

## **"A question of honor"**

### **Recommendations for dealing with intimacy in front of the camera**

There are stories for which the depiction of intimate scenes, nudity and sex in film is essential.

These scenes should continue to be told authentically and passionately. Professionals who have mastered their profession are usually involved in the production. Nevertheless, for actors and especially for newcomers, castings and filming with intimate scenes are highly sensitive and challenging.

They sometimes even feel obliged to agree to casting requests or role offers that actually make them feel uncomfortable. In order to create a common basis during auditions and filming, on which to work professionally and attentively in this sensitive area, we give casters of the BVC the following recommendations, so that the actors, but also all other participants in front of and behind the camera, feel safe and comfortable. "Intimate scenes" in this context refers to all film scenes in which erotic or sexual acts (including kisses), nudity or partial nudity of one or more persons are depicted.

The individual sense of shame of the actors during casting and shooting should be taken into account. Formulated boundaries must be named and respected as well as cultural differences.

Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that the following recommendations become standards for live castings, but also for virtual and e-castings and that they also apply to shooting preparation and shooting. This is not least a question of the professional honor of all filmmakers.

- Live castings should generally take place in professional or protected premises and at reasonable times.
- If a role contains intimate scenes, this should be described in

detail in the casting briefing so that actors can decide on this basis whether they are interested in the role and want to participate in the casting.

- In the best case, actors should receive the entire script before an invitation to the casting, or at least a precise description of their role and the nature of the intimate scenes.
- Intimate scenes should only be cast by prior arrangement, exact briefing and mutual agreement, and only if it is absolutely necessary to develop a particular character. Actors must not be asked to show nudity or depict intimate or sexual violence scenes at the first audition and at further auditions.
- The dress code must be discussed before casting. The type of contact, the choreography, or the sequence must also be discussed with the actors in advance. They agree which part of their body may be touched or how the kissing should take place, for example. Surprises are to be avoided.
- Likewise, actors should only be asked with a precise briefing for an e-casting if it is easier for them to record an intimate scene alone without the tension of a live casting. If this first step leads to a recall, then you can build on it, of course taking into account the needs of the actors. Whether they want to do an e-casting is up to the actors themselves, and this decision should not put them at a disadvantage.
- At castings of intimate scenes, only absolutely necessary persons (actors, casters, directors, possibly intimacy coordinators), but at least three actors, should be present. Discretion and careful handling of the material are prerequisites.

Only a narrow circle of decision-makers should be allowed to view the casting material later. After completion of the project, casting material with intimate scenes must be destroyed.

- If intimate scenes are part of the role, but are not cast, it makes sense to talk about the planned implementation of these scenes

during the casting. Boundaries formulated by actors in this context should be respected and not understood as a refusal to meet legitimate demands on the role.

- For films with many intimate scenes, especially in the depiction of sexual assault or violence, or in the participation of young actors, it is recommended, if necessary already in casting, to consult intimacy coordinators and/or stunt coordinators to prevent injuries.

These recommendations are based on a working paper of the International Casting Directors Network (ICDN) and the "Guidelines for doing intimate scenes in camera work" of the Finnish Film Foundation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the casting directors of the Bundesverband Casting. We also refer to the prevention offers of Themis – Trust Office against Sexual Harassment and Violence e.V. <https://themis-vertrauensstelle.de>

Bundesverband Casting  
BVC Cologne, 7.12.2020