



# BR EA KING THE ICE

EIN FILM VON **CLARA STERN**

**MIT:** ALINA SCHALLER, JUDITH ALTENBERGER, TOBIAS RESCH, PIA HIERZEGGER, WOLFGANG BÖCK

**REGIE, DREHBUCH:** CLARA STERN **KAMERA:** JOHANNES HOSS

**SZENENBILD:** CHRISTINE DOSCH, JULIA OBERNDORFINGER

**KOSTÜMBILD:** CAROLA PIZZINI **MASKE:** REGINA BREITFELLNER

**DRAMATURGIE:** WOLFGANG WIDERHOFER **SCHNITT:** MATTHIAS WRITZE **CASTING:** LISA OLÁH

**TON:** NORA CZAMLER **MUSIK:** BENEDIKT PALIER **SOUNDDESIGN:** LENJA GATHMANN

**TONMISCHUNG:** ALEXANDER KOLLER **GRADING:** BERNHARD SCHLICK

**PRODUKTIONSLEITUNG:** GERHARD HANNAK **HERSTELLUNGSLEITUNG:** MICHAEL KITZBERGER

**PRODUZENTEN:** MICHAEL KITZBERGER, WOLFGANG WIDERHOFER,  
NIKOLAUS GEYRHALTER, MARKUS GLASER

EINE PRODUKTION DER **NGF GEYRHALTERFILM**



# BREAKING THE ICE

A FILM BY CLARA STERN

2022 - Austria - Drama - 2.39 - 102 min

**INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

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## **CREW**

Director, Script	Clara Stern
Photography	Johannes Hoss
Sound	Nora Czamlar
Set Design	Christine Dosch
	Julia Oberndorfinger
Costume Design	Carola Pizzini
Makeup Design	Regina Breitfellner
Dramaturgical advise	Wolfgang Widerhofer
Editing	Matthias Writze
Casting	Lisa Oláh
Music	Benedikt Palier
Sound Design	Lenja Gathmann
Sound Mixing	Alexander Koller
Grading	Bernhard Schlick
Production Management	Gerhard Hannak
Executive Producer	Michael Kitzberger
Producers	Michael Kitzberger, Wolfgang Widerhofer Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Markus Glaser
Production	NGF - Nikolaus Geyrhalter Filmproduktion GmbH
With support of	Österreichisches Filminstitut Filmfonds Wien ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen FISA - Filmstandort Austria Land Niederösterreich

## **MAIN CAST**

Alina Schaller  
Judith Altenberger  
Tobias Resch  
Pia Hierzegger  
Wolfgang Böck

# BREAKING THE ICE



## SYNOPSIS

Mira, in her early 20s, escapes from the pressure of running her family's vineyard by playing ice hockey. When new player Theresa joins the team, she challenges Mira's rigid worldview, leading to life-changing nights on the streets of Vienna.

## **DIRECTORS' STATEMENT**

In films, I like stories and characters that unfold bit by bit, gradually revealing their world(s), with all their flaws, desires and facets.

Like all of us, Mira, the main character, does not have just one role to play in life: Mira is a professional ice hockey player and the captain of the team Dragons; Mira is a winegrower and works in the family business together with her mother and her grandfather, who is increasingly suffering from dementia.

Mira responds to the daily challenges of life by being tough on herself, being disciplined and not allowing herself any emotions. Mira doesn't have a world of her own, she hardly feels her loneliness, because she is too busy to live up to other people's expectations.

But things change when Theresa joins the team. And life changes when Mira's brother shows up and becomes part of her life again. Suddenly Mira's life is filled with light, colours, an exciting nightlife and new (gender) roles. In Mira's vigorous search for herself, things might and must break.

Breaking the Ice is an emotional story told in dynamic pictures: movements, contrasts, colours. Liberating adventures at night; the fast-paced, hard sport on the ice; the cold and the wind when Mira works in the vineyard.

My film is about taking control over one's own life. About enjoying life and letting loose, being true to oneself and letting go of other people's expectations. It's also about family and the speechlessness within the family. And the close ties that are there in a family, regardless. It's about team spirit and solidarity. It's about how we want to live together.

It's about equality. In life and in sports. It's about playing with and breaking up gender roles.

It's about recognising and admitting love. And maybe letting it go again.

What do we need to break the ice? To have the courage to make us vulnerable and to be ourselves? What does it take for us to have the confidence to trust?





## **PRODUCER'S NOTE**

We are always looking for directors with a signature style, who view the world with true interest and respect. And so Clara Stern's short film MATHIAS impressed us with its bold narrative and resolute images. That's why we were keen on producing her first feature-length film.

BREAKING THE ICE gives its characters a lot of room to develop and is full of faith in community, tolerance and courage. Clara sends her main character Mira on a journey of family conflicts and combative ice hockey matches until she recognises her own possibilities. The plot is both dramatically intense and playfully light.

We are delighted to present so many new, young faces on the screen: Alina Schaller, Judith Altenberger, Tobias Resch and last but not least, the amazing ice hockey women who play in the best teams in Austria. The cast also includes two big names in Austrian cinema: Pia Hierzegger and Wolfgang Böck. The film is set against the magnificent backdrop of Vienna and its surroundings, between vineyards and nightlife and pulse-quickenning ice hockey matches.

It wouldn't have been possible to produce BREAKING THE ICE without the wonderful and dedicated team that worked hard to realise Clara Stern's first feature-length film. Thanks to each and every one of them.





323



## CLARA STERN BIOGRAPHY

Screenwriter, Director; Born 1987 in Vienna, Austria.

To look at movies only from a theoretical point of view (Theatre, Film and Media Studies in Vienna and Utrecht, Netherlands) was at some point not enough, not anymore. In order to learn how to tell stories on my own I studied at the Film Academy Vienna, first Screenwriting (with Professor Götz Spielmann), then after two years applied again, this time for Directing (with professors Wolfgang Murnberger and Michael Haneke). Finished both.



After several short films, BREAKING THE ICE is my first feature film.

I want to make movies that entertain and move emotionally, shake you up and leave you yearning. I focus on feminist topics as well as on socio-critical and -political topics.

## AWARDS (Selection)

**2020**

**IF SHE CAN SEE IT SHE CAN BE IT Screenplay Competition** Award, held by the Austrian Screenwriters Guild and the Austrian Film Institute with Money or Life (Exposé for a feature film; co-authorship with Johannes Hoss)

**2018**

**Austrian Academy Award** for **MATHIAS** (30 minutes, fiction, co-writer and director)  
Main award **Carl-Mayer-Screenplay Award** of the city of Graz, Austria, for Working Ghosts (treatment for a feature film, co-authorship with Johannes Hoss)

**2017**

**Diagonale Award Best Short Fiction Film 2017** for MATHIAS, Diagonale - Festival of Austrian Films 2017, Graz, Austria

**Young Talent Grant for Film 2017** by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts for Breaking The Ice

**2016**

Main award **Carl-Mayer-Screenplay Award** of the city of Graz, Austria, for Breaking The Ice (treatment for a feature film)

**IF SHE CAN SEE IT SHE CAN BE IT Screenplay Competition** Award held by the Austrian Screenwriters Guild and the Austrian Film Institute, 2016 with You won't need that to be happy (Exposé for a feature film; co-authorship with Johannes Hoss)

**FILMOGRAPHY (as screenwriter and director)**

**2022 BREAKING THE ICE** - Fiction, 102 min, NGF Geyrhalter Film

**2017 MATHIAS** - Fiction, 30 min, more than 50 international festival screenings

**2016 Waiting Time** - Fiction, 11 min, more than 40 international festival screenings, screened at ARTE

**2015 Luminance** - Doc, 4 min

**2013 The snows of yesteryear** - Doc, 7 min

**2012 Sun down** - Fiction, 8 min

**2011 The islands that we are.** - Fiction, 11 min





## **ALINA SCHALLER BIOGRAPHY**

Alina Schaller is an Austrian actress, born 1997 in Vienna. She started her acting career at the age of eight. Since then she was part of several Austrian and German film productions and stood on the stage of various theaters in Austria. In 2017, she made her film debut in the short film "Voltage", which premiered at the Berlinale Film Festival. She was also part of one of the most successful Austrian TV-series: "Vorstadtweiber", the Austrian equivalent to "Desperate Housewives". Alina is also a dancer, journalist and runs the performative theater group "kollektief" - after the first lockdown 2020 she was part of a performance where the group isolated itself in glass boxes for 14 days. In 2017 she was the youngest person to ever be nominated for the Austrian Theater Award "Nestroy", she was also nominated for the Austrian TV-Award "Romy" in 2020. Mira in BREAKING THE ICE is her first leading role in a feature film, celebrating its premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival.

## **JUDITH ALTENBERGER BIOGRAPHY**

Judith Altenberger, born in 1996, is an Austrian actress. She started her career at various small off-theatre groups in Austria and Switzerland. Later she studied Theatre, Film and Media Studies and Sociology at the University of Vienna and took part in several stage design classes. At the same time, she contributed to different short films as an actress and producer. She became interested in music at a very early age and plays various instruments such as saxophone, transverse flute and guitar, and founded the hammered dulcimer band "HANV", of which she is also a part. In addition to her music career, she competed as a show jumper and gymnast for years, won the state championship with her team several times, until an injury ended her active career as an athlete. Now she is making her debut as an ice hockey player with her first feature film BREAKING THE ICE at the Tribeca film festival.







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A FILM BY CLARA STERN



FILMS *Boutique*