

## Press Release

8 October 2019

### Akademie der Künste acquires the György Konrád Archive

The Akademie der Künste has received the archive of its former president, the writer György Konrád (1933-2019).

Wishing to make his extensive work in Berlin accessible to researchers and the public, Konrád donated it to the society of artists a few months before his death on 13 September 2019.

In Hungarian, English, French and German, the archive impressively documents the literary oeuvre and political commitment of a European intellectual who was president of the Akademie der Künste from 1997 to 2003. On 25 November 2019, the Akademie will pay tribute to György Konrád with a public event at Pariser Platz.

Roughly 30 metres long from end to end, the **György Konrád Archive** contains the preliminary stages, manuscripts and typoscripts of his narrative and essay works, as well as working materials, biographical documents, diaries and notebooks since 1961, photographs and numerous important prizes and awards. The records begin with Konrád's early sociological writings. Working materials – ranging from handwritten everyday observations and small literary sketches to philosophical and political reflections and the finished texts and speeches – make it possible to study how works evolve. The documents on his debut novel *The Case Worker* (1969) and his second book *The City Builder* (1975) illustrate the censorship trials and oppression to which Konrád was subjected in Hungary during the Cold War.

How the Holocaust survivor bore witness and, as a leading dissident, opposed violence and state despotism can be investigated in the archive, as can his surveillance by the Hungarian secret service and the East German state security service. It is possible to reconstruct Konrád's role as a forward thinker who called for the removal of the Iron Curtain early on. Numerous texts documented in the archive on questions of artistic freedom, human rights and European politics have retained their topicality. The correspondence highlights his European network in extensive correspondence with ministries, international organisations, academies, publishing houses, editorial boards, radio and television stations, as well as with artists, friends, political allies, intellectuals and politicians, including Ignatz Bubis, Elisabeth Borchers, Hans Christoph Buch, György Dalos, Jacques Delors, Lars Gustafsson, Václav Havel, Teddy Kollek, Norman Mailer, Ivan Nagel, György Petri, George Tabori, Gesine Schwan, Richard Sennett, Iván Szelényi and Richard von Weizsäcker.

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With the installation of the György Konrád Archive at the Akademie der Künste, close links are established with other archive holdings: the Historical Archive, the archives and collections of the Akademie Presidents Heiner Müller, Günter Grass, Walter Jens and Klaus Staeck, and the Hungarian-language estates of Imre Kertész, George Tabori and Ivan Nagel.

At an **event** on 25 November at 8 pm at the Akademie der Künste, contemporaries and companions commemorate György Konrád and read from his works.

The acquisition was made possible with the kind support of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

**For inquiries concerning the György-Konrád archive:**

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