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CANNES 2023 Competition Review: *Club Zero*

by [MARTA BAŁAGA](#)

23/05/2023 - CANNES 2023: Jessica Hausner mocks and shocks in a satire that's going to leave you starving



Mia Wasikowska in *Club Zero*

Jessica Hausner mocks and shocks in her new film [Club Zero](#) [+], one that finally drew some gasps from the tired, resigned audience at the [Cannes Film Festival](#), where it has screened in competition. But her satire isn't really there to disgust or repel – it's a colder, more restrained kind of story that takes its time, just like its leads: a group of kids who decide to stop eating.

It's not what they initially set out to do. Their parents, who are already paying a lot for their international boarding school, want them to try "conscious eating". The kind of theory that, as advertised by its polite guru (**Mia Wasikowska**), can pretty much save the world and the environment, and turn you into a better, healthier human being. All you need to do is to eat very slowly, to pay attention to every bite and how your body

responds to it. But then the kids start “making progress” and all non-believers are out.

In *Club Zero*, Hausner constantly jumps from terrible to hilarious – it’s a wonder that a film this disturbing also manages to be entertaining. It’s easy to reject because of its utter weirdness, but despite all the playful exaggerations and constant tea drinking, it ultimately talks about something very real. Just like in, say, the Finnish horror *Hatching* [+], eating disorders are all over this story. Kids do it because they want to control their bodies. Hell – even their elegant parents do it. For one mother and daughter, not eating, just nibbling at their pretty plate, is an act of bonding. It’s funny how timely *Club Zero* feels, especially after Gwyneth Paltrow’s comments about “a nice intermittent fast” before a bone-broth lunch left people reeling.

And still, the obsession with diets, with cleanses, with having a “clean” body continues. Here, it even makes it all the way into a school. That’s what makes it so terrifying. If something is taught in a class, if it’s allowed by the principal (**Sidse Babett Knudsen**), it can’t be just some weird cult, right? Even though, admittedly, its final goal is properly bonkers – according to Wasikowska’s Novak, a proud member of “club zero” herself, there’s a growing number of people who don’t eat at all. Ever. Again, it’s good for everyone – it can pretty much save the world and the environment, and turn you into a better, healthier human being. Others won’t get it, but that’s part of the charm. Scary? You bet.

Club Zero was written by Jessica Hausner and **Géraldine Bajard**. It was produced by **Coop99 – Filmproduktion** (Austria), together with **Coproduction Office Limited** (France) and **Essential Filmproduktion GmbH** (Germany). Its international sales are handled by **Coproduction Office**.

Photogallery 22/05/2023: Cannes 2023 - *Club Zero*

22 pictures available. Swipe left or right to see them all.



Jessica Hausner, Elsa Zylberstein, Amir El-Masry, Mia Wasikowska, Mathieu Demy, Luke Barker

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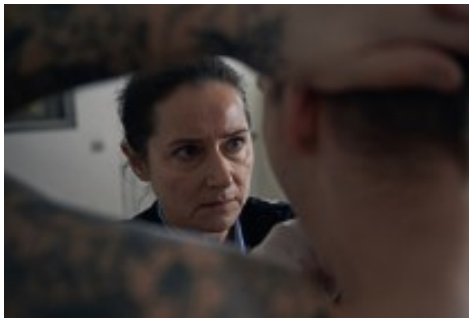
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Jessica Hausner's *Club Zero* begins shooting with Mia Wasikowska and Sidse Babett Knudsen in tow

The "intense psychological drama", set at an elite co-educational school, is currently filming in Oxford and will later move to Austria ▶

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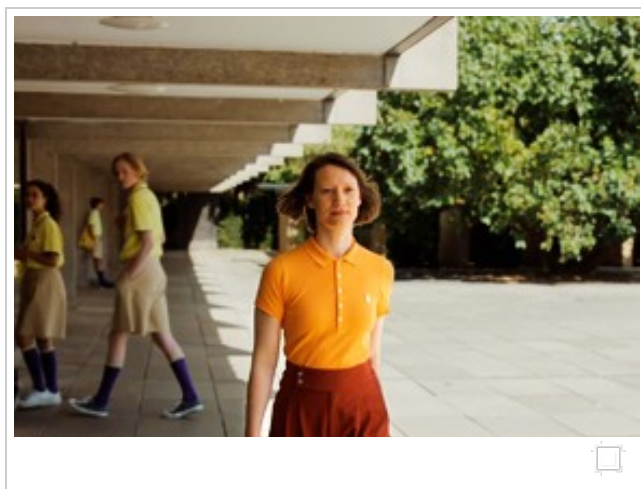
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trailers & videos

international title: Club Zero

original title: Club Zero

country: [Austria](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Germany](#), [France](#), [Denmark](#)

sales agent: [Coproduction Office](#)

year: 2023

directed by: [Jessica Hausner](#)

screenplay: [Jessica Hausner](#), [Géraldine Bajard](#)

cast: [Mia Wasikowska](#), [Sidse Babbett Knudsen](#), [Sam Hoare](#), [Camilla Rutherford](#), [Amanda Lawrence](#), [Elsa Zylberstein](#), [Amir El-Masry](#), [Keeley Forsyth](#), [Mathieu Demy](#), [Szandra Asztalos](#)

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