

PICTURE TREE INTERNATIONAL
PRESENTS



The *DEIX* movie


Snotty Boy

Petit Moutard

My life in
Siegheilkirchen



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Original title: ROTZBUB
Genre: Animation
Length: 86
Country of Origin: Austria, Germany
Language: German

Directors: Santiago López Jover, Marcus H. Rosenmüller
Production company: Aichholzer Filmproduktion, Filmbüro Münchner Freiheit
Animation director: Santiago López Jover
Art director: Manfred Deix (†)
Screenplay: Martin Ambrosch
Script editor: Roland Zag
Music: Gerd Baumann
Film Editing: Philipp Bittner
Producers: Josef Aichholzer, Ernst Geyer
Co-producers: Josef Reidinger, Antonio Exacoustos
World sales:: Picture Tree International



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Short Synopsis

In 1960s Sieghelkirchen, a small town in the Austrian hinterland that is steeped in reactionary, ultra-Catholic attitudes, the son of a hard-working innkeeper – known as Snotty Boy to all and sundry – is at odds with the narrow-minded confines of his home town. But his unstoppable talent for drawing gives him an outlet for his discontent as well as entertaining his school mates and exposing the town's bigwigs in all their ridiculousness to a collective orgy of unashamed laughter, thus saving his beloved, the ravishingly pretty Mariolina, from malicious persecution by a handful of political die-hards.

A politically incorrect and funny animation, based on the life and work of illustrator and cartoonist Manfred Deix.



Siegheilkirchen is pure hell. Everything is narrow: hearts, minds, and trousers. Lardy bigots and desperate die-hard Nazis rule the roost, from school to the tavern. The gendarme (Armin Assinger) goes about his duties in a state of intoxication, the parish priest (Jurgen Maurer) is a violent bully, and barber Kurz (Thomas Stipsits) would like to be the new Führer. We're in small-town 1960s Austria. The landlord (Gregor Seberg) might have lost an arm in the war but he has a gifted son. Yes, he can certainly draw, the Snotty Boy (Markus Freistätter) – a fact that comes to the notice of his Uncle Neidhardt (Wolfgang Böck) when he discovers his nephew's artful nudes, which are being used by the whole of the male population of Siegheilkirchen to beat the meat. A trained artist, Neidhardt is commissioned by the mayor (Karl Fischer) to freshen up the town mural, originally painted during the Nazi era. Snotty Boy gets to assist him when his mother (Susi Stach) allows this foray into the realms of high art. The main thing for her son is that he learns book-keeping on the side – and keeps his eyes and drawing pencil away from busy butcher's assistant Trude (Katharina Straßer). But the drudgery of mixing paints doesn't make life any more colourful. The only real highlights in his drab existence are the provoca-

tive looks he gets from Mariolina (Gerti Drassl), who together with her Mama (Adele Neuhauser) and family has recently set up camp at a safe distance from the town boundary. The Roma travellers are thrown out of his father's tavern as the sensibilities of the regulars take priority, but at Poldi's (Roland Düringer) Espresso Jessy everyone is served. Even Snotty Boy gets a beer (one too many in fact), and there's even a jukebox. Standing at the bar, under the benevolent eye of Old Marek (Erwin Steinhauer), he draws tender portraits of Mariolina. But soon the drawings are nicked by the enterprising Spotface (Mario Canedo) and his artless side-kick Grasberger to be sold to all and sundry as jerk-off material. Even before anything can flower between the two, Mariolina is mightily pissed off at him. And then barber Kurz and his troop start to build a bomb, intending to 'cleanse' the town, a project that ends up having completely the opposite effect. And in the end, while the good Lord can't let brains rain down from heaven to cure the general stupidity, he dispenses something else that fits Siegheilkirchen down to the ground... But this much we know: there are good times ahead for the Snotty Boy. Because one day he'll become Manfred Deix. And Mariolina looks as if she just might forgive him.

Long Synopsis



Preface

Gottfried Helnwein on Manfred Deix

If as Michelangelo claims that the true work of art is “nothing but a shadow of divine perfection” (*La vera opera d'arte non è che un'ombra della perfezione divina*), then Deix with his art presents us with unsparing evidence to the contrary, showing us that the creator's work abounds in mistakes, embarrassments and blunders. Thank God, it must be said, for if God were perfect we'd have little to laugh about, and it was Deix who helped us to the important understanding that the Creation is absurd and that God is the greatest humorist of them all.

The film *Rotzbub (Snotty Boy)* is a fantastical fairytale describing the stultifying atmosphere of a small, Lower Austrian town in the 1950s, where the astonishing career of this gifted caricaturist had its beginnings.

A backward world of philistines, Nazis and prepubescent boys, their minds addled by the first stirrings of lustfulness, but also of the first encounter between the gifted inn-keeper's son and the beautiful Roma girl that will grow into a lifelong love.

about Gottfried Helnwein

Helnwein is one of the most famous but also most controversial post-war artists in the German-speaking world. He is best-known for his hyperrealist images of wounded and bandaged children. His oeuvre explores the themes of pain, violation and violence, touching on taboo subjects and emotive issues from the recent past.

He was close friends with Manfred Deix from the age of sixteen. In 1968 he and his friend walked from Venice to Vienna, going without food or sleep for several days.



Manfred Deix

Toothless, tame caricature that pulls its punches makes no sense to me. I've often been accused of tastelessness and brutal humour. Who if not a satirist is entitled to call a spade a spade?

Like no other Austrian artist, the cartoonist Manfred Deix provoked and shocked people, shaking the foundations of social taboos. Following a serious illness he died at the age of 67 on 25 June 2016. His wife Marietta and their twenty-three cats were with him to the last. Deix had celebrated his sixty-seventh birthday on 22 February 2016.

Born on 22 February 1949, Manfred Deix grew up in the regional capital of St Pölten and the small town of Böheimkirchen. In his early years he studied the farmers and labourers who frequented his parents' tavern, drawing his first caricatures. 'Serving as a twelve-year-old in my parents' tavern, I had the privilege of experiencing people at close quarters. They were largely so-called "little people" who drank at our tavern. They would stand at the bar in their overalls, drinking their pints of beer or glasses of wine, talking about all sorts of things, from politics and work to women, telling smutty jokes, laughing or quarrelling about trivialities, and of course they had no idea that they were being mercilessly observed and listened to

by the keen-eyed boy behind the counter. The others sat at the tables and had themselves brought packs of cards, plates of goulash or beer, heading off towards midnight without leaving even a penny as a tip. In revenge I turned them into the Deix figures that have meanwhile become famous, giving them a questionable notoriety. Crimes deserve punishment.' Deix's charting of the depths and shallows of the Austrian soul began in the early 1970s. In his verse and drawings Deix levelled criticism at social compulsions, xenophobia and hypocrisy. Politicians were unsparingly scrutinized, the air-kiss celebrity world with its vanities unmasked, and even the Church with its 'ground crew' (sic!) was the target of his mockery. Detached from their erstwhile political topicality, Deix's works have long become works of art. Classics of Austrian satire, they have gone on to set a style. They allow a special insight into the thought processes and favourite subjects of an artist who trod his own resolute, unwavering path.

The artist behind the film
Manfred Deix



Markus H. Rosenmüller

Born in Tegernsee, Bavaria in 1973, Markus H. Rosenmüller studied at the University of Television and Film Munich (HFF München), shooting his graduation film Hotel Deepa in Pune, India. Rosenmüller made his feature film debut as director with *WER FRÜHER STIRBT IST LÄNGER TOT* (2006, *GRAVE DECISIONS*). This comedy about a mischievous boy from Upper Austria and his fear of purgatory drew cinema audiences of nearly two million in Germany. In 2011 Rosenmüller's *SOMMER IN ORANGE*, a comedy about a group of Berlin Bhagwan devotees who move to a small provincial village in Upper Bavaria, hit the cinema screens. Rosenmüller had an international success with the feature film *TRAUTMANN* (2018 *THE KEEPER*), which David Kross played the role of the legendary German Manchester City goalkeeper Bert Trautmann. From 2020 Julia von Heinz and Marcus H. Rosenmüller have shared the chair in feature and TV film at the HFF München. *ROTZBUB* is the first animated movie that Markus has directed.

Santiago López Jover

Santiago López Jover (Valencia, November 28, 1980) is a director, animator, story-board artist and animation supervisor with more than fifteen years of experience in the animation industry. For several years he worked as an animator in the acclaimed Irish studio Car-toon Saloon, participating in the Oscar nominated projects *SONG OF THE SEA* and *LATE AFTERNOON* among others. He has also worked in other important European studios such as Ankama, Boulder Media, Hampa Studio and Arxanima. *A HOLOGRAM FOR THE KING* with Tom Hanks, and *THE PROPHET* by Roger Allers are also notable productions in his CV as an animation professional. Having obtained a degree in Fine Arts, his training includes two master's degrees in traditional animation and stop-motion, and various courses taught by prestigious international professionals such as Joanna Quinn, Alan Barillaro, Sergio Pablos and Jose Miguel Ribeiro.

The Directors



*Interview with producer
Josef Aichholzer*

How did the project come about?

Ernst Geyer, a fellow-producer from Munich, and I paid a visit to Manfred Deix and said: 'Manfred, your cartoons, your figures, your people enchant not just us but many, many people, and we think it would be great if they came to life and started moving.' At first Manfred hesitated, then said: 'So how would you do that?', and then we showed him what it would look like if his two-dimensional figures suddenly turned into people, solid bodies that move and walk independently without him having to draw and write anything in addition. From that moment on he was full of enthusiasm for the project. Then there was a lengthy process before the story was ready. Funding went relatively smoothly and quickly. Compared to an analogue film we were plunging in at the deep end, because in Austria we hadn't had any real experience with making an animated film of over 90 minutes. That ended up taking years.

The film tackles many large subjects of Deix's, and his criticism of society – everyday racism, the way Austria's Nazi past continued to affect post-war society, the overbearing influence of the Church. How were all these themes compressed into the film?

Again I can only start with Manfred himself, whom I got to know very well. After all, we lived with this project together for ten years before he died. He was a great entertainer and remained a child all his life. This child in him saw something with a child's eyes, voiced it and then put it down on paper as a drawing. The child's eyes tell what everybody sees but what grown-ups then don't dare to name and later forget to name. And that's what these themes are: the themes from life at the time when Manfred Deix was growing up. The time when the Second World War was over, after the post-war reconstruction began and a kind of suffocating dome of secrecy and silence hung over Austria: the past was not talked about. Nobody talked about how it could have come to us walking into this dark hole, persecuting the Jews, looking away, always 'not there when it happened'. Those are the themes that he commented on – not in the manner of an investigative journalist nailing the topics of the day to his masthead – by observing people looking away in everyday life. It was this habit of looking away, averting one's gaze, especially in the provincial towns and villages, where patriarchal structures predominated and women were not welcome in public life. There's a brief scene in the film where Mariolina's mother comes into the tavern as a matter of course because she simply wants to treat herself to a glass of wine after work, and then men stare at her and say, 'what's a woman doing in here?'. Those are the themes that he experienced day

in, day out, and captured in his drawings. He knew there was something wrong with the notions that women should get back into the kitchen, that people from elsewhere – strangers, foreigners – should be sent away. He knew that a Church that swept everything under the carpet (or rather cassock), shouldn't exist in that form, because it did harm, and also that political issues should not be solved in a way that wasn't always in the best interests of society. That there's a teacher who bullies children, and a burgomaster who in an outwardly god-fearing town likes to run after young girls while talking about piety.

Let's talk briefly about the contents of SNOTTY BOY.

The story's inspired by what made Manfred Deix into Manfred Deix, without being a biopic of Manfred Deix. In this respect it's the story of a shy fourteen-year-old who grows up in a small staid provincial town and realizes that while he has family and friends there, his true home is where his drawing pencils are. There his life is secure, that's where he can discover the world. He falls in love for the first time in his life with a young girl who's a stranger in the town and is given to know that he's done something wrong, 'because one is not allowed to fall in love with a foreigner'. He realizes that the bigwigs in the town want to get rid of these people. Everything rebels in him, because he wants to save his beloved from harm. He takes out his pencil and shows the people as they really are. That's when he becomes Manfred Deix and in doing so saves Mariolina, also saving, so to speak, the soul of the town.

In a way, the Snotty Boy is a prime example of a rebel; the film is a declaration of love to rebellion. It's the coming-of-age story of an artist and a declaration of

love to the attitude that one should never let oneself be oppressed, that one should always be true to oneself.

I was young in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Back then as children we always heard the prototypical comment from the grown-ups: 'What will the neighbours say?' That's exactly what happens to the Snotty Boy – his mother tells him, 'don't do anything wrong, anything dirty, don't be cheeky, be good, just as the authorities want you to be'. That's the story that's being told here: dare to feel what you feel, dare to see what you see, dare to do what you want to do – in that respect it is a story of doing what one wants to do, against the resistance from powers that want you to submit. And – as he falls in love – it's a declaration of love to love itself.

Which is all quite close to the truth ...

It is quite close to the true story. At the end of the day the story of Manfred and Marietta Deix resulted in a wonderful partnership that lasted a lifetime. They went through thick and thin together, until Manfred Deix's death; they were like two polar opposites who held fast to one another.

What's your personal connection to Deix's work?

There is one person I cherish above all others in my remembrance – and that's Manfred. I often sat with him in the pub and always so enjoyed the way he could imagine his way into stories and fall about laughing like a small child over some little thing – sometimes on highly official occasions.

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