



MICHAEL SCHINDHELM

Writer, filmmaker, curator und cultural consultant

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Michael Schindhelm (1960), of Swiss-German origin, residing in Ticino, is a prolific writer, filmmaker, curator, and has been actively involved as a cultural consultant for international organizations since the spring of 2007. His diverse portfolio includes collaborations with entities such as Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (Dubai, UAE), West Kowloon Cultural District (Hong Kong), Strelka Institute (Moscow), Skolkovo Innovation Center (Moscow), Zurich University of the Arts (Zurich), European Capital of Culture 2025 (Dresden, Germany), Tempelhof Project (Berlin), and Diriyah Gate Development Authority (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia).

In 2022, Schindhelm was honoured with the Herbert Quandt Media Prize and the 3rd Prize at the German Business Film Awards for his documentary *At the Speed of Light to the Vaccine – the Biontech Project*. Subsequently, his film *In the Mood for Art* earned him the «Golden Feather» from the Swiss Association for Internal Communication in the fall of 2023.

His journey includes serving as the founding director of the Dubai Culture & Arts Authority in Dubai, UAE, and prior roles as the General Director of the Berlin Opera Foundation (2005–2007) and the Artistic Director of Theater Basel (1996–2006).

Schindhelm commenced his academic pursuits in 1979 at the International University of Voronezh, USSR, earning a Master of Science in Quantum Chemistry. Following this, from 1984 to 1986, he worked as a scientific assistant in the Department of Theoretical Chemistry at the Central Institute for Physical Chemistry in East Berlin. His subsequent years saw him engaged as a freelance translator (translating works by Gorki, Chekhov, Gogol), interpreter, and writer in East Berlin.

In 1990, Schindhelm embarked on a new chapter, initially as an advisor and later as the director of the newly established Theater-GmbH, Thuringia, Germany, a fusion of Theater Nordhausen and Loh-Orchester Sondershausen. He served as the Artistic and Managing Director of the Theatre Gera, Thuringia, from 1992, and from 1996 to 2006, he held the positions of the first General Director and Artistic Director of the (Fusion) Theater Altenburg-Gera, followed by the role of CEO and Artistic Director at Theater Basel, Switzerland.

From March 2005 to February 2007, Schindhelm held the prestigious position of the first General Director of the newly established «Stiftung Oper in Berlin», Germany, the world's largest opera organization comprising Staatsoper Berlin, Deutsche Oper, Komische Oper, and Staatsballett.

Books

- Roberts Reise (DVA, 2000)
- Zauber des Westens (DVA, 2001)
- Das Kamel auf der Startbahn (Christoph Merian, 2004)
- Die Herausforderung (DVA, 2006)
- Mein Abenteuer Schweiz (Echtzeit, 2007)
- Dubai Speed (DTV, 2009)
- Dubai High (Arabian Publishing, 2011 – Englisch)
- Lavapolis (Matthes&Seitz, 2014)
- Lavapolis (Sternberg Press, 2014 – English)
- Letzter Vorhang (Theater der Zeit, 2017)
- Walter Spies: Ein Exotisches Leben (Hirmer Verlag, Munich 2018)

Films

- Documentary film “Lied von der Steppe” (2004 – 3Sat; SRF) about musical traditions in the Gobi Desert (Mongolia)
- Documentary film “Bird’s Nest” (2008 – SRF; Arte) about the creation of the Olympic Stadium Beijing
- Documentary film “The Chinese Lives of Uli Sigg” (premiere in Europe in February 2016, in March 2016 in Asia) about the Swiss entrepreneur, diplomat and art collector Uli Sigg
- Documentary film “OUTLAND” (premiere in Lugano, Switzerland, 28 November 2021)
- Documentary film “At the Speed of Light to the Vaccine – The Biontech project” (Broadcast SRF1 Switzerland 24 October, 2021; Arte France Germany 30 October 2021)
- Documentary film “In the Mood for Art” about the Museum M+ and the art scene in Hong Kong, Production Filmerei, Swiss Television and 3Sat (September 2023)

Exhibitions

2008: Dubai Next, Vitra Museum, Weil am Rhein

2014: Friday in Venice, Venice Architecture Biennale

2018: Zurich Oracle, audio intervention in public spaces in Zurich

2019: New Home Dresden 2025, German Hygiene Museum Dresden

2022: Project Lightspeed, German Museum of Technology Berlin

Opera as a librettist

«Schwarzerde» and «Welt im Quecksilberlicht.»

Awards and Prizes

- 1999 Bavarian Theater Prize (for Theater Basel)
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- Herbert Quandt Media Prize 2022 (for the documentary film “At the Speed of Light to the Vaccine – The Biontech project”)
- German Business Film Prize 2022 (for the documentary film “At the Speed of Light to the Vaccine – The Biontech project”)
- Golden Feather SVIK 2023 for “In the Mood for Art”

Television

- TV-Talks «Der Salon» on Swiss TV SRF1 and has been author for national daily newspapers or quality magazines in Germany and Switzerland and for Gazeta.ru, Moscow.

Since 2016, Schindhelm has been a member of the International Board of the Leadership Program S.T.A.R.S.

Since 2019, he has been married to the Singaporean artist Yeo Yawen.