

Press release

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Käthe Kollwitz Prize 2021 of the Akademie der Künste goes to Maria Eichhorn

Maria Eichhorn has been awarded the 2021 Käthe Kollwitz Prize worth EUR 12,000. The jury comprising Akademie members Richard Deacon, Bjørn Melhus and Adrian Piper are keen to stress that “with her works and research projects [the artist] has been consistently and critically questioning the operating system for the arts at the interface of history, politics and society for what is now 30 years”. According to the jury, this form of political action is similar to that of an activist, serving as a model for a younger generation of artists in particular. Eichhorn has devoted her work to the artistic transformation and effective disclosure of such categories as capital, property and restitution, which she presents to the public in highly concentrated and reduced exhibitions.

Over the past two decades, Eichhorn has made a name for herself particularly with her contributions to Documenta11 (*Maria Eichhorn Aktiengesellschaft*, Kassel, 2002) and documenta 14 (Kassel/Athens, 2017). Since the realisation of exhibition projects such as *In den Zelten...* (2015) at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, and *Politics of Restitution* (2003) at the Lenbachhaus and the Kunstbau, Munich, she has repeatedly focused on the unresolved ownership of works of art, property, plots of land, libraries, etc., which were confiscated from Jewish owners in Germany and the occupied countries during the Nazi era. The rediscovered Gurlitt estate offered Eichhorn starting points for another project: as an artistic contribution to documenta 14 in 2017, she founded the interdisciplinary *Rose Valland Institute* (www.rosevallandinstitut.org) with the specific aim of researching the after-effects of the expropriation of Europe’s Jewish population by the Nazis. Like Walter Benjamin, she sees history as never-ending, as it takes place in the future, so to speak. In this sense, history does not stop referring to narratives of the past and updating or regenerating them, and also producing ambiguities and contradictions.

The dates for the award ceremony and the conversation with the artist will be announced at a later date.

Maria Eichhorn (born 1962 in Bamberg) lives in Berlin. From 1984 to 1990 she studied at Berlin University of the Arts under Karl Horst Hödicke; her works have been shown in exhibitions since 1986. She has been teaching as a professor since 1999, first as a visiting professor at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia and since 2003 at the Zurich University of the Arts. In addition to her contributions to documenta 2002 in Kassel and 2017 in Athens and Kassel, Eichhorn has participated several times in the Venice Biennale (1993, 2001, 2015), the Istanbul

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Biennale (1995, 2005) and other biennials worldwide and exhibited at numerous museums in Germany and abroad. The most recent large-scale exhibition of her work was held in 2018-2019 at the Migros Museum in Zurich under the title *Twelve Works* (1988-2018). The artist has been awarded, among other awards, the George Maciunas Prize (1992), the Arnold Bode Prize of the City of Kassel (2002) and the Paolo Bozzi Prize for Ontology of the University of Turin (2018).

The **Käthe Kollwitz Prize** has been awarded annually to a visual artist since 1960. The prize winners in recent years have included Timm Ulrichs (2020), Hito Steyerl (2019), Adrian Piper (2018) and Katharina Sieverding (2017).

On the occasion of its 60th anniversary, the Akademie der Künste is presenting, for all 59 prize winners, portrait photographs, biographies, short texts on their output, laudatory speeches, jury statements and photographs of their work and/or events at www.adk.de/kaethe-kollwitz-preis.

The prize and the catalogue have been co-financed since 1992 by the Kreissparkasse Köln, sponsor of the Käthe Kollwitz Museum Cologne.

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