, pack the picnic basket and set out for a wonderful day in the English countryside.



IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT HOLLYWOOD – CALIFORNIA HAS PLENTY OF OTHER ATTRACTIONS TO VISIT BY CORA WEISER

When thinking of California, most people immediately picture Los Angeles and Hollywood or San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge, which are some of the most iconic symbols of the Sunshine state. But there is so much more to it than that, and you might be surprised by the beautiful landscape you discover if you get away from the big cities just a little bit.

So here is a little guide to the top 3 places you absolutely should not miss on your next trip to California:

#1 Tahoe, CA

Lake Tahoe is a vast freshwater lake bordering California and Nevada. With shimmering blue waves, jaw-dropping settings, and powdery snow in the winter season, Tahoe is a well-known destination for skiing and snowboarding. Squaw Valley, one of many ski resorts in Lake Tahoe, is by far the most beautiful and most challenging ski resort in the area and acted as the 1960's Winter Olympics host. The black diamond slopes are not for the faint-of-heart, but do not worry, all ski resorts in Lake Tahoe can accommodate beginners. Squaw Valley is rated one of the most beginner-friendly resorts in Lake Tahoe. During spring and summer seasons, there are countless activities after the snow melts away. You can

rent kayaks and explore the serene, blue waters along beautiful Pope Beach, or go motor-boating on the lake.

If you are up for a little history, Emerald Bay shore is home to Vikingsholm and the Tea House. Vikingsholm is a mystic 38-bedroom mansion built in 1928 by Lora Josephine Knight as a summer home. It now acts as a museum and historical landmark. The Tea House, located on Fannette Island, is a small stone structure that appears as a miniature castle atop of the island and acted as a small getaway to Mrs. Knight and her friends.

For more information check: www.vikingsholm.com

#2 Santa Cruz, CA

Santa Cruz is a cute, little surfer town with a hippie vibe to it, less than two hours south of San Francisco. Its most popular attraction is the beautiful, old boardwalk, which was opened in 1907. The Boardwalk features more than 34 rides, but the one you should definitely check out is the Giant Dipper, a wooden rollercoaster which was built in 1937, and still makes for a thrilling ride today.

Find out more about the Boardwalk right here: www.beachboardwalk.com

If you get tired of all the excitement of the Boardwalk, you can rest on the beach right next to it or go on a 10 minute car ride to the town of Capitola where the beaches are less crowded and even more beautiful.

When it is time for some food you have to head to downtown Santa Cruz where Pacific Avenue, the main strolling promenade of the town, welcomes you with a bunch of cute little cafés, restaurants, and shops. For authentic Mexican food, you definitely have to stop at Taqueria Vallarta to have one of the amazing

burritos, and, if Mexican food is not exactly your cup of tea, have a slice of delicious pizza at Pizza my Heart instead. Make sure to order ranch on the side and dip your pizza in it– it is to die for!

If by then you still haven't had enough of Santa Cruz I would suggest you pay a visit to the Mystery Spot, a place where the rules of physics and gravity seem to not imply. It is located in the redwood forests just outside of Santa Cruz.



Find out how to get there right here: www.mysteryspot.com

#3 Yosemite National Park, CA

If you like the outdoors, Yosemite is definitely the place for you. Situated only 2 hours south of Lake Tahoe, Yosemite covers an area of 3,026 kilometers. The park is recognized for its magnificent granite cliffs, immaculate waterfalls, and the Giant Sequoia groves. These enormous trees can reach a height of 87 meters or more, a circumference of 34 meters and an estimated age of 1800-3600 years old! They are among the tallest, widest and longest-lived of all organisms on Earth, and they surely make for some breathtaking pictures.

Yosemite is also known for its rare biological diversity because of its unique soil. A few small areas that are home to these native plants have been restricted by park rangers to preserve their habitat.

Yosemite is well known for the wide variety of outdoor activities such as backpacking, mountain biking, bird watching, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and many more. It's just the perfect place to get away from the busy life in the cities.



One of the most impressive mountaintops of Yosemite is “El Capitan”. It is a vertical rock formation that reaches a height of 900 meters and acts as a climbing favorite to rock climbers and base jumpers from around the world. It is formed almost entirely out of granite from over 100 million years ago and was once considered impossible to climb, but is now the most popular hiking and climbing structure in Yosemite. So if you are a climber, this is the place to go to!



Should you ever find yourself on a trip to California make sure to not only visit Hollywood and the Golden Gate Bridge, but to remember these amazing attractions that might totally change what you thought California was all about.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE DAMARA

A forgotten culture lives again

By Wiebke Theuer

What would we be without our culture? What would we do without our traditional customs? What would happen if all our cultural values got lost and we forgot how to bake bread, brew beer, build cars or make Currywurst? How would we define ourselves then? The Damara, a native Namibian tribe, helplessly had to watch their culture disappear until it was almost extinct. Luckily they found a way to protect their traditions from being forgotten forever...

Probably none of you has ever heard about the Damara. They belong to the oldest ethnic groups in Namibia. Prior to 1870, the Damara lived in central Namibia as hunters, gatherers and herders. Then Namibian nearby tribes of the Herero and Nama occupied their area in search for better grazing. Because of their loose social structures, the Damara were not able to defend themselves against oppressors, thus large numbers were displaced or killed and some became servants to their enemies. The domination by other tribes led to a slow, but extensive loss of their cultural identity. In the course of the years, the Damara culture was, to a great extent, forgotten.

Luckily some committed people founded the Living Culture Foundation Namibia (LCFN), whose first aim is the protection of traditional culture. It has established a sustainable project for the tourism industry called Living Museums. With these museums, the LCFN does not only aim to encourage people in rural areas to concern themselves with their traditional culture, it also tries to fight poverty and promote tolerance between Namibians and Non-Namibians.

All in all there are five Living Museums: One of the Ju/'Hoansi, Mafwe, Damara, Mbunza and the Hunter's Living Museum. The Living Museum of the Damara, which is located in the Damara land in the North-West of Namibia, opened in 2010 and is the first traditional Damara project in Namibia and the only one of its kind in the world. Nowhere else in the world will you be able to experience their way of life as closely as at the Living Museum of the Damara.

With its establishment, it was possible to reconstruct the forgotten Damara culture. The museum has been developed and built by

Hansbernhard Naobes in cooperation with the LCFN-founders Kathrin and Sebastian Dürrschmidt from Namibia and Germany. It is hard to believe that the Damara had to relearn their traditional techniques and skills. Although their customs were nearly completely forgotten, Hansbernhard and his team have successfully reconstructed this culture. None of the Damara knew how to forge, produce leather or make fire. For this reason the bushmen, another indigenous Namibian tribe, traveled to the Damara land and showed its inhabitants how to do all the handcraft.

Nevertheless, the Damara still knew some of their primal dances and songs which they have learned from their ancestors and which they present at their museum these days.

Werner Pfeifer, cofounder of the LCFN and one of the initiators of the Living Museum of the Damara, reports that what makes the Damara so special is that their culture was lost for about 100 years. Thus, in order to establish the Living Museum, the Damara as well as the foundation members had to reconstruct everything carefully. Just imagine - there are all in all only three pictures left which show the original Damara and which the team could use in order to create traditional clothing.

According to Werner Pfeifer this Living Museum offers three essential advantages.

Firstly, it helps the Damara, who built the museum and are living in great poverty to receive a regular income. Secondly, the Living Museum somehow functions as a school since the Damara engage in their own traditions again and consequently prevent the loss of their cultural values. Last but not least, the Living Museum supports a great intercultural exchange within the country as a lot of people experience the inimitable Damara culture more closely. Furthermore, interested visitors give

especially young tribe members a feeling of pride about their culture. "The Damara who work in the Living Museum and keep it alive have developed a really big self-esteem since they can call the museum their own project whose income directly benefits the commune." said Werner Pfeifer.

I lived in Namibia the last six months and I was lucky to have the chance to visit the Living Museum in the beautiful Damara land with Werner, who is a good friend of mine. It was a sunny day, as it is almost always in Namibia, when the Damara welcomed us warmly at the museum and provided us with an insight into their daily routine with tasks such as blacksmithing, fabricating of traditional clothes from leather, producing of jewelry and crafts, making fire and cultural elements like playing traditional games as well as dancing

and singing. Furthermore, Damara women showed us how to make medicine and cosmetics from different plants and dung.

"Although the Damara offer an all-round program for visitors to show them their cultural traditions as authentically as possible, the development in the museum is continuing since there is still so much left from the original Damara culture which has to be rediscovered and relearned, for instance the making of typical bows and arrows. However, exactly this is what makes our work so unique and interesting." Werner Pfeifer commented.

Today the majority of the estimated 107,000 Damara lives outside of the Damara land, working in the towns of the central part of the country. Nevertheless, the Living Museum of the Damara attracts approximately 6,000 to 7,000 visitors per year and has successfully achieved its goal to protect the traditional culture of the Damara from extinction.

NEED A HOLIDAY? BY DANIEL SELLE

Everyone needs a holiday during the summer or winter break, or some time during the semester. Certainly, there are pretty places in Germany like the Baltic Sea or the Alps. Also Australia, USA or Scotland are heard of during travel reports of students or friends.

A few weeks ago, I stumbled across a website titled something like "Places to Visit before You Die". There were some colourful and extraordinary images posted on that website. So I ended up doing some research to introduce you to a few places on our planet which you probably haven't stayed at yet. So put on your seatbelt, relax and let us take off for our first destination you should visit sometime during winter.



We are heading for Lake Baikal, Russia. Due to the target of our travelling, we need to go there in March which should work for us students. There are group tours offered for around 12 days including everything (flights, entrance fees, visa, double Hotel rooms, equipment,...) ,except for the transfer from/to the airport from/to Irkutsk to the starting place at the Lake, for ca. 2100-3000€ per person.

The lake is one of the largest and deepest of its kind. An amazing side-fact about it: It holds around 1/5 of the earth's freshwater. Here, "Winter" is a 5-month period from January until May.



These ice formations only occur during a special condition of wind, frost and sun in March. Another Impression from above the ice surface will give you another impression of what it is like.

Most of us students travel abroad at some point, in fact, the students of a foreign language have to. In this context, a few of us think about visiting New Zealand, for we have heard about the stunning nature. We know getting there will charge us a lot but as I introduce my next destination in New Zealand, maybe you save it in the back of your head for the time you plan on going to New Zealand.



The word 'glow worm' is familiar to us. We know that these animals can glow in the dark, but have you seen these ones? The place is called Waitomo Glowworm Caves.

A special excretory organ makes the glow worms glow. The funny thing about it: the hungrier they are, the brighter they shine. Actually they are not really glow worms but only larvae hanging down from the ceiling reaching a size up to 30cm.

There is a 2-day- tour offered which introduces you to Auckland's sights and then takes you to the caves by coach. The whole tour will be 325\$, which is around 206€.

If you would like to stay in Europe, there is a Hotel with an unusual roof. These glass igloos in Kakslauttanen, Saariselkä, Finland are see-through with the bed right in the center. They have been designed with the purpose to lay on the bed with your loved one and watch the starry night or even the northern lights.

You do not have to worry about the cold, comfortable room temperature is certain. The owner even announced the opening of a four-bed igloo in the 2014-2015 season.

With an overnight price of around 210€ in March, they are not exactly cheap, but maybe you can spend a night there if you visit the area.

For our final destination we are actually going to stay in the Scandinavian surroundings, without electricity, without showers and without anything fancy!

Welcome to Sweden's most primitive hotel: Kolarbyn Ecolodge.

All you will find inside these cabins are two beds and a fire place. The beds are covered with sheep skin. Water you can get from the stream close-by. In case you get hungry, there is a fire place in your hut which you can use. But after all, it is not as terrible as it might sound. The hosts are there to guide and assist you through every step. Moreover, the prices are really affordable: One night in September is around 44€ while flights from Berlin to Stockholm and back are only 85€.

Now, we have reached the end of our tour throughout the world. I hope you enjoyed it and got some inspiration for where to spend your next holiday.

So get on to your Computer and book your next flights and apartments.

THE STORY BEHIND THE IRISH REDHEAD STEREOTYPE

by A. Herrmann

The Italians eat pasta, the Germans are well organized, the Swedish blond, and the French flirt experts. Such stereotypes are burlesque pictures we like to draw when speaking about people of nationalities with which, so far, we have not had any experience. I would argue that only if we have been to a foreign country can we confirm or adjust our prejudiced thinking about its people.

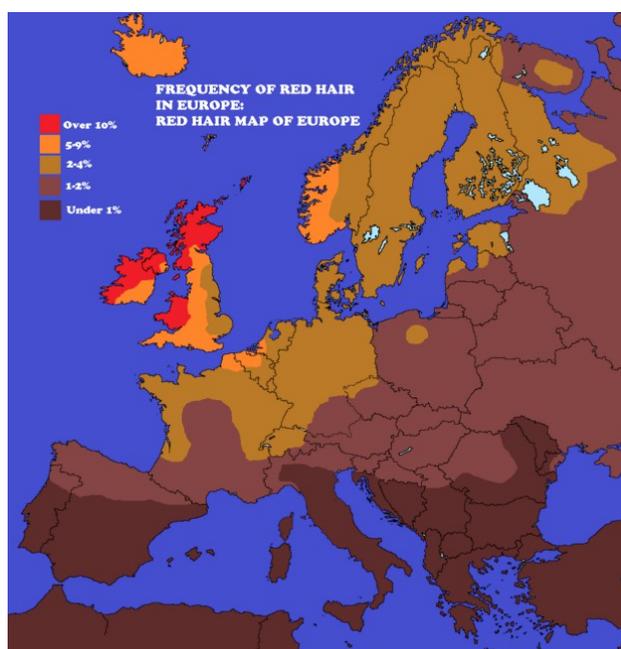
Some months ago, I spent some time in Ireland, and, as a matter of fact, I did not go there without bias either. I expected Ireland to be an entirely green island (apart from some cities, of course) and the people who live there to have red hair. The funny thing is that I returned with the very same picture in mind: just as much of what I got to see of the country was green, quite a few people I met there were red-haired. Naturally, this begs the question whether I was just talking myself into believing that the latter were a true phenomenon and if there are any scientific theories to verify my detection. – Does Ireland really have more redheads than other European countries?

If we have a look at circulating figures, we will soon realize that the incidence of red hair on the Emerald Isle is a lot higher than in other countries. According to BBC News¹, less than two percent of the world's population have red hair. It must be said, however, that their number is not spread evenly across the globe. Compared to other continents, Europe has the highest concentration of redheads. That is, four percent of all Europeans are red-haired. Yet, we have to consider a north-south divide in numbers. Southerners like the Spaniards

and Italians, for example, are virtually all dark-haired, but the further north you go, the more likely you are to come across people with red hair. In Ireland and Scotland, one out of ten is a natural redhead.

¹Barnes, Hannah. "How Many Redheads Are There in the World?" *BBC News*. 01 Oct. 2013. Web. 13 May 2014.

While the statistics certainly allow us to understand the formation of the stereotype, determining what causes the high incidence of red hair among the Irish requires us to dig deeper. On this account, various theories and hypotheses have evolved. For example, one of them holds that the color is a Scandinavian heritage, the visual indication of a gene which the Vikings brought to the island in the 9th century. However, most Vikings were actually either blond or dark-haired and, therefore, this



thesis is rather non-credible. A second and very similar theory rests upon the descriptions of Romans and Greeks who attributed red hair to the Celts and, thus, told them apart from the fair Germans. The Celts probably came from Central Asia where, according to some scientists, the gene responsible had already been passed on to Homo sapiens by a Neanderthal.

The many approaches have so far made it difficult for historians to distinguish between myth and truth in their attempt to identify the real source of the red hair color, the more so as some studies trace it far back to the beginning of mankind. Now, a new, completely different thesis promises to deliver the answer to the problem. In 2012, Scotland conducted a DNA project to identify the people's ancestral origins.

As a result of this research, scientists discovered that red hair is due to a mutation of the MC1R (melanocortin-1 receptor) gene that causes the body to produce increased amounts of pheomelanin, the red pigment, and less eumelanin, the dark pigment. In consequence, carriers of the altered gene practically do not tan. Scientists believe that this is an adaptation to the climate on the British Isles, the cloudiest place in Europe (even Scandinavians are exposed to more sunlight, despite fewer hours of daylight). – A plausible conclusion that goes hand in hand with the results of studies on the phenomenon of darker skin in southern countries.

Regardless of why and where the red-hair gene developed, the Irish take it in their stride. In fact, many celebrate this particularity with pride and dignity, for instance, at the redhead convention, an annual festival in Crosshaven with more than 1000 participants from all over the world. In addition, the Irish stress the prominent feature by equipping their national symbol, the leprechaun, with red hair.



Not only in Ireland has the hair color, whether natural or not, become fashionable. Many red-haired celebrities like Nicole Kidman, Alyson Hannigan and even Queen Elisabeth I

have additionally boosted the sales of red-hair dye.

While especially North-Europeans might be used to seeing people of different hair colors and even dye their own hair red, other nationalities might consider people with natural red hair a bit creepy and unattractive. For example, redhead Scott P. Harris from Austin, Texas documents in his recently released movie "Being ginger" how he suffered cruel ginger jokes and apathy from women in his home country where less than 2% of the population are redheads. He recently moved to Edinburgh to no longer suffer from his position as an outsider in America, and to live in a country where red hair is not stigmatized. Other examples, like the Facebook group "Kick a Ginger" which aims at establishing a so-called "Kick-a-Ginger Day" as well as countless school kids with red hair being bullied by their classmates underline the outsider position of redheads in many countries of the world, probably due to their minority status.

Concluding, one might say red hair is intrinsically linked to the Irish and although scientists might never agree on its origin, it makes the population special in its very own way. As the figures prove, I was not deceived sensing that there were a lot of red-haired people in Ireland. On the contrary, there are in fact more redheads in Ireland than in any other place in the world I have visited so far. What remains to be answered is the question what other stereotypes bear the potential to prove a true feature unique to one population. Are the French indeed better flirts than any other nationality of the world?

HOLY SMOKE - MARIJUANA IN THE RASTAFARI MOVEMENT

BY INGA THEMEL



The Rastafari movement is an African-based spiritual ideology that emerged in the 1930s in Jamaica. Its adherents worship Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia (who ruled from 1930 to 1974), some as Jesus in his Second Advent or God, the Father. The name Rastafari is taken from Ras Tafari, the title (Ras) and first name (Tafari Makonnen) of Haile Selassie I before his coronation. In Amharic, Ras, literally "head", is an Ethiopian title equivalent to prince or chief while the personal given name Täfäri means one who is respected or feared.

The Rastafarian way of life encompasses the spiritual use of cannabis and the rejection of the degenerate society based on materialism, oppression, and sensual pleasures, called Babylon. According to Leonard Barrett, Rastafarians first began using Marijuana in reaction to the treatment of blacks in society. It became a device to enable freedom from the establishment. A commune was founded in the early 1940's by Leonard Howell who was one of the leaders of the Rastafarian movement. Howell openly acknowledged Emperor Haile Selassie I as the Supreme Being and the black people's ruler. He was charged with inciting rebellion against the Government of Great Britain and was sentenced to two years imprisonment. When he was released in 1940, he established the "Ethiopian Salvation Society," recruiting a sizeable following, and established a commune named Pinnacle in the hills overlooking the city of Kingston. This brought about the freedom to adopt smoking Marijuana, which is commonly called ganja in Jamaica, as a religious ritual. .

In the Rastafarian movement Marijuana is not seen as a drug but as a medical and holy plant. Smoking Marijuana is a central religious

ritual. At the same time, it plays an important role as preventive and curative medicine in everyday life due to its relaxant as well as stimulating effects. So for the Rastas, there is no strict division between the sacred and mundane realm.

Nevertheless, the Rastas use various names for their "Holy Herb" such as Ishence (blending of incense and Icient, the Rastafarian word for ancient), Maka, King's Bread, Lamb's Bread, Kali, Kaya, Iley or Weed of Wisdom. Marijuana is usually consumed in the form of a Spliff, a cigarette rolled using cannabis, or as Ganja tea. Some Rastas use it as a spice and rubbing the ashes from smoked cannabis into the skin is also considered a healthy practice.



The Chalice comes with a greater religious meaning. It is a sort of water pipe with a hose to inhale. The water cools and filters the smoke and the hose provides additional airspace for cooling. Before lightening it, the Rasta typically says a short prayer or rather blesses the pipe. When smoked, it is inhaled deeply, and then held as the devotee enters into a trance-like state. The Chalice symbolizes the Rasta's bond to the four elements: Earth in which the plant grows. Fire with which the Chalice is lightened up. Water through which the smoke is filtered. Air with which the smoke is inhaled. The term 'Lick the Chalice' refers to a Rasta communing with God, whom they call Jah. Jah is a Biblical name of God, from a shortened form of Jahweh or Jehovah found in Psalms 68:4 in the King James Version of the Bible. Most adherents see Haile Selassie I as Jah or Jah Rastafari, an incarnation of God, the Father. The Chalice is preferably made out of plants such as coconuts or calabashes. Alternatively glass bottles, metal tubes or cow horn can be used. True Rastafarians do not smoke tobacco or

cigarettes as it is seen as unnatural and dangerous to one's health.



Rastas consider their bodies as a living temple or House of God and therefore the smoking of Ganja is seen as cleansing by burning. Rastas see cannabis as a sacramental and deeply beneficial plant

that is the Tree of Life mentioned in the Bible. Jamaican reggae musician and companion of Bob Marley Peter Tosh, amongst many others, have thereto quoted Revelation: 22:2, "the river of life proceeded to flow from the throne of God, and on either side of the bank there was the tree of life, and the leaf from that tree is for the healing of the nations." So Rastafarians believe that Marijuana use is sacred, following biblical texts to justify its use. The use of cannabis, and particularly of chalices, is an integral part of what Rastafarians call "reasoning sessions" which are communal meetings involving

meditation where members get together to discuss life according to the Rastafarian point of view. They see the use of cannabis as bringing them closer to God, allowing the user to penetrate the truth of things much more clearly. According to the "anti-cult" group Watchman Fellowship, "The herb is the key to new understanding of the self, the universe, and God. It is the vehicle to cosmic consciousness" and is believed to burn corruption out of the human heart. Also it serves as a source of inspiration for many Rastafarian artists.



WHERE ARE THE WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF ART?

By Jana Wiekling

Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Yoko Ono or Marina Abramovic – have you heard of all these names? These women belong to the Top Ten of female artists worldwide. If you have not heard of them you do not have to blame yourself. Despite the fact that the number of galleries and museums has increased in the big cities worldwide in the past decade, it is striking that there is still a female underrepresentation in exhibitions and galleries. Why do women artists do not get the same attention as male artists? And is this issue of gender inequality totally ignored by our society?



A poster by the Guerrilla Girls

The imbalance between male and female artists is actually not a new issue, it has occurred earlier. In the 1980s for instance, the Guerrilla Girls, a group of anonymous feminists, were formed in New York City in order to bring the gender inequality within the fine arts to light and to fight against it. They draw attention to this issue by spreading posters or stickers around the city and by protesting in front of museums or galleries.

Very often women artists actually get more attention than men in the art world. This fact, however, is to be seen as a "positive discrimination" as they receive this attention not for their status as an artist but for their exceptional position as being a woman. It should also be clear that art produced by women is not a synonym for feminist art, even though feminist art is often produced by women artists.

Looking at the graduates of art colleges, there are more female graduate students than male. Women at the University of Arts in Berlin made up 58% of all graduates in 2011, for example. However, this majority of female graduates is not reflected in their later careers. Looking at London, only 31 per cent of 3163 represented artists, of the 134 commercial galleries in London that were audited, were women. Why are women artists not represented by galleries? The reason for this imbalance is the fact that women are confronted with the same problems as in every other profession. Women who want to have children cannot keep up with the rapidness of the art market. You have to be available at every time, especially as networking is an important factor in the art world. Another problem might be the fact that many galleries and museums are still run by men who might not be committed to the promotion of art by women.

The fight against this kind of discrimination of women artists has to work through the deconstruction of outdated structures and an emerged dialogue. As the art market is built on supply and demand, collectors have to start buying the work of women artists so that other will follow as well as museums have to start displaying them constantly and in a broader context; not only in their exceptional position as women artists. The redressing of the underrepresentation of women artists is going to be a slow one but people are becoming more and more aware of this issue. An increasing number of female gallery founders and influential women can be seen as a starting point towards gender equality in the art world. This change as well as organizations like “Women in the Arts Foundation” will help to overcome discrimination against women artists.



”SOMEDAY MY PRINCE WILL COME” - DISNEY PRINCESSES AND ROMANCE

It's always the same: As soon as there's a new Disney movie about to be released, it is sure to be both praised and torn apart by critics. Take Frozen, last year's Disney princess movie, for example, which has been called, on the one hand, “the best Disney Musical since ‘The Beauty and the Beast’ and on the other hand described as a disappointment.

By Elena Ritter



However, one thing cannot be denied: In its latest installments Disney seems to avoid purely romantic storylines. Frozen, for instance,

focuses on the relationship of its two protagonists, the sisters Anna and Elsa. Brave's (2012) heroine, red-haired Scottish princess

Merida, has no romantic interest at all. And still, the stereotype prevails: According to many, Disney princesses have little to no function apart from looking pretty and searching for a husband. But is that stance

justified? Or are we currently heading for a new era of princesses?

Without a doubt, the first members of the official Disney Princess franchise fall into the “pretty but kind of dull” category. Cinderella(1950), Snow White(1937) and Aurora (Sleeping Beauty, 1959) are children of their time, and by that I do not mean the Middle Ages, in which their stories take place, but the time from the 1930s to the 1960s, whose image of an “ideal” woman’s role the characters portray. All three of them have little to no interests except marriage, fulfill stereotypical female roles such as cooking and housekeeping and are essentially damsels in distress who need to be rescued by their princes. Marriage is the highest goal they can achieve.

Compared to these princesses, the female protagonists of the so called “Disney Renaissance” are portrayed much more as individuals who take action and have hobbies and interests. All of them, Ariel (The little Mermaid, 1989), Belle (The Beauty and the Beast, 1991), Jasmine (Aladdin, 1992), Pocahontas (1995) and Mulan (1998), are curious and active, challenging (at least in theory) their current situation as something they would like to break out of. However, there is still a focus on romance in all these movies (except for Mulan).

Which is not that bad, you might say. Love is not the worst thing to make movies about, right? Right, but let us not forget that the way Disney portrays romance often enough glorifies dependence. Ariel’s fate lies in Prince Eric’s hands (or rather on his lips) because she will become a mermaid again if he does not fall in love with her. Jasmine is a sultan’s daughter,

controlled by the men in her life (and there are only men since she is the only named female character in the whole movie) and even though she wants to break out of this structure, she still has to rely on Aladdin to save her. Belle is literally held prisoner, paying her father’s debt by giving over control of her personal freedom to the Beast. As gorgeous as that movie was on a visual and musical level, the romance was, on its most basic level, rather creepy. So yes, love is a wonderful thing to make movies about, but especially children’s movies have to be careful about what they portray.



Disney seems to be aware of that problem and the criticism they have faced. The most recent princesses have not only marked the change from 2D to 3D animation, but also a new mindset: Romance is not in the focus anymore. Sure, there are the usual princes and handsome strangers, but the love story seems to be only an addition, the man just a “bonus” prize along the princess’ way to a positive character development. Tiana, heroine of The Princess and the Frog (2009), wants to open a restaurant and help her financially rather unfortunate family. Rapunzel (Tangled, 2010) wants to leave the tower she has been kept in her whole life by her “mother”, who is in fact the evil witch that kidnapped her from her parents. And even though Anna (Frozen, 2013) sings about finding love, it is actually the relationship to her distant sister Elsa she wants to and has to fix (oh and, you know, free the land from the eternal winter she has brought).

And here is another important change: Non-romantic relationships. Almost all princesses

had friends to aid them, but they were usually comedic sidekicks (often animals) or reduced to the embodiment of society's norms that actually keep the princess from doing what's right. Family was shown as something important, but still usually something that was in the way of romance (if the parents were still alive, that is. Disney princesses have an alarming rate of orphans and half-orphans). Parents were, most of the time, strictly opposed to their daughters' wishes to be with the handsome strangers and princes, but had to admit their mistakes in the end and give their blessing to the happy couple.

In the newest Disney movies, however, family often plays an even bigger role than

romance. Of course, the generation conflict is still a powerful trope, but peace is not achieved by the headstrong princess just forcing her way out, but by listening and compromising. Brave's Merida has to learn to understand her mother's concerns, just as the latter has to listen to her daughter's fears and wishes. In Frozen, Anna realises that Elsa's distance does not come from resentment, but from fear, but also, that pressuring her to do something will resolve in panic and disaster. Tangled, on the other hand, shows something else: an abusive mother-daughter relationship that is treated as such. There is no compromise to be achieved and Rapunzel ultimately has to free herself from her mother's grip (quite literally).

All these relationships are at the heart of their respective movies. They are, eventually, even more important than the romance and the character's dealing with them is what ultimately saves the day (or the country. Or the mother from being permanently transformed into a bear.).

What is equally important about them is that they focus primarily on female characters. None of the modern princesses share Snow White's, Jasmine's and Mulan's fate of being the only named woman in the whole movie. Instead, the screen is more and more filled with important female side characters and protagonists. They are treated as equally valid and important to their male counterparts.

Disney princesses have always been a franchise primarily directed at young girls and it is wonderful to see Disney recognise the importance of non-romantic relationships, princesses with goals other than marriage and that "true love" does not always

mean romantic love. There are still a lot of issues that make Disney problematic, especially on a feminist level.

But the company shows that it is able to take steps into the right direction, as slow as they might be. Disney was never a company to take risks with their princess movies. They react very slowly to trends and usually stick to delivering something that people already know. However, in the last few years, a whole number of competitors have appeared on the market, with more daring, more innovative projects that will hopefully force Disney to keep up.

Because, in the end, it is more than just colourful children's movies. Every project that Disney releases to the big screen is sure to be someone's childhood memory one day and possibly help contribute to shape the person the child will become.

JEWGENI SCHWARZ' THE DRAGON / DER DRACHE AT STAATSSCHAUSPIEL DRESDEN

A review by Julia Miteva

In the beginning of June 2014 Dresden citizens had their last chance to experience at Staatsschauspiel Dresden the performance of The Dragon by the Russian dramatist Jewgeni

Schwarz, shown in a translation by Günther Jäniche, and directed by Wolfgang Engel. Since its premiere on 12 April 2013 the play has run for just over a year until its last show on 6 June.

It starred Matthias Luckey (as Lancelot), Tom Quaas (as the Dragon), Ines Marie Westernströer (as Elsa), Holger Hübner (as City Burgomaster), Benjamin Pauquet (as Heinrich, Burgomaster's son), and Christian Clauß (as the he-cat Mariechen).

Jewgeni Schwarz was born in 1896 in Kasan, Russia. Before the October Revolution he studied Jurisprudence in Moscow and Rostow. From 1922 he worked as a magazine editor and children's book author. His work as a dramatist began 1930. He transformed Andersen's fairy tales, Don Quixote and other fairy tales for the stage and the film. His play *The Dragon*, characterized as a political fairy tale or a comical fairy tale, targets the fascist dictatorial regime in Germany during in the 1940ies. The play was accomplished 1943 after Schwarz' survival of the two-year blockade of Leningrad. The play was performed in Moscow in 1944 only in two general repetitions, before the censorship started suspecting that other regimes, such as the one in the Soviet Union, might be targeted by the play as well, and forbid the performances. The play was staged in Moscow again after 22 years, in 1962, after the dead of the author. 1962 is also the year in which the text of *The Dragon* was published in Germany by Kiepenheuer & Witsch in a translation by Dorothea Müller. From the 1960ies onwards the play was performed not only in the Soviet Union, but in France and Germany, and many other international stages. Even in the 21. century it has not lost its political expressiveness – it was played in 2007 in Shri Lanka to draw a parable between modern warfare and terrorism on the one hand, and dragons on the other. Particular popularity the play gained though in the Soviet Union in the 1980ies, which culminated 1988 with the Russian-German movie *To Kill a Dragon* (1988, Rus/FRG), directed by Mark Zakharov and based on the screen play by Grigori Gorin and Mark Zakharov.

The *Dragon* is a parable about the power of a tyrant, which is based on the convenience and

fear of the citizens. The plot of the story is old. Lancelot, a knight and professional hero, arrives in the city controlled by the Dragon, and is shocked by the cringing of its inhabitants. For the last 400 years the Dragon used to demand not only enormous amounts of food, and starved the people therefore. He also required every year a maiden to become his bride. This year's choice has fallen on Elsa, the daughter of the archivist Charlemange. Lancelot's has come to set free the citizens and Elsa, but they do not wish to be freed. The best way to get rid of dragons, asserts the hysteric Burgomaster, is to keep an own one. Besides, the Dragon had done so much for the city. Still, Lancelot has fallen in love with Elsa, and he is certain in his decision to challenge and kill the Dragon. He can count only on the support of few citizens who provide him with a proper weapon, after the Burgomaster had offered him a barber's wash-basin and a copper tray as a helmet and a shield. Lancelot manages to kill the Dragon, but, as in the old fairy tales happens, he is injured and disappears, so the Burgomaster becomes the hero of the day. He, the Burgomaster, appoints himself as the Dragon-killer and savior of the city, and is about to marry Elsa. Although with his come-back Lancelot can claim the maid for himself, she is disgusted by the continuous manipulation of her faith and by the citizens' behavior, who are more than willing to accept Lancelot as a new ruler. Has he become a new Dragon? As if to prove this, Lancelot repeats in his last statement Mielke's famous sentence "Ich liebe Euch doch alle" ("But I love you all.", transl. JM). What facilitates the Dragon's existence?

The play, critics say, disturbs and asks questions, but does not give easy answers. What shapes the interplay between tyrants and subordinates? The Dagon explains this self-confidently before the combat with Lancelot. Here an excerpt of Yuri Machkasov's translation into English (<http://a7sharp9.com/dragon.html>):

- Dragon.** If you could see their souls, that would give you a fright.
- Lancelot.** No.
- Dragon.** You'd run away. Wouldn't risk your life for the cripples. My dear man, I crippled them myself. Crippled them exactly as required. You see, the human soul is very resilient. Cut the body in half – and the man croaks. But tear the soul apart – and it only becomes more pliable, that's all. No, really, you couldn't pick a finer assortment of souls anywhere. Only in my town. Souls with no hands. Souls with no legs. Mute souls, deaf souls, chained souls, snitch souls, damned souls. Do you know why the burgomaster parades his supposed madness around? To conceal that he does not have any soul at all. Hollow souls, corrupt souls, worn out souls, dead souls. A pity they're invisible, really.
- Lancelot.** You're lucky they are.
- Dragon.** How do you mean?
- Lancelot.** People would be horrified if they could see with their own eyes what happened to their souls. They would rather march to their deaths than remain enslaved. Who is going to feed you then?
- Dragon.** I'll be damned. You might be onto something there. So, shall we begin?

Although Jewgeni Schwarz' aim was obviously th parody of the totalitarian societies of his time, the director Wolfgang Engel searches to enlarge the meaning of the struggle between the Dragon, Lancelot and the people. For him, the Dagon is the unleashed, unrestricted marketplace. Not so much the fear of a political regime, but the pursuit of the own material benefit and the neglect of unselfish human activities, such as love and friendship, are for him the real evil. The performance offers various hints for such kind of interpretations. Still, they rely strongly on two essays included in the booklet accompanying the play. These are the essays by Frank Schirrmacher "Die Seele, die aus der Kälte kam" (English: "The soul which came from the could", transl. JM) and by Stéphane Hessel "Empört Euch!" (English: "Feel outrageous!", transl. JM)

Wolfgang Engel's production mainly follows the original text by Jewgeni Schwarz, but incorporates few deviations among which the prologue from Dracheoper (Engl: Dragon Opera, transl. JM) by Heiner Müller, performed as a rap scene, and Lancelot's final statement. These might have been controversial for the critics, but were rather convincing for the author of this review.

The spectators on 6 June observed a masterly performance. Matthias Luckey as Lancelot incorporated very convincingly the fearless, cool rebel and idealist, who believes that the evil is outside the human soul and can be combat with physical weapons. His antagonist, the Dragon, was brilliantly played by Tom Quaas. The Dragon was one of the most difficult characters to play, since it adopted three different images – he was firstly an elegant and genteel ruler in a tailcoat, then a cool manager-like person in a Hawai-shirt, and finally a human beast with a white, hostile face, and with a body convulsed by nervous twitches. The Dragon transformed himself during the battle with Lancelot into a beastly creature with three heads, each of which had to be slaughtered separately. Virtuous was as well the performance by Holger Hübner as the mad, hysteric Burgomaster, a cunning but driven by fear character, who used to contradict his own words constantly and played a fool, but one who manipulated the others for his own political benefit. Ines Marie Westernströer as Elisa convinced the audience particularly by demonstrating nausea in the

third act that the loss and lack of principles were disgusting. Plaudits to the chorus playing the citizens of the city who particularly during Lancelot's fight with the Dragon demonstrated masterly the susceptibility to manipulation, and to Benjamin Pauquet playing Heinrich, the Burgomaster's son, for his pointed representation of a turncoat political behavior.

All who were aware of the The Dragon's staging and spent an evening at Staatsschauspiel Dresden were able to enjoy a brilliantly performed comic fairy tale which churned deep philosophical and moral considerations. For all who missed it, there is some consolation in the English and German translations of the original text, an audio book (all available online), and of course in the not less brilliantly played movie To Kill a Dragon.

A NEW FORM OF COUNTRY – BRO-COUNTRY MUSIC AND ITS ENDLESS SUMMERS, GIRLS AND ICE-COLD BEERS

By Katleen Schünemeyer

When I first moved to the States in 2010, I was overwhelmed by all the radio stations you could listen to while driving your SUV or Pickup Truck.

It was amazing. Every genre had its own radio station and there was a choice of almost fifteen stations per city.

The first time I switched to 92.5 XTU (Philadelphia's Country station) was magical: The sounds of Luke Bryan's (recently elected as Country's Sexiest Man by People magazine) Rain is a good thing popped up. That was when I realized how Country music belongs on the roads of America. From that point on, every time I found myself driving, I also found myself switching to a Country music station and fell in love with the music.

As I got more and more into that kind of music and started listening to several artists, I grasped that today's Country music is undergoing huge changes.

Music journalists are saying: The old Country is dying out and the new form of Country which can be listened to on radio stations all throughout the US is called Bro-Country. The term was used first by Jody Rosen, a journalist writing for the New York Magazine, Slate, and Rolling Stone, and is defined as "music by and of the tatted, gym toned, party-hearty young American white dude".



There are several things you are going to hear in every Bro-Country song and also these are the things the subgenre defines itself through: The season in a Bro-Country song is always an "endless summer", the object of lust is a girl wearing "blue jeans, painted on tight" and the favorite beverage is "an ice-cold beer".

But how does Bro-Country differ from the "old" Country? Nashville's old pedal steel guitars are obviously missing in Bro-Country songs. In fact, Bro-Country songs are more rock and pop than old Nashville style Country songs. And also a hip-hop part can play a big role in a Bro-Country song.

The genre's most known artists are the aforementioned Luke Bryan, Blake Shelton, Tim McGraw, Dierks Bentley, Chris Young and many more. These guys embody the Bro lifestyle perfectly: Always tanned, smirky smile, cowboy hat, and boots.

It is also for these men that Bro-Country runs most of the Billboard Country Charts.

Nevertheless, there are a lot of journalists criticizing these new trends in modern Country music. They are making fun of the simple lyrics and the Bro stereotype.

My advice: Do not take Bro-Country too seriously (the lyrics can be pretty cheesy indeed), have a good time while listening to it and dream about America.

After coming back to Germany, I realized how much I actually miss driving my American car on American roads with some good Country music on the radio. I guess it is the permanent longing for the open lands, the endless

summers, ice cold beers and the huge cars every Bro-country musician sings about. One day I will go back and road-trip the American South and West while some Bros will be playing their songs on my stereo.

MUSIC – NOT JUST ENTERTAINMENT

by Peter Hanka

Most of us listen to music on a daily basis. We listen to it because we like a certain band or a certain type of music. Some people just listen to it in between newscasts only because it happens to be playing at that very moment. But how many of us do actually listen in the exact meaning of the word? How many of us just let themselves be soothed by the O so sweet sound, and who pays attention to the lyrics, the meaning of the song presented to us?

The pen is mightier than the sword. Words carry meaning and power. And they are spoken – or, as in this case, sung – with intent. Sure, there are many songs that were composed only for the purpose of giving the audience a good time and a feeling of refreshment. There are songs that deal with tragedy, with heartbreak, with loss. And then there are other songs. Political songs. Songs that try to raise awareness about what is really going wrong in our society. One of the most politically interested singers had been a star of country music.

In the very same year John Denver released his nostalgic and rather idyllic song Country Roads, Take Me Home about the longing for home, 1971, Johnny Cash sung his as critic as famous song Man in Black, hitting the US Billboard Hot Country Singles Charts on 3rd place. In the early 1970s, Cash became known as the man in black for always wearing nothing but black when being on stage. Throughout his career as a musician, he always had an eye for society's problems rather than for the bright side of life and tried to raise awareness for those who were left behind by the state and by the people. Cash very often stood up to defend the rights of prisoners and tried to help them reclaim their place in society after their time in prison. He even performed his famous song

Folsom Prison Blues in front of a crowd of inmates.

Even though struggling with alcohol and drugs from time to time, he held religious values, mused about god, and tried to invoke everyone's willingness to help one another. Johnny Cash took the saying of "one nation under god" very serious and also wrote a book titled Man in White to further explain his understanding of religion and Christian charity, and to give people a better understanding of his value system.

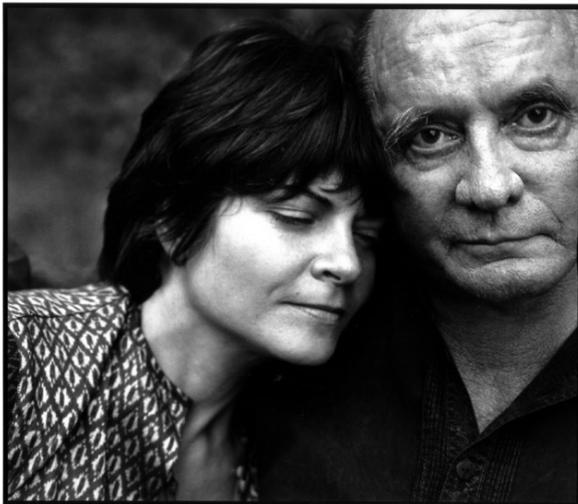
There is not a shadow of a doubt that his fans thought and still think of Johnny Cash as a patriot. And they should. Having been a veteran himself, he even visited the US troops in Vietnam together with his wife June in 1971, right before Man in Black came to his mind. He was concerned not only about war, but about the soldiers, too. And in the end, he raised the issues he had with this situation by the help of his music. He was not only a critic of the Vietnam war, but felt conflicted with the United State's invasion of Iraq in 2003, too.

In 2010, Cash's daughter Rosanne, a country singer by her own right, gave an insight into her father's mindset:

"In the two weeks leading up to the invasion, my father was in the hospital. He was very sick. The doctors put him in a medically induced coma. He went to sleep not knowing if we had invaded Iraq. It was the last thought on his mind. When he woke up, I was sitting by his side. He looked at me and reached over to pull the television over to him. He was looking at me like, 'Did it happen?' I said, 'Dad, it happened.' He went, 'No! No!' Can you imagine? This is the

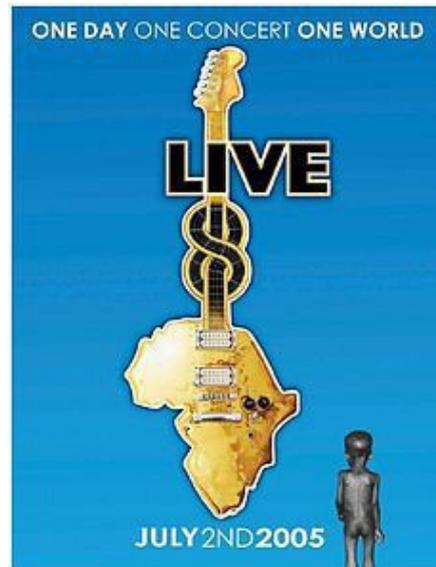
first thing he thought of when he woke up from a week-long coma.”¹

Of course, Mr. Cash and country music in general are not the only sources of artistic feedback on governmental action. In approximately 1989 – the exact date is unknown – Tupac Shakur, one of the most famous rappers of all time, recorded the song Panther Power. As one can easily see when looking at the title, Panther Power relates to the Black Panther Party, a political group of African Americans, who fought for the rights of their community by resorting to gun violence if necessary. In Panther Power, Tupac picks to pieces the American Dream by claiming that it does not apply to the African American community and therefore holds to be nothing but an illusion for non-white citizens. In recent years, one just had to turn on the radio to come across titles as Green Day's American Idiot or Pink's Dear Mr. President, which criticized the media as well as president George W. Bush and programs like the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).



Annie Liebovitz/Courtesy Rosanne Cash

Now what might happen when politically or at least socially interested artists flock together for a common cause? Charity Concerts! These kinds of public events are used to raise awareness for different social and political issues, and to collect funds for organizations which are trying to solve problems connected to those issues.



One example of famous charity concerts would be the Live Aid concert of 1985, which was held simultaneously both at Wembley Stadium in London, England and at John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Twenty years later, on the 20th anniversary of Live Aid, Live 8 was celebrated preceding the G8 summit.

Of course there was and still is criticism about this form of aid, because some people might argue that this money is not going to support the people who are suffocating because of famine, but the corrupt regime of the respecting countries. But this discussion in itself encourages the people to think about even more effective ways to deliver welfare and puts a focus on injustice in politics in one's own and other nations.

In fact, there is a wide variety of possible means to affect the attitude of one's audience. An artist is not only able to make use of his very own musical creativity, but he can make use of his popularity in many aspects. If we just take a look at presidential campaigns during elections, we will find a number of artists who support their favorite presidential candidate not only with money but with promotion, too. Barack Obama's list of supporters contains famous names such as Jon Bon Jovi, Bruce Springsteen, Elton John and Mick Jagger. Of course their fanbase will know whom of both presidential candidates their idols are going to support, and it very well might

¹ D'Ambrosio, Antonino. "An Interview with Rosanne Cash." The Progressive. The Progressive Magazine, Oct. 2010. Web. 29 Aug. 2013.

influence the choice they are about to make. Quite the same effect is used with the concept of charity concerts. Here, too, one might say that big names attract big attention.

It would be wise to admit music's importance and potential when it comes to politics, and of course to really listen when it's playing. Don't you think so?

FROM LOCH NESS TO THE ELBE – SCOTTISH SOUNDS IN SAXONY

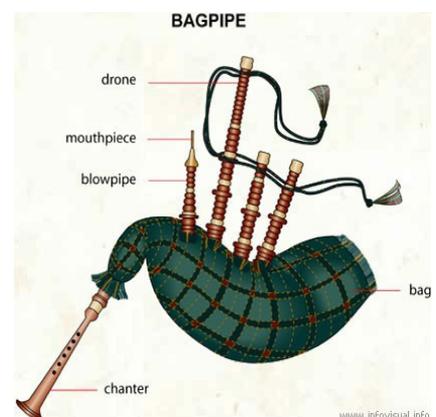
by Fraucke Senckel

Thinking of Scotland, the country's beautiful countryside with its hills, lakes, coasts and castles comes to mind and this has inspired many of us to travel there to see it for ourselves. But what about Scottish culture? Except for linguists who might think of the people's curious accent, most people will probably think of the sound of bagpipes, coming from a man dressed in a kilt, a well-tempered Scotsman who also enjoys drinking whisky. And these attributes are the ones we usually associate with Scottish culture. But can you witness these in Dresden?



Other Anglo-Saxon cultures seem far more present in our everyday life: The Irish, for instance, have their pubs everywhere, counting at least four in Dresden. Irish holidays are celebrated with music, beer and dancing. But where are the Scots? One major contribution is formed by a pipes and drums band from Dresden, the Dresden Pipes and Drums who have made it their job to play authentic traditional Scottish music for audiences in and around Dresden and Saxony and thereby present us with a local Scottish experience.

Originally founded by two people who started to meet for regular rehearsals in 2005, the group has since begun to grow larger and larger and consists of 16 advanced players today with ten beginners practicing to follow in their footsteps. Thereof, 19 people play the Scottish bagpipe and seven the drums. In addition, the group has a drum major who leads the group when marching at competitions and at performances. The Dresden Pipes and Drums are one of few groups of their kind in East Germany.



Asked about the reasons for his interest in Scottish music, Oliver Behling (28), one of the group's founders, recalls a situation back during his exchange year in the United States when he saw a bagpipe player on the streets and was so fascinated by the music that he decided to play himself.

Yet learning to play Scottish instruments is neither an economical, nor an easily accessible endeavor: There are no teachers for Scottish bagpipes or Scottish drums in Dresden and therefore much of the learning has to be done autodidactically. The Dresden Pipes and Drums teach their new members themselves and in addition to that organize several workshops a year to improve their playing skills. Before playing on an actual bagpipe, students practice on a so-called practice chanter which looks more like a recorder than a bagpipe. When the finger movements and the tunes are internalized, players start practicing on a real bagpipe. Which is where the expensive part begins: for a suitable bagpipe you will



have to pay around 700 euros. The most difficult part about playing the bagpipe, according to Oliver Behling, is producing the sounds. He also had a nice story to tell about that difficulty: when he first started to play the bagpipe, he did not manage to produce any sounds on it and therefore thought his newly-bought pipe was broken. He then went to a bagpipe maker who started playing his bagpipe beautifully without any trouble, proving to him how difficult playing the bagpipe actually is.

At least as important as the music, says Oliver Behling, is the outfit: This again is part of the expensive aspect of playing Scottish instruments as one has to pay between 800-1000 euros for a complete outfit consisting of a kilt, a shirt, a vest, a jacket, shoes and several accessories such as a hat, kilt pins, hose (woolen socks) and a sporran (a type of pouch). The outfit is important as it enhances the musical experience to a far more intensive cultural one. Talking about kilts, one of the most interesting questions people always ask is whether the men wear anything under them. Each of the Dresden Pipes and Drums members decide on this matter themselves.



Coming back to the premise of authentic Scottish music: what does this actually entail? There are several classic traditional Scottish tunes known to most of us, including Scotland the Brave, Amazing Grace and Auld Lang Syne. There are many more that are less known. Nevertheless we would probably recognize them as being Scottish. The Dresden Pipes and Drums have a large repertoire of these tunes that they perform throughout Saxony and the neighboring states at village fairs, for instance at the Dresden city festival and the Bunte Republik Neustadt, at Irish celebrations such as St. Patrick's Day, but also at private celebrations like weddings. To prove their authenticity, they have competed in two Scottish competitions in East Germany, called Highland Games, in which their musical skills and their marching were evaluated by Scottish judges flown in from Scotland. They placed first in their category each time.

Even if they are not Scotsmen/Scotswomen themselves, the Dresden Pipes and Drums contribute to our knowledge of Scottish culture and music and enable us to experience it without having to travel to Scotland to do so. Slàinte mhòr agad! (Cheers!)

For further information on the band and their upcoming performances, visit their website: <http://www.dpdd.de/index.php>

THE BEST FULL-TIME JOB IN THE WORLD

by Lucie Schneider

I am sitting on the floor, my laptop on my knees, trying to write a formal email to my professors, when I suddenly hear a voice: "Mummy, why do you have to work now?". According to the voice, which is becoming more and more demanding, the reading of at least three children's books aloud is on

the agenda now. But at the same time, this email cannot wait any longer.

I am a student. But I am also a mother of two little girls, aged one and two. I am the personification of the old saying: "Life is what happens w h i l e you're making plans".

Becoming a mother has turned my whole life up side down. And never before have the previous turning points in my life been this radical and constantly demanding. There are so many changes that you cannot even imagine when you first find out you are pregnant. Not sleeping late anymore? Being awake every few hours in the night? No endless library sessions with numerous coffee breaks? No going out until three in the morning anymore? But I bet that you also have no idea about the many advantages and help you are offered when you become a mother during your university career!

One of the most crucial aspects when raising a child is always the But despite my expectations, various ways became visible in order to apply for some financial aid. For example, you are entitled to claim Parental Allowance (Elterngeld, 300 Euro) and Children's Allowance (184 Euro). Furthermore, you can receive additional support from the Office for Educational Support (Bafög-Amt), additional Children's Allowance (German: Kinderzuschlag. This will support you if you cannot afford the additional living cost for your child), Maternity Allowance (German: Mutterschaftsgeld. This will be paid if you are not covered by family or student insurance but have to pay for your insurance), and Maintenance Allowance (German: Unterhaltsvorschuss. The state will cover the financial help if your ex- partner if they do not, for whatever reason, contribute to your financial situation). There are also some scholarships available for young parents who have not completed their studies yet (<https://www.bundesstiftung-mutter-und-kind.de>, <http://www.boell.de/de/stiftung/stiftung>).

To my surprise, the TU Dresden has been carrying the label "familiengerechte Hochschule" since 2007. This means that the university has a special centre which offers individual counseling, financial support, workshops and even short-term day care facilities. Plus, there are various places all around campus where you find some spots to play, change nappies or breast-feed your child

in a quiet surrounding. The library SLUB even has a special room where you can take your child with you and (try to) study while your offspring is playing with some toys.

You probably imagine having a child and trying to keep up with your studies as a burden or at least as a puzzle that can hardly be ever solved. But let me assure you that you actually benefit a lot from this double-life.

First of all, I have truly internalized the fact that my time, however spent, is precious. I simply just cannot afford to waste one hour on Facebook because either the girls or my latest homework (in some cases, both) need my attention. Before I had children, writing an essay in 90 minutes seemed rather demanding. More than once have I surrendered to the tempting of procrastination. Being a student mum, I know that, after these 90 minutes, our babysitter will be back with the little ones, and this helps me to effectively get some work done in a rather short time window. I have also said goodbye to the idea of being a perfectionist when I complete my tasks, something I consider vital for my future career as a teacher at state schools. And because I am constantly occupied with going to playgrounds, I have also narrowed down my social life to those who truly matter and have met some wonderful new people. And last but not least, my children have helped me to learn a lot more about myself. When you meet up with other parents, it seems so easy and natural to compare your child to theirs ("Is he sleeping during the whole night? — Too bad for you! Our child has been a sound sleeper ever since she's born!") But this constant comparing will only lead to pressure and tension for both, you as the parents, and your children as well. It is so important and healthy to let go of this thought. Kids are a challenge, each day, each second, but once you embrace this challenge, it will turn into a gift. Mastering this new life by gaining the ability to cope with everything unexpected will turn you into a proud and happy person. And one last secret, then I am off to the playground again: children love helping their parents with daily tasks like an unfinished email and will happily press the send button before they will again insist on reading story books.

DEAR DIARY: A STATISTICALLY REINFORCED SELF-JUSTIFICATION

by Jennifer Günther

As it is common among students, I also experienced the inevitable question about my choice of field of studies. I remember that I went to a student party in my first semester and was asked the whole evening about what I wanted to do in the future. At first, I happily answered that I studied German and English language and cultural studies. But soon, my mood changed from happy to being annoyed and I got used to adding to my answer that it was not a teaching degree but the normal dual subject Bachelor. And I can assure you that my revised answer still did not satisfy people at all. It seemed to me that all the people could forecast a dark future for me after I graduate as a Bachelor of Arts instead of the more promising Bachelor of Education.

As people were wondering what one can do in the future with the study of two languages, I slowly got the feeling that I needed to justify my choice. Many people hold the opinion that the combination of two subjects that lead to the Bachelor of Arts degree is not a great start into the future working world. In addition, only courses of studies with a teaching degree could turn me into a college graduate who has the slightest perspective of not ending up in unemployment. To tell the truth, I thought these people were right. Students who decide to study German and English language and cultural studies often share the same wish to get an esteemed position in the publishing and media sector or in the field of journalism. But one has to be aware of the fact that the positions in these sectors are limited.

The statistics of the German Federal Employment Office² show the current developments in the labour market by separating all applicants for work as well as non-workers into the respective fields of their profession. According to the statistics, there were 2,882,029 million non-workers and 4,987,635 million applicants for work in May 2014. When looking at the different professions, the Federal Employment Office compares the teachers with the arts, social and economic sciences; the linguist, literary and cultural scientists can be found among the latter. The data clearly shows that there are 22,188 unemployed teachers while the linguist, literary and cultural sciences only consist of 4,793 unemployed. Generally speaking, the number of teachers out-of-work is five times higher than the one of the arts. Furthermore, when comparing the figures of the applicants for work, it becomes clear that the number of teachers seeking a job is again five times higher than the number of registered work-seekers in the other arts. That is to say that there are 45,497 teachers looking for a job opposed to only 8,303 linguist, literary and cultural scientists. But one has to admit that the statistics is based on nominal numbers, which have no relation to the actual amount of workers in the respective field. According to the relative numbers of teachers and linguist, literary and cultural scientists, there are 793,300 teachers currently working but only 319,000 of the latter, which shows that there are definitely more jobs available for teachers. Furthermore, another statistics³ of the Federal Employment Office depicts that the development of the teaching sector has even shown positive developments since 2012 and it is expected that there will be a high demand for young academics in the next years as almost one third of the entire teaching staff is 55 years or older. Comparing the positive development among the teachers with the development of the linguist, literary and cultural sciences, the Federal Employment Office states that the development of the latter is positive as well but only due to the fact that a great deal of linguist, literary and cultural scientists are career changers and work in other areas. Therefore, it recommends for the graduates in arts to focus early as well to gain practical experiences in order to reach a high level of qualification.

²for further information see <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistik-nach-Themen/Statistik-nach-Berufen/zu-den-Produkten-Nav.html>

³for further information see <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistischer-Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Akademiker/generische-Publikationen/Broschuere-Akademiker-2012.pdf>

But what do these figures mean for me studying German and English language and cultural studies? Underlining the fear of unemployment after my degree was my uncertainty about what I actually wanted to do with my studies. I was not sure until I made an internship at the department for German as a foreign language as a student assistant teacher. For three semesters, I have been teaching German as a foreign language to foreign part-time students at the TU Dresden. By doing so, I have the feeling of a real perspective for my future that will eventually lead to success in the working environment.

Since I now know that I want to work in the field of German as a foreign language, I am not worried that much worried about my future anymore. Although the labour market is built on the principle of supply and demand, like the statistics of the German Federal Employment Office underline, I believe that one can still influence the perspective in the working sphere with one's own actions. When people ask me now about my future career perspective, I can finally give an answer that satisfies me.

“BECOME WHAT YOU ARE” BOARDING SCHOOL AS A STEPPINGSTONE INTO LIFE

by Clara Behnke

Boarding schools certainly have a bit of a mythical appeal. Every one of us might have heard of institutions like this, but only a very few actually experienced it. You may assume you have a pretty good sense of the experience – demanding classes, room sharing, and no parents. But what is it really like attending one of those institutions? I myself spent four years at a boarding school and will tell you how this special place changed my life.



Here I stand now, surrounded by an idyllic setting, the Odenwald. The sun is shining and I can see students leaving the little, beautiful houses on their way to the dining hall. Although there are many people around, everything is very quiet. It is Monday - a day like any in this place but a very special day for me. It is my first day at a boarding school. Never could I have imagined that I would find myself in this place. But right at that moment I could see its first advantage: the luxury of waking up in the morning and being in the middle of the campus, without carrying a heavy schoolbag while sitting

in traffic jams. But let me tell you more about this place.

My new home is called the “Odenwaldschule” and was founded in 1910 with a concept of a progressive education. The idea behind it is that the school should foster a sense of community, personality and self-determined behavior. It is the only boarding school in Germany with an integrated comprehensive school and offers training courses for mechanics, carpenters, chemical-technical assistants and IT assistants in addition to regular studies. There are places for 250 students who will then live with their teachers in mixed-age and gender groups of six to ten people, called “families”. These families provide students with a sense of security, moral support, assistance with problems at school or in private life, as well as a lot of fun and opportunities for sharing. There are also differences to a state school when it comes to education. Small classes with no more than 15

students offer individualized education and combine academic learning with practical training.

Most people might have heard of this institution in the media, as it turned out in 2010 that there had been over a hundred cases of sexual abuse in earlier years. Since then the school has a lot of problems with the public and concerning new registrations, but does a lot for rehabilitation and try to pay compensation to the victims. Due to the fact that I luckily did not go through things like that during my time at the Odenwaldschule, this article will not deal with this topic, but just with my own experiences.

So why did I become a part of this unique framework of living and learning back then? Students attend boarding schools for a number of reasons. Either their parents do not have enough time; the children do not feel comfortable at home or see that as the last chance to overcome personal and school problems or they just like the variety of classes and activities outside the standard educational framework. For me, it was to overcome my problems in school as I was very unmotivated to continue my studies, my mother saw a boarding school as the only way to show me that there are more things in life than just hanging around and doing nothing – and I quickly found out what she meant.

Even though it was not easy at the beginning to accept my situation and to know that I was so far away from home and all my friends, I adjusted to the boarding way of life quite fast. I really enjoyed the wide range of activities and experiences that gave me the opportunity to develop skills and interests beyond the academic curriculum and I realized that living and studying in one place provides much more time for you to get on with whatever you enjoy in the company of your friends. There was a great difference between how I was spending my free time here and to what it was before. I did things that I had never done before. Sometimes I was just talking with the other students - talking, talking, and talking because there were so many things to share. Of course we also had to follow some rules. Some of them which I found quite ridiculous, for example when

200 people had to wait for a “Gong” to ring out, before they begin their meal, but as I realized that the amount of freedom you get depends on how commendable you are in school and social life, I decided to stick to these easy rules hoping I would get a lot of freedom. It worked.

What I loved the most was that, due to the fact that the Odenwaldschule offers scholarships and various kinds of financial aid that enable all kinds of people to have access to the special opportunities, people from all economic backgrounds attended this boarding school and incomes were rarely discussed amongst the students, so that no one felt uncomfortable. At this place we were all equal. However living in a community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is very different and can be challenging in some ways as you never really have time on your own. Mentioned the sharing of bed and bathroom I have to say that I was really lucky as my first roommate was very nice and after one year I got the chance of living in a single bedroom for the rest of the time. But still the bathroom had to be shared with at least seven other students and I still cannot understand how people can leave their own bathroom in such bad conditions...but that is a different story. Anyway, what you lose in privacy, you gain in companionship. You get to know the people's personalities and I have to admit that I did not like all of them, but I learned to accept. On the other hand, I was surrounded by people who knew exactly what it was like to be living away from home and they were in the same situation I was. As a part of this close and supportive community, where my friends lived next door and became family, I felt that this boarding school turned out to be my second home.

It looks like a boarding school was simply the right solution for me in that it is an excellent preparation for university and employment as it provides many of the non-academic skills that are needed to be successful in life. I learned to be tolerant and to be able to live with other people and yet think for myself. My time in this institution encouraged me to care for others and get involved, but also to have my own opinion and not to follow others blindly. It taught me to be independent, but also made me more

appreciative of my family and home life. And especially it brought me in touch with a network of like-minded people that gave me a great foundation to build upon in my later life. So the principle of the progressive education “Develop into the unique individual you were meant to be”

or shorter “Become what you are”, has been fulfilled in my case.

Enchanted by this unique environment and nervous about how my life will change from today on, I look at my watch and assert that it is time to go to the dining hall too, to have the first breakfast in my new home.

LIFE AS A NURSE – FULFILLMENT OR MISERY?

It is no secret that Germany faces a tremendous issue those times: the shortage of professional nurses. By Karla Schmitz

When reading the newspaper or just by simply watching the news on TV, one thing strikes my mind every single time: Why in the world does Germany have such a shortage of professional nurses? I will never be able to answer my question to the fullest extent, but I can also think of some reasons why not to become a nurse – but I can also think of at least as many why it is desirable to become one as I have worked as a nurse for 4 years myself.

In Germany, you need at least a good Junior High School Diploma (after 10 years of studying) or even a High School Diploma, the “Abitur”, to be admitted to nursing school. This, indeed, is useful as the apprenticeship is very challenging, not just from the theoretical perspective, also from one’s own personality. As being a nurse means dealing with people who are dependent on you, it requires much empathy and maturity, which the majority of the young “Hauptschule” (normally after 9 years of school) graduates does not yet possess.

The apprenticeship lasts 3 years and finishes up with an oral, written and practical exam. The entire material from the 3 years is part of the exam, which might be the reason why some students fail the final exams in every group. If a student has failed the exam, he or she will not be able to take it again right away, but has to redo another 6 months in the failed subject.

Like I have mentioned before, Germany has a shortage of nurses, which affects the multiple health institutions differently. Recently published statistics (aerzteblatt.de) show that in 2020 Germany will count 212.000 vacant positions and in year 2030 this number will have risen to

a total of 575.000 job vacancies. Hospitals claim to be suffering the shortage the most, followed by welfare centers and nursing homes. This can be explained by taking a closer look at a nurse’s range of duties. In contrast to other occupations in the medical field (excluding doctors), nurses are allowed (with an order from the doctor) to draw blood, inject medication into blood vessels and to (re)do bandages. Furthermore, they are allowed to treat patients with narcotics and highly pain relieving medications, inject insulin and conduct multiple forms of diagnoses with regards to medical statuses. Because of this versatility, nurses are called professionals and are highly demanded in the above-mentioned institutions.

The fact that Germany is and keeps having a huge shortage of educated nurses is not understandable as nursing schools witness a high numbers of graduates. Where do all the nurses go?

After having worked as a nurse after my apprenticeship for a while, I can now understand why, at least, some decide to quit and start either a new career or go for further education. I did love what I was doing; being a nurse is a very satisfying profession with a lot of thankfulness coming your way. Nevertheless, one can feel the shortage of nurses, which ends



in a quantity of work that is not manageable by one person alone. Furthermore, the 3-shift system does not consort

with a family life and nor does the salary. Depending on the employer, the average salary is about 1200 Euro (net) for a 40-hour week. This might sound like it is a lot, but truly is not when this includes working weekends, working 14 days in a row and in different shifts every day. I had single-mom colleagues who were dependent on their parents' financial support as they could not afford to live on this salary, having 2 or 3 children to take care of.

So, as I have mentioned before, the answer to the question why Germany has such a high shortage of nurses is not easy to provide. This profession can be very fulfilling as long as a person does not have high financial expectations. Being a nurse means living on a

small salary compared to what one has to accomplish every day at work. For people who do not yet have a family, this way of life might work, but what I have noticed in my work experience is that many nurses leave their profession as soon as they are planning or have just started a family. I can speak from my own experience when I say: being a nurse is the most wonderful occupation one can ask for as long as there is no family that demands a 5-day week and a salary that is sufficient to live on. Depending on one's own personal life plan, the field of nursing can be a true fulfillment, but it can turn into misery when life statuses change.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX – IT IS MORE THAN JUST PLASTIC, RUBBER AND LEATHER.

By Kai Reuße

When opening a shoe box, it is the sound of the rustling wrapping tissue which covers the shoes, it is the smell of glue and new leather or synthetic that raise my hackles. The moment of unpacking one's beloved and highly coveted pair of sneakers is ineffable. It is the pleasant thrill of anticipation when finally having found one's grail (the shoes one has been looking for for years), or simply the feeling when wearing one's brand-new shoes for the very first time, which makes sneakers a matter of the heart to me.

As I am writing these lines, it becomes clear to me that I might be obsessed with sneakers and shoes in general. For the majority of people, shoes are a purely functional product. They have to be made to last, they have to be affordable and they have to match the rest of what is inside their wardrobe. Frankly speaking, there is nothing wrong about this attitude concerning shoes. Now, why did sneakers have such a vital impact on my life? What is so fascinating about trainers, which were created for the purpose of running, playing tennis or playing basketball back in the 70s, 80s and early 90s?

Honestly, it is hard to put that passion, or obsession, into words, but the keenness basically started with my very first pair of sneakers. In 2005, I spent a whole summer and

even the autumn vacation doing all different kinds of underpaid menial work to earn money, as I knew then that I was going to New York City in 2006 and that I could find shoes there which were not available in Germany, or even Europe. Travelling back in time, I think earning my own money and, equally important, having experienced two wonderful weeks in NYC were key moments I associate with my first pair of trainers. Probably, these moments made the first purchase even more precious. From this moment on, I have been stricken by sneakers, their design, functionality, history, creators and background stories.

till, the question why sneakers are that fascinating, and why shoes are more than just plastic, rubber and leather to me, is not thoroughly answered. At root, there is one main difference between me and other people who own two or three pairs and just buy shoes every once in a while. For me, buying shoes is not the process of entering a store, choosing a pair, and paying. It is far more. It is the feeling when I unsuspectingly happen upon a shoe which was produced back in 1989 or maybe 1994, which I have been looking for for months or even years. In the best case, it is exactly my size, it has never been worn by anyone before and it is brand new although it is ten or fifteen years old. It is not the ordinary procedure of buying a new

pair which was released in 2013 and is still available. It is the whole process of searching, finding, and receiving a new pair of highly coveted shoes, a modern treasure hunt, so to speak. As far as I am concerned, this is the pure sense of pleasure.

Moreover, collecting sneakers in a serious manner is a passion and passion is not made out of plastic. It is the admiration for what has been accomplished over the past two or three decades, namely the idea behind a certain shoe model. Furthermore, one has to consider the people, such as Tinker Hatfield, who are responsible for the creation and the technological progress of running shoes. Without these pioneers in design and technological development driven by their obsession to steadily improve their company's products back in the 1980s, sneakers would not have gained importance beyond high-performance sport. Innovations like the development of the "Nike Air Technology" and, in the next breath, the "Air Max One", which was inspired by the architecture of the "Georges Pompidou Centre", changed the appreciation of running shoes enormously. Thus, the revolutionary approaches of designers and companies in terms of cushioning, materials, weight or longevity, and the volition to create persistent, better, lighter, more comfortable shoes make me see sneakers from a different angle. They are not only basic functional products, but they are a contemporary form of art, combining design, technology and progress.

Apart from the admiration for what has been achieved over the last decades, there is another salient aspect concerning my passion for trainers: emotions and experiences. As shoes have been an essential part of my life for a very long time, certain models are linked to certain experiences. I could tell you exactly which pair I wore when I met my girlfriend for the very first time or which pair I wore on my first day at university. Every single shoe has its own

personal story and, when I look at them, I take a trip down memory lane and can visualize all the wonderful experiences and adventures I associate with a certain pair.

At this moment in time, wearing sneakers has become an important part of youth or even mass culture. Global players such as Nike, New Balance or Adidas already realized this a few years back and have started to focus on mass consumption and therefore on the mass market. Presently, established shoe companies release a "new" pair of sneakers nearly every week. Unfortunately, the love for detail has fallen by the wayside. There is hardly any technological progress, shoes fall apart after six or seven months of wearing, although they get more and more expensive, and the former incentive of companies to continually improve their products is a thing of the past. Thus, my passion for sneakers is slowly but surely put to the test. However, I believe that things will change in two or three years at the latest as ordinary consumers will not be keen on spending 150 euros every half year just to demonstrate trendiness. Although I critically observe the latest development of sneakers as part of mass culture, my personal attitude towards trainers has not changed yet, and I claim it will not change in the future. For me, shoes will always be a crucial aspect of self-expression, at least from a nostalgic point of view. When talking about sneakers I do not mean plastic, rubber and leather. I mean sports, art, design, progress, revolutionary ideas, appreciation and admiration for what has been achieved since the late 1970s, but most importantly, I mean the indescribable feeling when opening a shoe box. I mean the sound of the rustling wrapping tissue which covers the shoes. I mean the smell of glue and new leather or synthetic, but most importantly and above all, I mean the inexplicable feeling of boundless joy and satisfaction when slipping into my "new" vintage sneakers for the very first time.

My lover and I are sitting in front of our house.

The house we had always dreamed of when we were still restless and young. We had achieved and found everything we had ever wanted and we had finally found our inner peace. We could tell from each other's eyes that we both felt complete happiness and calmness. She was still beautiful. Now, her beauty was that of a different kind. She radiated lightheartedness and balance. I could read from the wrinkles of her face all sadness she had experienced and all the losses she had been through. But now – at the end of our lives – we had both found something that our children and grandchildren had not found yet (but which they would find too with the coming of age).

My lover and I are sitting in front of our house, holding hands, watching the young ones play their restless games. We are now fulfilled with happiness.

SHORT STORY BY SARAH ZIEGLER

The room embraced her with a warm, dusty smell. She closed the bathroom door behind her and took a deep breath of the dense air which had become so common to her within the last twelve hours. She was alone. Nothing could be heard than the quiet creaking of the floor planking always when she moved. The air stood still and started to feel heavy and oppressive, but at the same it contributed to an atmosphere of meditation, quietness, solemnity. A motionless fly sat on the handle of the window as if to point out that it existed, but to open it and to let in the air of the cloudy morning and the distant noise of the street would seem like a sacrilege. Her breath went slower as if she would risk to breathe away the memories. A sudden sound made her cringe, but it was only a drop that fell from her wet hair and left miraculous patterns in the dust on the floor. She wrapped the towel tighter around her naked body. Looking around, she noticed for the first time the blank light bulbs at the ceiling and the wooden shelves which made the impression that they had not been used for a long, long time. She shivered in the warm air and the insecurity that she had laid off with her clothes when she had entered the apartment flashed through her mind. It was not induced by the dirt on the floor, the stains on the ceiling or the persistent light smell of people who breathed and laughed and loved, a smell that changed the dusty smell of a room which did not tell its visitor if and how long it had been abandoned to the smell of a room in which something has happened, without any sign that it may happen

again. It was the fact that nothing in this room told anything about its past or its future, no books revealed the thoughts of its inhabitant, no food indicated that someone would come back, no piece of paper told about a plan or a purpose.

She walked to the bed, slowly, quietly, and sat down on the mattress that did still hold the warmth of her own body. The bed was the only piece of furniture in the room that did not appear empty, abandoned, lifeless. When she removed the blanket, she found some reassuring signs of the fact that she had not always been the only living person in this apartment and that the events in her memories were not as far away as they seemed. There was some worn-out women's underwear – she remembered how she chose it before leaving her house, being sure that no one would get to see it besides herself – as well as some socks, socks that did not belong to her and that made her smile when she took them up and caressed them tenderly. A used condom fell out of the sheets and on her feet. She glanced at the bedside table. It was empty like everything else in the room, but without any dust and it had not been empty some hours before. A strong mental image arose in her mind, the image of a shiny black revolver that had carefully been placed on the table and that wasn't there anymore. For a second, her smile became painful at the thought of all the questions she had chosen not to ask, but it did not fade away. The air did not lose its heat, but she did not open a window: it was her

who would soon leave this apartment and not the world that would come in, the world with its sound and smell of a busy urban morning that did not belong here. Reality, just as her doubts, would never enter this room. Quietly, she took her underwear, the socks and the condom and hang them one by one on the brittle clothesline beneath the ceiling that had probably never been used before. Her eyes were shining when she put up this memorial of the previous night,

this obvious proof that the room was capable of accommodating other signs of life than the revolver being put down in the evening and picked up in the morning. She put on the rest of her clothes and before leaving the silent apartment, she took her Polaroid camera to take a photograph of the clothesline: a beautiful, calm and sad picture with dust on it, a reminder of the day she decided not to regret.

A KITSCHY LOVE POEM

by Marie-Kristin Kaiser

In the eye of the rose upon a unicorn's crown
You are my king, the only one.
For you I wear my favourite gown,
The one I wear when I wear none.

Hundred years I'll sleep for you,
Dream dreams of dreams, the dreams of you,
Awaiting the day when love comes true.

Search the woods till you find bread crumbs that show you the way,
the way to my heart, the way to stay.
Kill the witch if you must,
for I am the only one you can trust.

In the dark woods you might get weary,
The noises of enchanted souls, now swans and deer, seem eerie.
But be assured I hold you dear, my love for you, nothing to fear.

The wolves keep lusting for your flesh, just don't look back.
The thorns of the roses that grow beneath my tower,
Pray to the gods for might and power.

And once you found me sleeping in my gown,
Forget the darkness and stop the frown.
For in the eye of the rose upon a unicorn's crown
You are my king, the only one.

A PENTAGRAM FOR SELIM LEMOUCHI

by Marie-Kristin Kaiser

Brown is the earth
And brown were your eyes,
Yet you drowned in sweet demise.

Cold is the air,
Cold is your touch.
I believe you would not have appreciated me much.

The tunes of your soul sounded tender and whole.
Your sister's voice like a wave that through the oceans creep,
Sometimes make me laugh, sometimes make my weep.

Fire was in your art,
The fire of your burning heart.

Though now in the earth you lie
And rarely tears leave my eye.
The stars, the sun, the earth, the moon,
In you now all are in tune.

The air now warmer than before,
Devoured by some I don't adore.
Your spirit forever in the air,
the water, the rain and everywhere.

In the fire of every flame,
there burns thy name.
And in the wine that fills my cup,
Forever is THE DEVIL'S BLOOD.