

Dear ARTE editorial team,

we know a lot about you: For decades, ARTE has shown a pleasantly rich program on numerous screens. But: who are we, the directors\*? You obviously don't know what we need or want. There is hardly any other way of explaining your latest call for proposals, "Searching for female directors".

According to the dictionary, the term "**search**" means "the effort to find someone or something lost or hidden." But we are not hidden or lost. We present ourselves at film festivals, pitchings and screenings.

### **We are present!**

And now we should compete against each other in a show for you? We are to produce films free of charge that – if they win the competition – are shown on ARTE. The chosen ones should receive a license fee that has not yet been determined. In our experience, these payments don't even cover production costs.

Admittedly, we are used to pre-finance and having to prove ourselves. Before that, people – and too often women – rarely trust us. This time, too, some will get into the ring without pay.

### **But: We don't want to compete against each other. We are on strike!**

We also don't feel like having to explain ourselves and our womanhood! Women directors, but also male directors\*, can deal with topics regardless of their gender. In addition, modern feminism has been trying to break down binary gender categories for decades.

A little thought experiment: Imagine a competition for male directors on the subject of "Indescribably Male"! And? What do you see? Irritating, isn't it?

## Your appeal does not solve a structural problem, it reinforces it!

This structural problem is well known: the diversity report from 2018 (German) shows that women directors are not even close to being adequately represented in the film and television industry. And this even though more than 50% of the film school graduates are women.

“Why is this reality not showing up on the screens so far?” You ask. Good question! For 50 years, women\* have been studying at German film schools. They had to be content with low-budget projects and claim against the prejudice that women are not as creative as men.

You say you are looking forward to “lots of new talent”. Pay tribute to our talent with slots, not only **one** 52 minutes slot. In 2020 we also call for a concrete plan for the integration of BIPoCs, trans women\* and non-binary people.

The fact that there is currently not a single woman\* on the ARTE board or in the twelve-person general meeting seems like a bad joke. You want equality? Start right there. **We** are not responsible for resolving this structural problem for you.

## If you no longer want to miss our clever films and strong stories, tackle the structural change – also as a pioneer for other broadcasters!

Don't take a detour via a short film competition that has nothing to do with long broadcast slots. Approach it directly: Post pitchings for ARTE themed evenings and for the Grand Format. For all directors alike. Gender equality and the elimination of multiple discrimination start with the selection of the substances and the makers. That is YOUR job.

Dare to be at eye level: break the hierarchy between you and us! Understand this letter our approach towards you.

**You don't have to look for us. We were always there!**

Initiators: Annelie Boros, director and screenwriter, Lara Milena Brose, director, Vera Drude, director and screenwriter, Narges Kalhor, director and screenwriter, Laura Kansy, director and cameraperson, Sabrina Kleder, producer, Mara Molitor, filmmaker, Gisela Carbajal Rodríguez, director, Benedikt Schwarzer, screenwriter and director, Elizaveta Snagovskaia, director, Rebecca Zehr, director

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