

Invitation

6 October 2017

Benjamin and Brecht. Thinking in Extremes

Exhibition 26 October 2017 – 28 January 2018

Invitation to the Press Preview

Wednesday 25 October 2017, 11 am

Exhibition halls open from 10.30 am

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin

Registration requested: Tel. +49 (0)30 200 57-1514 or presse@adk.de

With

Werner Heegewaldt, Director of the Archives of the Akademie der Künste

Erdmut Wizisla, Director of the Bertolt-Brecht-Archive / Walter Benjamin Archive
and Head of the Curatorial Team of the Exhibition

Raimund Fellingner, Chief Editor of Suhrkamp Verlag

The relationship between Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) and Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) was an unusual one – between critic and poet, commentator and author, art theoretician and theatre director, scholar and artist, metaphysicist and rationalist. Benjamin and Brecht’s relationship reflects a century of extremes: in their conflicts as well as their productivity, in their astonishing ability to allow for the validity of contradiction, and in their harmonious moments as well as their unsettling ones. Much of what motivated them seems disturbingly relevant today: What is radical art? How does one confront social crisis? Who writes history?

For the first time an exhibition is dedicated to the subject of Benjamin **and** Brecht. Taking advantage of both archives that are housed at the Akademie der Künste – the Walter Benjamin Archive and the Bertolt Brecht Archive – the conditions for such an exhibition are ideal. It shows the topicality of their friendship, its historically documented aspects, resonances from friends and enemies, and moments of reception in ideas and art. Starting from their close personal relationship, this exhibition responds to Benjamin’s and Brecht’s names becoming ciphers, models for art and a particular view of the world.

On display is a selection of original items, some of which are lesser-known: Brecht’s chess board and a Chinese figure of Laozi, manuscripts of poems, diary entries, letters and photographs – key documents illustrating the pivotal and conflictual points in this relationship. The historical material is supplemented by original film and audio documents, and including recordings of early Brecht productions. Furthermore artistic works comment on past events from present-day perspectives: by Zoe Beloff, Adam Broomberg / Oliver Chanarin, Edmund de

Press and Public Relations

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Waal, Felix Martin Furtwängler, Friederike Heller, Alexander Kluge, Mark Lammert, Jonas Maron, Thomas Martin / Irina Rastorgueva / Jakob Michael Birn, Marcus Steinweg and Steffen Thiemann.

An extensive **accompanying programme** consists of readings, lectures, concerts and theatrical debates. Contributors include: Alexander Kluge, Corinna Harfouch, Lorenz Jäger, Mara Delius, Friederike Heller, Kathrin Röggla, Marcus Steinweg and Hanns Zischler. Suhrkamp Verlag is publishing the **book accompanying the exhibition**, edited by Erdmut Wizisla.

The exhibition is funded by the FRIES Gruppe, the Society of Friends of the Academy of Arts, the Goethe-Institut, the Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Research and Culture, as well as Alexander Kluge, Munich.

Exhibition Information

Benjamin and Brecht. Thinking in Extremes

Exhibition opening: Wednesday 25 October 2017, 7 pm, free admission

Exhibition: 26 October 2017 – 28 January 2018

Tue – Sun, 11 am – 7 pm

€ 9/6, free admission for under 18s and Tues from 3 pm

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin/Germany,

Tel. +49 (0)30 200 57-2000

Website www.adk.de/benjamin-brecht

Press photos available at www.adk.de/de/presse/pressematerial.htm

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