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Akademie der Künste presents Berlin Art Prize – Jubilee Endowment 1848/1948 Awards

2016 Berlin Art Prize: Grand Prize awarded to Frank Castorf

Awards Ceremony with Berlin's Governing Mayor Michael Müller and Akademie President Jeanine Meerapfel on 18 March

The 2016 *Großer Kunstpreis Berlin* (Berlin Art Prize: Grand Prize) has been awarded to Frank Castorf. In consultation with one of its six Sections on a rotating basis, the Akademie der Künste presents this annual award, with prize money of €15,000, on behalf of the federal state of Berlin. Six artists are also honoured with Berlin Art Prize awards, each worth €5,000.

This year's jury of Constanze Becker, Christian Gerhaher and Ulrich Matthes, all members of the Performing Arts Section, is honouring Frank Castorf and his outstanding work in theatre over 25 years at the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. In their statement the jurors noted, "We three have wholeheartedly awarded (…) this year's *Großer Kunstpreis Berlin* to a director who has decisively influenced German-language theatre over the last 25 years. Without doubt, Frank Castorf is a major artist, in his standing equivalent to a Picasso for the stage, and the energy and charisma of his oeuvre is such that everyone has to engage with it – irrespective of where they are working in the broad field of art."

Born in Berlin in 1951, Frank Castorf initially held positions in Senftenberg, Brandenburg and Anklam before being appointed artistic and managing director of the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in 1992. Since then, he has also been a guest director in Basel, Vienna, Hamburg and Zurich. From 2003 to 2004, he was the artistic director of the *Ruhrfestspiele* (Ruhr Festival). In 2013, his production of the *Ring of the Nibelung* premiered at the Bayreuth Festival. Frank Castorf, whose productions have won numerous prestigious theatre prizes, became a member of the Akademie der Künste in 1994.
His contract at the Volksbühne ends in 2017.

The recipient of the **Berlin Art Prize** award of the Visual Arts Section is photographer and video artist **Sven Johne**. The Architecture Section is honouring two leading figures in the young Belgian architecture scene, **Kersten Geers and David van Severen,** and their practice **OFFICE**, founded in 2002. The Music Section is paying tribute to composer **Stefan Prins**, also Belgian-born but now living in Europe and the USA. The Literature Section is presenting its award to author **Angelika Meier**, while the Performing Arts Section is honouring the soprano **Anna Prohaska**. Sound engineer **Peter Avar** is the recipient of this year's award from the Film and Media Art Section. Four of the six Berlin Art Prize award winners – Johne, Meier, Prohaska and Avar – live in Berlin.

The **Berlin Art Prize – Jubilee Endowment 1848/1948** was founded by the Berlin City Council in 1948 to commemorate the 1848 March Revolution. Since 1971, the Prize has been awarded by the Akademie der Künste on behalf of the federal state of Berlin. Over the last years, Grand Prize winners included Sherko Fatah (2015), Mathias Spahlinger (2014) and Florian Beigel (2013). The **Awards Ceremony** is to be held on 18 March at 8 pm at the Pariser Platz venue. The evening will be presented by Ulrich Matthes, Director of the Performing Arts Section.