



56. Internationales Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg

Farewell to Fee Vaillant

Obituary by her successor Dr. Michael Kötz

Fee Vaillant, Director of the International Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg 1973-1991, has died

Mannheim-Heidelberg, 5. November 2007 ---

As the International Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg has come to know only now, Fee Vaillant, who was the artistic director of the Festival between 1973 to 1991, passed away two weeks ago at the age of 93. She died when Fee Vaillant's former "International Film Week Mannheim" took place on its former date in October, now known to be the "International Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg".

Michael Kötz, Fee Vaillant's successor and the festival's artistic director since 1991:

„She decisively and, if necessary, rigorously took care of the festival throughout many years and she fostered its international reputation of being a forum for the young, creative and often politically inconvenient filmmakers from around the world. Without this fundament, the festival's importance is not imaginable.“

"Tireless Fee Vaillant", "Fee Vaillant, cineaste" and "Mother Courage of German cinema": this is how she is known in Mannheim and in the whole world, even today. Her energy and resolution is legendary. Even at an early stage, everything revolves around film for the trained photographer, born on 20th March 1915 in Witten on the Ruhr. She gets involved with the "Association of German Film Clubs", founded in 1949, and becomes its treasurer in 1961. As a co-organiser of the Mannheim Film Week, she arranges retrospectives for the festival and obtains films for the competition programme, sometimes under adventurous circumstances. After the death of the then film week director, Walter Talmon-Gros, she takes over responsibility for the entire programme in 1973 (together with Hanns Maier). Soon after this she is the artistic director of the festival, for nearly two decades.

A precise cinematic awareness of quality and tireless work round-the-clock associated her to a second person, to Rainer Werner Fassbinder, whose first full-length feature film, "Katzelmacher", was presented by Fee Vaillant in the competition of the Mannheim Film Week, and who was a good friend of hers. To Rainer Werner Fassbinder is attributed the phrase which in turn links him to Fee Vaillant: "I can get plenty of sleep when I'm dead".

Michael Kötz: „That's what she does now and whatever her gravestone might look like, somewhere in Hilden, her actual monument is as alive as was this wonderful person Fee Vaillant and it returns each year in the shape of the Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg.“

For further information

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