

Press Release

29 May 2017

Kurt-Bartsch-Archiv at the Akademie der Künste

Archive and book presentation on 8 June

The Akademie der Künste is highlighting the archive of author Kurt Bartsch (1937-2010) with a special event on 8 June in the Akademie building on Hanseatenweg. After moving from East to West Berlin, Bartsch maintained regular correspondence with his friend Wasja Götze, an artist and set designer in Halle. Actors Martin Brambach and Michael Kind will read from their previously unpublished letters. The book *Kurt Bartsch/Wasja Götze. In all dem herrlichen Chaos. Briefe von 1982 bis 1989*, published by the Mitteldeutscher Verlag, was edited by Kurt Bartsch's wife, Irene Böhme, a publicist and author. She will launch the evening's event, together with Sabine Wolf, the deputy director of the Akademie archives.

Kurt Bartsch left secondary school without completing his *Abitur* (A levels). Sometimes biographies for today's politicians start out like this. In the GDR in Bartsch's days many of life's more arduous journeys began this way. But the "casual labourers" did have supporters and others to encourage them. With the help of Georg Maurer, Bartsch's teacher at the German Institute for Literature in Leipzig, his first poems were published in the early 1960s. And at the now legendary "Junge Lyrik" event in 1962 at the Deutsche Akademie der Künste, Stephan Hermlin included Bartsch's works among those of others that he introduced. However, working freelance since 1966, the author showed no talent or willingness to conform to the system he found himself in. Bartsch broke off his studies in 1966, in protest against the culturally hostile 11th plenum of the Central Committee of Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). A decade later he signed the petition protesting against Wolf Biermann being stripped of his citizenship. And in 1979 he was forced to leave the writers' association due to his political actions. In addition to the consistent lifeline that bound him to politics, Kurt Bartsch's artistic vein reveals his work to be an important component of the Akademie der Künste's literature archives. Parodist, satirical and critical poet, Brecht admirer, theatre enthusiast and temporary in-house writer at Benno Besson's Volksbühne in Berlin, Bartsch made an essential contribution to East German literature. Despite all its censorship, he is one of the reasons it is still quite vibrant. Kurt Bartsch would have turned 80 this year, on 10 July.

The **Kurt-Bartsch-Archiv** at the Akademie der Künste contains manuscripts, including exposés, drafts and scripts for films and television series, manuscripts of works for the theatre, numerous poems and prose texts, as

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well as Bartsch's drawings. In addition to Bartsch's exchange with Wasja Götze, it contains correspondence with Elke Erb, Sarah Kirsch, Manfred Krug, Günter Kunert, Helga M. Novak, et al. There are also personal documents and photographs, thematic newspaper clippings and collections of materials, as well as print documents and reviews. The entire Kurt-Bartsch-Archiv has been digitized and turned into a database that can be accessed for online research (<https://archiv.adk.de/bigobjekt/4426>). It is also available for scholarly use in the archive reading room.

Further inquiries: Petra Uhlmann, Sabine Wolf, Tel. + 49 (0)30-20057-3000

Event Information

Kurt Bartsch. In all dem herrlichen Chaos. Briefwechsel mit Wasja Götze

Archive and book presentation (in German)

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin

8 June 2017, 8 pm, admission: € 10/8

Ticket reservations: Tel. + 49 (0)30 200 57-1000, ticket@adk.de

>> Press tickets: Tel. +49 (0)30 20057 – 1514, presse@adk.de

Event in cooperation with the Mitteldeutscher Verlag.

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