

## Marlene Streeruwitz



Marlene Streeruwitz was born in Baden bei Wien on 28th June, 1950. After studies of Slavic literature and history of art she has been working for theatre and radio since 1989. Her first radio plays were “Der Paravant”, “Alkmene” and “Urlaub”. In 1992 she made the breakthrough with “Waikiki Beach”. After the first great success other successful plays followed such as “Sloane Square”, “Ocean Drive” and “Tolmezzo”. Since 1996 Streeruwitz has been writing prose and fiction such as “Verführungen”, “Lisas Liebe”, “Nachwelt” and “Partygirl” which are her best-known novels. Guiding themes are the frozen relationship between men and women. Her “trademark” is the extreme, radical and concise language. The author gives lectures on poetics in Frankfurt and Tübingen and also time and again makes comments on political themes.

### Recension: “Verführungen” Vlg. Suhrkamp, 1996



The good life ends for a young woman, 30 years old, her youth, beauty, great love and security in her marriage with a university graduate based on partnership are meaningless when her husband leaves the family for a new love. What yesterday could be considered as a life free of care becomes today unloved work, education of two children, coping with the difficulties of everyday life and confrontation with the left behind mother-in-law. The hasty way of telling the story shows her indignation about the unreasonable demands of life, the atmosphere of emptiness and the lack of human relations in spite of her friendship with other women and love affairs produce a mix of self-doubt and helplessness. The protagonist has positive feelings only towards her children, the relationship with her daughters gives her satisfaction. Sometimes her state of mind is euphoric when she is looking for a man as her saviour and for sexual satisfaction but those states are followed by deep delusions. The plot seems to be simple, it shows a trivial enumeration of daily activities but the characters are interwoven: her girlfriend defeated by life, the mother-in-law, the Italian musician without means as great lover, the filthy head of office, a number of real situations which as such are known to everybody. The great haste in which the young woman tries to fulfil her obligations, looking at the same time for a bit of happiness, the approaching of a disaster, are reflected in an extremely concise language. The general topic in the works of the author is the critical look at the Austrian patriarchal Catholicism defining women as second-class beings. In the tradition of Austrian writers such as Nestroy, Karl Kraus, Ödön von Horvath and the folk theatre which derives from the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, Streeruwitz stands in a line with the Austrian “insulters” like Handke, Bernhard, Jelinek, although her language seems to be simpler and more every day life. But she is not always right with her assertions: the life of a woman does not necessarily have to be like this. If you have a closer look at this story you will see that the protagonist is a conservative woman who dreams of a faithful husband and of a caring extended family and thereby calls the free and emancipated life of women into question.

Topics for discussion: Situation of women, relations between sexes, language used by author, literature of women/men, influence of religion on women