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mizzi. Interview: Stuntwoman Cornelia Dworak



one of my friends, [cornelia dworak](#), has made a pretty outstanding decision concerning her job – she works as a stuntwoman. i got to know her years ago through bmx and i was always impressed by her hard-working mentality.

austria isn't exactly known as the homebase of a lot of movie productions or anything of that like. nevertheless, cornelia made her choice and has been working hard on pursuing her dreams ever since. it is amazing what she has already done and what stunts she is capable of doing.

i guess she is one of the examples that the saying, that you can accomplish anything if you are willing to work hard, is true.

when she's not working or training for her job, she enjoys sports such as surfing, wakeboarding and snowboarding.

i decided to do an interview with her, because i truly believe she can be a rolemodel for other women and girls out there!

be sure to watch the teaser video at the bottom of the interview!

why did you decide to become a stuntwoman?

I didn't really decide, it just happened. After I finished University I was on job search and it appeared that most of my jobs were body and stage related. So I decided to go for whatever came first – either biology or stunt – and it was stunts that made the race.

what kind of education do you have?

Actually I studied biology at the University of Vienna and specialized on Zoology and Behavioral Science. Somehow it still influences my profession as a stuntwoman, because I learned to be precise in monitoring which is an advantage for embodying movement structures.

For stuntwork itself there is no school you can attend. What I collected over the years is bits and pieces of different sportive skills – such as dancing, pantomime, martial arts, boardsports... – mixed with stunt training, which put together make a perfect match. I've been to England several times, to various cities of Germany, up to Norway and different parts of the USA to train on more than 9 stage combat weapon styles (including unarmed combat, single rapier, rapier & dagger, knife, quarterstaff, broadsword, katana, smallsword, sword & shield, theatrical martial arts,...), fight choreographing & arranging, aerial & wirework, precision driving and general bodystunts. I've worked with people from more than 15 different nationalities. My next journeys will lead me to Italy and Estonia. I'm always in for something new!



was it hard to get jobs in the beginning?

Haha, it's still a challenge, depending on the film budgets and the "who-knows-whom" in the industry. For 2 years I was part of an Austrian stunts & special effects team and since 2009 I'm a freelancing stuntperformer, fight choreographer and stage combat teacher.

Contra: there is no fixed monthly salary I can rely on.

Pro: I can accept new opportunities and work with stunt teams all over the world!



can you make a living from doing stuntwork?

Yes – of course it varies from month to month and sometimes projects you count on are cancelled, but the last 2 years I was quite lucky being on the German stuntteam of Aida at the Bregenz Festival, leading various stage combat and body-workshops, doing some movie stuff and events and teaching my regular classes at the dramaschool Krauss in Vienna.

do you have any role-models?

No. I met a lot of different people in the business and two german stuntwomen have become very close friends of mine. I'm impressed by people that unite great skills, a clear mind, the courage to say "no" and a relaxed and fun personality.

So if there is a role model: That's the kind of person I love to work and share experiences with.



do you have any recommendations for other women who would like to become stuntwomen?

Yes, think about this decision very carefully.

What I experienced as a woman, is that you're in everybody's focus of attention in the beginning but you have to work twice as hard as a man to be accepted. Stunts and special effects are still male dominated.

You constantly need to develop your skills, be a tough person and keep your chin up to make your way in the biz – and you shouldn't ignore the fact that you can't do this job up to great age. It's a good

idea to have a second education you can fall back on! In stunts you don't win the laurels for your job, and still you step in for actors when they can't go any further.

The most important thing is to keep in shape and have the knowledge what you are capable of doing. That's the only way to stay safe!

So if you decide to become a professional stuntperformer though, let this always be your guideline: "Safety first!"



what do you like to do in your spare time?

Depending on my jobsituation and my mood – I sometimes enjoy just to sit down , relax and draw or paint a picture – OR I need to move my ass!

I like to travel a lot and do whatever sport that introduces itself to me...streetdance, snowboarding, BMX, wakeboarding, scuba-diving, surfing, riding my motorbike...

That's me, I'm much to curious about experiencing something new to specialize just on one thing! – and actually this characteristic trait emerged to be quite the best approach for stuntwork!

here's a teaser of her work:

[Video bei Vimeo ansehen](#)

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