

Ulrich Wegenast leaves Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH (Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film, Raumwelten Ludwigsburg ...)

Press release, 13 July 2022

Prof. Ulrich Wegenast is leaving Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH (FMF) after 17 years as Managing Director. At his own request, he will end his employment at FMF on 15 September to take on a new professional challenge and has asked the FMF supervisory board to terminate his contract prematurely. The supervisory board complies with this request and thanks Prof. Wegenast for his many years of service as Artistic Managing Director of FMF.

Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH organises, among other events, the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film (ITFS) and Raumwelten – Platform for Scenography, Architecture and Media in Ludwigsburg/Stuttgart.

In his time as Artistic Managing Director, Wegenast established the ITFS Open Air Cinema on Stuttgart's Schlossplatz (from 2006) together with his colleague as Commercial Managing Director at the time, Dittmar Lump. Moreover, together with Vincent Ferri, former manager of MIFA in Annecy, he founded the Animation Production Days in 2006, which have since become the most important event for animation production in German-speaking countries and take place during ITFS.

On Wegenast's initiative, the GameZone has been taking place as part of ITFS since 2013, exploring the intersection of computer games and animated film as well as bringing the subject of games in the classroom to the fore.

During the coronavirus crisis, ITFS was the first animation festival in the world to be held exclusively on the internet, setting new standards in the online presence of film festivals.

ITFS is one of the largest animation film festivals worldwide and one of four Oscar-qualifying festivals in Germany. It reaches an audience of up to 100,000 and receives over 2,000 (film and project) submissions per year.

Since 2012, Wegenast has also been developing the conference "Raumwelten – Platform for Scenography, Architecture and Media", which takes place in Ludwigsburg and Stuttgart and is the leading event for spatial communication in Germany.

Dr. Walter Rogg:

"As Chairman of the Supervisory Board, I have accompanied Prof. Ulrich Wegenast in his 17 years as Managing Director and thank him and the entire team on behalf of the supervisory board and the associates for spectacular festivals of international acclaim and the creation of further significant formats. Ulrich Wegenast has made a great contribution to the development of our location for film and media."

Lord Mayor Dr. Matthias Knecht, Ludwigsburg:

"Prof. Ulrich Wegenast has created considerable attention in the Stuttgart region with several series of events. In Ludwigsburg, in particular, he has succeeded in making a magnificent mark with the Lichtwolke at Raumwelten. With his courageous, artistic eye and his sense for exciting development potential, he has opened up new paths in animated film, scenography and architecture. For this, the City of Ludwigsburg is very grateful to him."

First Mayor Dr Fabian Mayer, Stuttgart:

"The ITFS Open Air Cinema on Stuttgart's Schlossplatz is a highlight in the event calendar for many thousand people in Stuttgart and for international guests, and an important showcase for our city. We are strongly committed to film and media and thank Prof. Wegenast for his important work and support over many years; we wish him all the best in his new role."

Ulrich Wegenast:

"I would like to thank our Supervisory Board Chairman Dr. Walter Rogg and my colleague, Commercial Managing Director Dieter Krauß, who was already given his farewell into retirement (starting in autumn) at ITFS 2022, for the good and trusting cooperation. I owe a lot to the entire FMF team and at this point would like to make special mention of my colleague Andrea Bauer, Head of Programme, who I worked with intensively for many years. My time at FMF was fascinating and successful, but also – especially during the time of the coronavirus – very challenging. The ITFS is a 'jewel' in the German festival scene with a high international reputation and charisma, and Raumwelten has developed into the most important event for scenography in the German-speaking regions over the last ten years."

Ulrich Wegenast will remain with the Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH in an advisory capacity for the next few months.

Vita Prof. Ulrich Wegenast

Ulrich Wegenast, born in 1966, studied history and art history at the University of Stuttgart and completed postgraduate studies in cultural and media management at the Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" Berlin. From 1987-2006 he was a founding and board member of Wand 5 e.V.

(Stuttgarter Filmwinter – Festival for Expanded Media) and from 1993-2005 programme consultant at the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film and the Ludwigsburg European Short Film Biennale. Since November 2005 he has been Artistic Managing Director of Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH (Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film, Raumwelten – Platform for Scenography, Architecture and Media).

From 2005-2013 he was a member of Goethe-Institut's programme advisory board for film, television and radio. From 2005-2015 he was head of the department of media studies and a board member at Freie Kunstakademie Nürtingen/FKBW. Since 2012 he has been an honorary professor for Expanded Animation at Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf. He has been a consultant and author for Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Filmfest München and documenta Veranstaltungs GmbH, among others. In 2012 he received the Willi Haas Award for the best DVD edition in German-speaking regions for "Geschichte des deutschen Animationsfilms". He is a founding member of AG Kurzfilm and AG Filmfestivals.

He has given around 250 lectures and workshops in Germany and abroad on animation, film, scenography, games, and cultural management, including at the University of Toronto, Harvard University, ARS Electronica Linz, Festival d'Animation Annecy, Bangkok Culture Center, Chicago Cultural Center, Nanyang University Singapore, Nanjing University of the Arts, KASK Gent, Goethe-Zentrum Harare.

About Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH

The non-profit company Film- und Medienfestival gGmbH (FMF) based in Stuttgart and has been successfully implementing its public mission since 2000 by organising top-class creative event formats in the Stuttgart region. Its tasks and objectives are the promotion of high-quality media content, the creative conception and professional realization of outstanding film and media events, and thus to strengthen the creative industries in the Stuttgart region.

FMF acts on behalf of the company' associates: the City of Stuttgart, Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (for the State of Baden-Württemberg), and the City of Ludwigsburg. Since its foundation, FMF has built up a broad portfolio of events. Their largest event is the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film (ITFS) which takes place at the end of April/ beginning May of each year. It is one of the world's largest animation festivals and evolved into a crowd puller and must-go for professionals thanks to its programme, numerous (Oscar-qualifying) competitions, and its intersections with other disciplines such as games and music, art, and science.

Animation Production Days (APD) takes place in parallel with ITFS. It is the most important German co-production and financing market for animation and is organised by FMF in cooperation with the FMX Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Immersive Media. With the special combination of film festival, specialist conference and financing market, the events have become a unique platform for the financing and development of animation projects and attract up to 6,000 professional visitors to Stuttgart every year.

The second highlight of the FMF is Raumwelten – Platform for Scenography, Architecture and Media, Germany's leading industry event for spatial communication, which takes place annually in November in Ludwigsburg and Stuttgart. Here visitors and the general public can learn, by means of workshops, panels, and keynote lectures, how space can become an experience in a holistic way and how to create exciting connections between digital media and real space.

In addition, FMF is also co-organising the NaturVision Filmfestival, Germany's oldest and largest film festival on nature, wildlife and the environment which takes place in Ludwigsburg.

Download Photo Ulrich Wegenast:

https://www.itfs.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Portrait_Wegenast_DSC1702-1024x682.jpg

Credit: ITFS/Reiner Pfisterer

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