

## Press Release

6 March 2020

### Federal Cross of Merit 1<sup>st</sup> Class for Jeanine Meerapfel

At a ceremony today, Jeanine Meerapfel, President of the Akademie der Künste since 2015, will be awarded the Federal Cross of Merit 1<sup>st</sup> Class. Minister of State Monika Grütters will present her with the award on behalf of Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to honour her success as a filmmaker and author as well as her commitment to human rights, freedom of speech and equality and diversity of cultures.

“I consider it a great honour and at the same time an obligation to be awarded the Federal Cross of Merit”, said Jeanine Meerapfel upon receiving the award. “The recent series of right-wing and anti-Semitic attacks in Germany requires all of us to resolutely defend civility and humanity. We are committed to using the possibilities of art and the spirit of the enlightenment to combat hatred, coarseness, discrimination and violence: This is about societal harmony and democracy. I call to mind the words of Primo Levi: ‘It happened, therefore it can happen again.’”

Jeanine Meerapfel (born in 1943 in Buenos Aires) is a film director, screenwriter and producer. From 1964 to 1968 she studied at the Film Institute of the Ulm School of Design, where she was taught by Alexander Kluge and Edgar Reitz. She shot her first motion picture, *Malou*, in 1980. This was followed by award-winning documentary and feature films such as *In the Country of my Parents* (1981), *La Amiga* (1988) and many others. From 1990 to 2008, Jeanine Meerapfel worked as a professor in the Department of Film and Television at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. In 2012, her latest film, *My German Friend*, an Argentine-German co-production, was released in cinemas. Together with Floros Floridis she produced the audiovisual essays *Confusion / Diffusion* (2015) and *Moving Sand / Topos* (2019). In December 2019 she was the Jury President of the Festival of New Latin American Film in Havana.

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