

Press release

8 May 2021

Alfred Döblin Prize 2021 goes to Deniz Utlu

The author Deniz Utlu is receiving the Alfred Döblin Prize 2021. The prize winner was selected from six authors who took part in a day of public readings and discussions at the Literary Colloquium Berlin this Saturday.

The jury comprising **Marie Schmidt**, **Sieglinde Geisel** and **Knut Elstermann** justified its decision as follows: "Deniz Utlu builds up the story of a father-son relationship in layers of memory. His narrator enters into an inner dialogue with the father that revolves around the existential themes of their lives: the emergence of masculinity, issues of destiny and spirituality, and experiences of migration and belonging. In an immediately touching and humorous language, he allows us to witness a family's conflicts, celebrations and everyday life. Utlu opens up a geography of memory for German literature that stretches from Hanover in Germany far into Turkey and to the Syrian border."

Deniz Utlu, born in Hanover in 1983, lives in Berlin. He studied economics at the Freie Universität of Berlin and at the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne. In 2014 he published his first novel *Die Ungehaltenen*, which was adapted for the stage at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in 2015. His second novel *Gegen Morgen* was published by Suhrkamp Verlag in 2019. His essays have been published in the feuilleton of newspapers (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Der Spiegel*, *Der Freitag*) and in anthologies (most recently: *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum; Wir. Gestern. Heute. Hier*). From 2003 to 2014, he edited the culture and society magazine *freitext*. From 2017 to 2019, he wrote the column *Einträge ins Logbuch* for the *Tagesspiegel*. He also curates the literature series "Prosa der Verhältnisse" at the Maxim Gorki Theatre. Most recently, he was awarded the Literature Prize of the City of Hanover in 2019.

This year's award ceremony took place immediately after the competition, and the video recording is available at www.lcb.de and www.adk.de until 16 May 2021. The other nominees were Daniela Dröscher, Ursula Fricker, Valeria Gordeev, Michael Kleeberg and Senthuram Varatharajah.

The Alfred Döblin Prize, donated by Günter Grass in 1979 and awarded every two years for an unfinished prose manuscript, is organised by the Akademie der Künste and the Literary Colloquium Berlin and, in the spirit of its founder, commemorates Döblin as one of the most versatile German writers of the modern age. Endowed with EUR 15,000, the Alfred Döblin Prize is being awarded for the 23rd time this year and is being supported by the S. Fischer Foundation.

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