

Press Release

23 August 2017

Konrad Wolf Prize 2017 goes to Márta Mészáros

This year, the Konrad Wolf Prize from the Akademie der Künste goes to the Hungarian film director Márta Mészáros. The prize, which is endowed with EUR 5,000, will be presented on 18 October. Jeanine Meerapfel, filmmaker and President of the Akademie der Künste, will give the opening speech. The jury consisted of Academy members Bettina Böhler (film editor), Gisela Tuchtenhagen (camera woman, documentary film director) and Tamara Trampe (filmmaker, dramaturge).

Excerpt from the **jury decision**: "The work on approximately 60 films has become a life-long search for an expression of her own biography and thus of people's lives and their ever-changing existences in the 20th century. Two world wars, the purges during the Stalin era and the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 have defined the country's society. Fear and mistrust, displacement and the need to forget, seep like poison into every relationship. Márta Mészáros, however, searches for the strength of the individual, for the spirit of resistance. (...) This precise understanding of the milieu of her protagonists, mainly women, has shaped her aesthetic and is convincing and moving to this day."

Márta Mészáros was born in 1931 in the Hungarian town of Kispest. At the age of five, she emigrated to Kyrgyzstan with her parents. Her father, a sculptor, was executed there during the Stalinist purges and her mother died of typhoid shortly thereafter. Márta Mészáros grew up in the care of a foster mother. After the Second World War, she returned to Hungary. In Moscow, she was one of the few women to study direction. Back in Hungary, she began making short films and documentaries; in 1968 her first feature film was released: *The Girl*.

Mészáros' work is typified by the inextricable link between her autobiographical experiences and the history of Hungary, and how they are reflected in the interplay between documentary material and fictional content. In particular, the *Diary* trilogy, filmed in the 1980s, is a testament to how much she sees herself as a chronicler of her country. Worldwide, her work has won numerous awards, including the Golden Bear at the 1975 Berlinale for *Adoption*, the 2007 Berlinale Camera for her life's work and other awards at the festivals in Cannes, Venice, San Sebastián, Karlovy Vary and Moscow. Márta Mészáros lives in Budapest.

Named after the film director and long-standing president of the GDR Akademie der Künste, the **Konrad Wolf Prize** is awarded annually for outstanding artistic achievements in the fields of the performing arts or film and media art. Recent prize winners include Nicola Hümpel of *Nico and the Navigators* (2016), Christoph

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Schlingensief/Opera Village in Burkina Faso (2015), Jürgen Holtz (2014) and Ostkreuz photo agency (2013).

Award Ceremony

Wednesday, 18 October 2017, 7 pm, free admission

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, Berlin-Tiergarten

After the ceremony, *The Girl* (Hungary, 1968) will be screened.

Press interviews: Márta Mészáros will be available for interviews on 17 and 18 October. Please send enquiries to presse@adk.de

Press photo also on request: presse@adk.de

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