

UNTIER



DAS UNTIER (THE BRUTE)

A short film by TOVE STILLE
(Vera von Gunten & Tomas Schweigen)

Austria, 2025 — 19 min

DAS UNTIER

(THE BRUTE)

PRESS KIT – ENGLISH

LOGLINE

In the 1970s, children claimed to have seen a strange creature in a lake. Fifty years later, two young filmmakers track down a woman who filmed the animal at the time with her parents' Super 8 camera...

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the 1970s, rumours of a monster in the Neusiedler See spread through local newspapers, stirring a wave of public hysteria. Decades later, two young filmmakers revisit the story and meet an elderly woman who claims she once captured the creature on her Super 8 camera. When they visit her home, they discover that the “beast” is still there – hidden in her wardrobe. Hairy, lethargic and uncooperative, it defies every cinematic expectation. What began as a documentary and failed as a horror film gradually drifts into a genre experiment and ultimately collapses into a meditation on fear, projection and the stories we invent to make sense of the unknown.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In the mid-1970s, a group of children reported seeing a mysterious creature in the Neusiedler See, a shallow lake on the Austrian-Hungarian border. The local press quickly sensationalised the rumour, and soon every unexplained noise, accident or disappearance was blamed on “the beast.” The hysteria faded and the lake returned to silence.

Half a century later, two young filmmakers discover the old newspaper clippings and decide to investigate the forgotten legend. Their search leads them to an ageing woman who claims she once filmed the monster on her Super 8 camera. When they visit her home, they begin to suspect that there is more to her story – until they make a startling discovery: the creature is still there, hidden in her wardrobe.

But the “beast” they encounter is neither terrifying nor spectacular: hairy, lethargic and utterly uncooperative. As their documentary begins to collapse, the project turns into a strange reflection on fear, projection and the cinematic urge to control what cannot be explained.

DAS UNTIER (THE BRUTE) oscillates between mockumentary, found-footage and monster film, playfully deconstructing the language of horror – without ever quite becoming a horror film itself. In the end, one question remains: what do we fear more – the monster, or its absence?

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

We wanted *THE BRUTE* to be a horror film. But the monster wasn't cooperative. So it became something else.

We grew up with stories of lake monsters, bedtime fears and the image of the Other – the strange, the hidden, the thing beneath the surface. In *THE BRUTE*, we set out to playfully trace how these fears evolve: from childhood myths to adult narratives of control – in cinema and in society.

Our protagonists attempt to make a horror film about the legend of a creature. But the creature they encounter – hairy, voiceless, stubbornly still – resists being turned into a metaphor. It refuses to mean anything. And in that resistance, something essential is revealed: fear is not only about what stands before us, but about what we bring to the encounter – especially when the monster is absent.

The film unfolds in layers and across different media: Super 8 footage meets smartphone clips, blurred memories meet failed cinematic attempts. *THE BRUTE* plays with genres and expectations, subverting them at every turn – part sketch, part document, part riddle. What begins as found footage becomes a pseudo-documentary, then a failed genre film – and, even during the closing credits, something else entirely.

THE BRUTE invites us not to fear what we see, but to question our compulsion to explain it.

DIRECTORS' BIO

Tove Stille is the joint artistic identity of **Vera von Gunten** and **Tomas Schweigen** – two award-winning artists, particularly known in the German-speaking world for their layered, genre-defying storytelling across theatre and performance.

Both trained at the **Zurich University of the Arts** and have collaborated for over twenty years, creating a prolific body of distinctive and unconventional work. Their projects span documentary theatre, immersive installations, interactive social-media performances and hybrid film-theatre productions.

They have received numerous accolades for their work – most recently the **Nestroy Prize 2023 for Best Director** (awarded to Tomas Schweigen) for their film-theatre hybrid *FAARM ANIMAAL* – and are regularly invited to international art and theatre festivals.

Under their shared identity Tove Stille, the duo now focuses on cinematic storytelling through ambitious and formally inventive feature film projects. Their debut feature *DÉBUT SANS FIN* is currently in development, supported by the **Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab** (Switzerland), and explores the theme of unconventional ageing in Western society.

CAST & CREW

HEIDE **ALINA SCHALLER**

MICK ANTON **WIDAUER**

FRAU MARIA **ELFI BERENCZ**

UNTIER **SEBASTIAN SCHINDEGGER**

SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTOR **TOVE STILLE**

CAMERA **MICHAEL SCHINDEGGER**

EDITING **DANIEL RUTZ**

SOUND DESIGN **DOMINIK MAYR**

MUSIC **CLARA FRÜHSTÜCK & DOMINIK MAYR**

PRODUCTION VERA VON GUNTEN & TOMAS SCHWEIGEN

ORIGINAL SOUND **CHRISTI IORGA, RAPHAEL ANGELO ORTNER, MARKUS ORTNER, ALEXANDER SIEGL**

LIGHTING **CHRISTIAN ANGERMAYR**

PRODUCTION MANAGER **SANDRA THEUERMANN**

SET, COSTUME AND SPFX **TOVE STILLE**

SPFX COLORATION WOUNDS **KATHARINA LENZ**

MAKEUP ADVICE **ANNA-HELEN GIESE**

CHILD WELFARE RESPONSABLE **ANETTA IVISIC**

CO-EDITING **PAUL ECKHART**

VFX EYES UNTIER **HOLGER WENZL**

COLORS **ANDI WINTER**

SOUND MIXING **THE GRAND POST**

GRAPHICS **CAROLINE PLANK-BACHSELTEN**

TECHNICAL DATA

Running Time: 19' (18 minutes 50 seconds)

Country: Austria

Language: German (English subtitles available)

Aspect Ratio: 2.39:1

Format: DCP / 4K

Sound: 5.1

Colour: Colour

Year: 2025

Premiere: SLASH Fantastic Film Festival, Vienna (AT), 21 September 2025

CONTACT

TOVE STILLE (Vera von Gunten & Tomas Schweigen)

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UNTER
DAS
WATZ

Ein Film von
TOVE STILLE





