

## Press release

23.02.2021

### Gabriela Maria Schmeide follows Judith Hofmann as wearer of the Tilla Durieux Jewellery

The actress Gabriela Maria Schmeide is to be the new wearer of the Tilla Durieux Jewellery at the request of her colleague Judith Hofmann. The necklace containing 34 zircons set in platinum was originally donated by the actress Tilla Durieux (1880–1971). To mark the 65th anniversary of her stage career in 1967, Durieux awarded the jewellery for the first time to Maria Wimmer with the instruction that it be passed on every ten years to an "outstanding exponent of German dramatic art". In 1977 Wimmer chose Gisela Stein, who passed the jewellery on in 1988 to Kirsten Dene, who in turn gave it in 1998 to Annette Paulmann, who presented it to Judith Hofmann in 2010. Hofmann has now decided in favour of Gabriela Maria Schmeide: "The path between her and the character she embodies is unobstructed. Quite simply, she's always utterly convincing!" The new wearer will receive the necklace from Hofmann's hand at a public ceremony next season. Durieux's donation and instruction are managed by the Akademie der Künste, of which Tilla Durieux was a member from 1961.

The daughter of Sorbian parents, **Gabriela Maria Schmeide**, born in Bautzen in 1965, grew up bilingual. Immediately after graduating from the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts, she was engaged by the Berliner Ensemble in 1991, where she was selected as Young Actress of the Year by *Theater heute* in 1992 for such roles as Helene in *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (directed by Christoph Schroth). In 1994, commended with the Art Prize (Development Prize) of the Akademie der Künste, she moved to the Theater Bremen. There she worked with Andrej Woron, Karin Henkel, Johann Kresnik and Konstanze Lauterbach, among others, receiving the Kurt Hübner Prize in 1996 and the "Silver Roland" in 2003. She has been a member of the ensemble of Hamburg's Thalia Theater since 2008. She has appeared in leading roles in Luk Perceval's acclaimed novel adaptations (Zola Trilogy, *Die Blechtrommel*, *Jeder stirbt für sich allein*) and Johan Simons (*Deutschstunde*), as *Mother Courage* (directed by Philipp Becker), in productions by Stefan Pucher, Kornél Mundruczó and Antú Romero Nunes, in whose *Don Giovanni. Letzte Party* she was awarded the Rolf Mares Prize for Outstanding Performance as Zerlina in 2013. The turn of the millennium also saw the beginning of her extremely successful film and television career. She received the Adolf Grimme Award in 2001 for the title role in Andreas Dresen's *Die Polizistin*; numerous other film and television roles followed, including *Grill Point* (Andreas Dresen), *Leben wäre schön* (Kai Wessel), *The White Ribbon* (Michael Haneke), *Die Friseurin* (Doris Dörrie) and commendations including the German Television Award and the German Acting Award, and most recently in 2020 for *Systemsprenger* (Nora Fingscheidt) with the German Film Award for Best Supporting Actress.

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Born in Vienna in 1880, **Tilla Durieux** acted under Max Reinhardt at the Deutsches Theater from 1905 and in repeated productions at the Lessing Theater from 1911 onwards, while also making guest appearances abroad and was known worldwide – not least due to her marriage to the internationally renowned art dealer Paul Cassirer – not only as an actress, but also as a lady of high society. Together with her third husband, the brewery owner Ludwig Katzenellenbogen, Durieux financed the Piscatorbühne at Berlin's Nollendorfplatz in 1927/28. The couple fled from the Nazis in several stages to Yugoslavia and settled in Zagreb, Croatia. In 1941, Katzenellenbogen was deported to Berlin by fascists and died two years later. Durieux joined the Yugoslavian resistance.

After the Second World War, she first worked at the Zagreb Puppet Theatre and only returned to the German stage in 1952. She performed with Boleslaw Barlog at the Staatliche Bühnen Berlin and above all under Erwin Piscator at the Freie Volksbühne as well as in Hamburg, Cologne, Lübeck and Basel.

In 1961 she was appointed a member of the Akademie der Künste (West) and, among many other distinctions, received honorary membership of the Deutsches Theater in what was then East Berlin. Tilla Durieux died 50 years ago, on 21 February 1971.

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