

## BeyondBühne

Run free!

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BeyondBühne is a place where all young people can develop artistically. You are taken seriously here. You can come as you are. Run free! Since our founding in 2003, we've been a stage for the curious.

We developed rapidly: The starting 60 members soon turned to several hundred children and youths that create their own personal art through means of theatre, dance and film.

Soon we left the Austrian borders behind us: Our network covers over 70 youth theatres in more than 30 countries. Our members regularly travel afar, to work on art projects with others, and we invite youth groups to stay with us.

In 2017, our long-standing engagement was rewarded with the *Kulturpreis des Landes NÖ*.

The creative work in our groups is led by academically trained art pedagogues. Many voluntary workers lend their hand in different fields behind the stage: make-up, costumes, marketing, catering and many more. In addition, we work together with a professional light and sound team. All of them are in it with their whole hearts: **Passionately curious!**

*Everyone is exceptionally open-minded and we become friends so easily!* - Marlene H., 15

## Mission

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We want to nurture all people in their individual growth through the performing arts, so that they can act in a reflected, empathetic and responsible way.

As a central crossover point of our international network, we offer all our members the chance to exchange interculturally on the regular.

## Vision

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In 2024, more than 10% of our members will actively feedback the positive influence that BeyondBühne has had on their personal growth.

*I trust the people here and that helps to express the feelings that I have deep inside. That's what I like so much about BeyondBühne.* - Marlene Anais T., 10

## Values

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We treat everyone that enters our rehearsal space without prejudice. It doesn't matter if they come from a long line of actresses and actors or if they've never stepped foot on stage - they're always welcome with us. Whether they want to try out acting, dancing or film-making, or they want to invest into their class with all their heart. It's not experiences or skills that count here, but curiosity and the ideas of the youths themselves. We don't cast, we develop our roles and plays ourselves.

All our members are supported by experienced art pedagogues, that help the groups develop their own ideas. Our belief: There's nothing you cannot do. Everyone can create art.

### **We take children and youths seriously as creators of art.**

Art is always in the eye of the beholder. We consciously behold the creations of our members. Theatre, dance, film - we do not fear to call their contemporary creations by their name: Art. It might irritate some people or they might not understand, but it shows our claim to critically deal with current events. Young people use their own language and we respect that, because it ensures that they fully express themselves and convey their messages.

*For a long time, I struggled with my own definition of home. But at BeyondBühne, I've always felt at home, even though I hadn't thought about the why. Now I do know - it's the safe environment while being creative, the feeling of safety when making art, the kind, appreciative people that accompany me, the freedom to be, the knowledge to be welcome and that there's no wrong or right.*  
- Zoe P., 17

## Method

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BeyondBühne recognised the principles of cultural education as the best way to holistically nurture young people. Our focus lies in the fields of theatre, dance and film, that oftentimes meld together in practice. Through the means of the performing arts, our members discover both their interests and potential.

Within a yearly course, the plays are developed in small groups and in the end performed on stage. The children and youths are encouraged to come up with themes that are important to them or they interpret predetermined ideas themselves. Aesthetically pleasing forms of expression are found through playful improvisation and workshop-like experimentation, leading to an artistic outcome that's selfmade and unique.

### **Empowerment!**

We see BeyondBühne as a place of experimentation for young people. Our work is meant to kindle the courage in youngsters to experiment with art and develop their own ideas. For this kind of work, it is important for the pedagogues to see these creation processes as something to be protected. The creative process is also the prerequisite for the mediation of decision-making. The framework for this varies depending on the process. We create a room for inspiration, but also clear structures and focusings in a predefined time frame. Our major focus lies on experiencing social relations, on keeping an appreciative approach and on trusting the people involved in the process, as well as on learning to deal with the spontaneous. This enables the children and youths involved to reach democratic, eye-level decisions.

Another important aspect of our work lies in the mediation of autonomy, as the young people take initiative in their creative work and their experimentation. The group situation mobilises the ability to be creative and it often leads to innovative solutions. The help and feedback of our pedagogues makes our members feel safe and raises their appetite for risk in their art. The youngsters can show their potential in this safe environment and learn to acknowledge their boundaries.

The children and youths learn to creatively utilise insecurities and complexities, to work cooperatively in heterogeneous groups as well as experience their self-efficacy. It is those abilities that help them to stand out and persist in a time where knowledge is easily accessible online.

*The thing I like most here, is the way that we approach things here. We develop our plays in a creative process where every member of the group is encouraged to bring in their own ideas. There's not a single person making the decisions, but the whole group is involved. - Bernhard S., 23*