

Press Release

Press and Public Relations

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New members of the Akademie der Künste

The Akademie der Künste has taken in 31 new members. The elections took place at the 62nd General Assembly (24 – 26 May 2024) in Berlin. All newly elected members have since accepted their election. The Akademie der Künste currently has 435 members in its six art sections. The following were admitted: **Visual Arts Section:** Alexandra Bircken, Klaus vom Bruch, Ursula Sax, Julia Scher, Thomas Struth; **Architecture Section:** Momoyo Kaijima, Jan Knippers, Marianne Mommsen, Philipp Oswald, Xu Tiantian; **Music Section:** Anna Korsun; **Literature Section:** Lena Gorelik, Marion Poschmann, Yoko Tawada; **Performing Arts Section:** Aleksandar Denić, Katja Erfurth, Marcel Kohler, Falk Richter, Ilse Ritter, Dietmar Schwarz, Edgar Selge, Jette Steckel, Almut Zilcher; **Film and Media Arts Section:** Andreas Ammer, Peter Badel, Silke Fischer, Floros Floridis, Helgard Haug, Agnieszka Holland, Andreas Kleinert, Harf Zimmermann.

Brief biographies of the new members, in alphabetical order:

Andreas Ammer, writer, producer, television journalist, audio play author and director

Born in Munich in 1960, he studied German language and literature, philosophy and the history of science before working as an assistant to Alexander Kluge. Since 2003, he has edited the ARD literary programme *Druckfrisch*. He regularly works on audio plays with musicians including Ulrike Haage and FM Einheit. His works have won numerous awards (selection): *Orbus Auditus - Das Lautlexikon* (1990), *Apokalypse live* (1995), *Crashing Aeroplanes* (2002). Theatre performances since 2017 include the noise opera *Symphonie der Sirenen* at the Brno Philharmonic. In 2019, he received the prestigious Günter Eich Prize together with FM Einheit.

Peter Badel, cameraman

Born in Berlin in 1953, he studied cinematography from 1977 to 1981 at the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen Potsdam-Babelsberg, before working as a cameraman at the DEFA-Studio für Spielfilme (DEFA Studio for Feature Films). He worked closely with documentary film director Thomas Heise, including on *Das Haus / 1984* (1984), *Volkspolizei / 1985* (1985), *Barluschke* (1997), *Neustadt (Stau – Der Stand der Dinge)* (2000) and *Material* (2009). His feature films include *Erster Verlust* (1990, directed by Maxim Dessau) and *Zirri – das Wolkenwach* (*The Cloud Lamb*) (1992, directed by Rolf Losansky). From 2007 to 2019 professorship

“Cinematographer for Digital Media” at the Film University Babelsberg. He has also taught in Karlsruhe and Ludwigsburg.

Alexandra Bircken, visual artist

Born in Cologne in 1967, she lives and works in Berlin. She studied fashion design at Central Saint Martins University of the Arts London from 1991 to 1995. She has been a professor of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. When creating her installations and sculptures, she draws on a wide range of artistic materials: everyday objects, motorcycles, handmade textiles and machine-processed fabrics as well as organic materials such as wood, leather and bone. Her work often deals with the theme of the human body.

Klaus vom Bruch, media artist

Born in Cologne in 1952, he lives and works in Berlin. He was Professor of Media Art at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design from 1992 to 1998 and at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich from 1999 to 2018. Initially Klaus vom Bruch worked almost exclusively with video. Many of his works bear autobiographical traits and are characterised by a layering of documentary footage, advertising elements and self-portraits. In his work he often highlights the connection between media and power. Technology is not merely a means of expression, it is also the subject of his art.

Aleksandar Denić, set designer, film designer

Born in Belgrade in 1963, he studied stage and set design at the University of Arts in Belgrade. He has worked for stage and film for over 30 years, including with Emir Kusturica. In his theatre work he has worked since the 2000s primarily as a set designer for director Frank Castorf, at the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, in major theatres and opera houses in German-speaking countries, at the Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals and additional stages around the world. In 2014 he was voted Stage Designer of the Year by *Opernwelt* magazine and received the theatre prize DER FAUST. He has been Professor of Stage Design at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade since 2010.

Katja Erfurth, dancer and choreographer

Born in Dresden in 1971, she trained at the Palucca University of Dance Dresden before joining the ballet company of the Saxon State Opera in Dresden from 1990 to 1997. Since then, she has worked independently, realising her own projects and collaborating with artists from other disciplines as a choreographer and soloist, for which she was awarded the Kunstpreis der Landeshauptstadt Dresden 2020, among other prizes. From 2002 to 2023, she was Artistic Director of the Whitsun Festival at Batzdorf Castle. Since 2016, she has been committed to the preservation and use of the former Mary Wigman School Dresden. She is Vice

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President of the Saxon Cultural Senate and a member of the Saxon Academy of the Arts.

Silke Fischer, set designer and filmmaker

Born in 1961, she studied art education, theology and visual communication at the HfBK Hamburg. Co-founder of the collective “Abbildungszentrum” and co-editor of the video magazine *Der Renegat*. She began her career as a director on documentary and feature film projects; since 1996 she has worked primarily as a production designer. Selected projects: *Bungalow* (2002, directed by Ulrich Köhler), *Alle anderen (Everyone Else)* (2009) and *Toni Erdmann* (2016, directed by Maren Ade), *Vor der Morgenröte – Stefan Zweig in Amerika (Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe)* (2016) and the series *Unorthodox* (2020, both directed by Maria Schrader), *Pelikanblut (Pelican Blood)* (2019, directed by Katrin Gebbe) and *Ökozid* (2020, directed by Andres Veiel). She teaches production design at the Zurich University of the Arts.

Floros Floridis, jazz musician and film composer

Born in 1952 in Thessaloniki, Greece, he lives in Thessaloniki and Berlin. With a musical focus on improvised music, he has played with Evan Parker, Conny Bauer, Peter Brötzmann, Günter Baby Sommer and with many other musicians of international renown. He has created compositions for films by director Jeanine Meerapfel, including *Annas Sommer (Annas Summer)* (2001), *Der deutsche Freund (My German Friend)* (2012) and *Eine Frau (A Woman)* (2021), for short films and documentaries as well as theatre and dance productions. In 1983 he founded the Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music in Thessaloniki. He has worked as a producer for Greek radio and as artistic director of the jazz events of the European Capital of Culture Thessaloniki.

Lena Gorelik, writer, theatre and radio play author, essayist and journalist

Born in St. Petersburg in 1981, she lives in Munich. After attending journalism school, she studied communication science, politics, sociology and Eastern European studies. She is a poetics lecturer at the University of Hanover and teaches creative writing at various universities. Publications include (selection): *Meine weißen Nächte* (2004), *Hochzeit in Jerusalem* (2007), *Lieber Mischa ... Du bist ein Jude* (2011), *Sie können aber gut Deutsch!* (2012), *Mehr Schwarz als Lila* (2017), *Wer wir sind* (2021). Awards include (selection): Bayerischer Kunstförderpreis, Marieluise-Fleißer-Preis, Heinrich Mann Prize of the Akademie der Künste (2024).

Hilgard Haug, author and director for stage and audio plays

Born in Sindelfingen in 1969, she studied Applied Theatre Studies in Giessen, where she began her work with collective structures. In 2002, after various solo projects in the field of photography and visual arts, she founded the theatre group

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Rimini Protokoll together with Stefan Kaegi and Daniel Wetzl. The group's focus on innovative perspectives is demonstrated in examples including the re-enactment of a Bundestag session, *Deutschland 2*, the performances *Karl Marx: Das Kapital, Erster Band*, which was cast with experts from everyday life, and *Sabonation – go home and follow the news*, which was about the bankruptcy of an airline company. Most recently, Haug published *All right. Good night.* as a novel, theatre and audio play.

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Agnieszka Holland, director and screenwriter

Born in Warsaw in 1948, the director has been making films for six decades. She graduated from the Film and Television School of the Academy of performing Arts in Prague in 1971. After returning to Poland, she worked as an assistant to Krzysztof Kieślowski. Her mentor is Andrzej Wajda. Her first directorial works are attributed to the “cinema of moral unrest”. In 1981, after martial law was declared in Poland, she emigrated to France. Since then, she has directed international productions such as *Hitlerjunge Salomon* (1990), and *The Secret Garden* (1993) and *Spoor* (2017) and she has been nominated for several Oscars. Her latest film, *Green Border* (2023), was met with strong criticism by the PiS government. Holland was president of the European Film Academy for many years.

Momoyo Kaijima, architect

Born in 1969 in Tokyo, where she now lives. After completing her studies at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, she founded the Atelier Bow-Wow with her partner Yoshiharu Tsuamoto in 1992. Her designs for new forms of housing in Japan are pioneering in terms of their social and ecological approach, with a focus on people and their relationship to the built and natural environment. One of her most important projects is the Mado building in Tokyo (2006). She has taught at various universities around the world and has been a full professor of Architectural Behaviorology at the Faculty of Architecture at ETH Zurich since 2021.

Andreas Kleinert, author and director

Born in East Berlin in 1962, he first worked as a transport worker before working as an assistant director. From 1986 to 1989 he studied at the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen Potsdam-Babelsberg. His debut film *Leb' wohl Joseph* (1989) premiered at the Locarno Film Festival. He regularly shoots *Tatort* and *Polizeiruf* episodes for television, which have received several Grimme prizes. His successful cinema work includes *Wege in die Nacht (Paths in the Night)* (1999), *Freischwimmer (Head Under Water)* (2007), *Hedda* (2016) and, most recently, *Lieber Thomas (Dear Thomas)* (2021), which is based on the biography of Thomas Brasch and won nine awards at the German Film Awards.

Jan Knippers, engineer

Born in Düsseldorf in 1962, he now lives in Stuttgart. After his studies and doctorate in civil engineering at TU Berlin, he founded the engineering firm Knippers Helbig Advanced Engineering, which he managed from 2001 to 2017. The company is based in Stuttgart, Berlin and New York, and specializes in structural and façade design as well as sustainability consulting for construction projects (steel construction, timber construction, bridges and airports). In 2018, he founded Jan Knippers Ingenieure with a focus on innovative projects that he accompanies from concept to completion, primarily incorporating timber and fibre composite structures. He teaches at the University of Stuttgart, where he was Dean of the Faculty of Architecture until 2023. In 2024 he will be a visiting professor at University College London.

Marcel Kohler, actor, director, theatremaker

Born in Mainz in 1991, he studied at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts before joining the ensemble of the Deutsches Theater Berlin in 2015. In 2023/24 he moved to the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz. He has acted with Daniela Löffner, Jossi Wieler, Stephan Kimmig, among others, and had his debut at the Salzburg Festival in 2015; he has directed productions at the Deutsches Theater, Nationaltheater Weimar, Theater Heidelberg, and has done film work with Angela Schanelec. He was awarded the Alfred Kerr Prize in 2015 and received the Best New Actor Award 2016 by the magazine *Theater heute*, and received the Berlin Art Prize of the Akademie der Künste in 2023. In 2018 he founded the collective Neues Künstlertheater with former co-students.

Anna Korsun, composer

Born 1986 in Donetsk, Ukraine, she lives in Germany. She studied composition in Kyiv and Munich. She has been a visiting professor at the Amsterdam Conservatory since 2018. Her focus is on acoustic sound sources, with a particular interest in the human voice. In addition to purely musical works, she also collaborates with artists from the fields of theatre, dance, film, art and literature. Her works are performed regularly at concerts and festivals around the world. Korsun has received numerous scholarships and awards, including scholarships at Villa Massimo (Rome) and Villa Aurora (Los Angeles) and the 2018 Berlin Art Prize of the Akademie der Künste. Selected works: *FOS* for eight slide trumpets (2024), *Rito* for string octet, *Terricone* for orchestra (2022).

Marianne Mommsen, landscape architect

Born in Berlin in 1972, she lives in Berlin. She studied landscape architecture at the University of Hanover and Sheffield University. Together with Gero Heck, she founded the firm relais Landschaftsarchitekten in 2001. She has lectured at the TU Berlin and at the University of Stuttgart. She has been a member of the design advisory board for public spaces in Berlin since 2020 and has been on the design

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advisory board of the city of Stuttgart since 2023. Selection of works: *Der geschriebene Garten. Gärten der Welt Berlin* (2011), *Neue Ufer, Landesgartenschau Überlingen* (2020), *Kunstcampus, Berlin* (2021), *Freiräume Europa-City, Berlin* (2022).

Philipp Oswald, architect and publicist

Born in Frankfurt am Main in 1964, he studied architecture at TU Berlin and HdK Berlin and now lives in Kassel and Berlin. Since 2006 he has been a Professor of Architectural Theory and Design at the University of Kassel. He served as Director of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation from 2009 to 2014. He is committed to the values of democratic rule of law in the field of architecture and urban planning (including in the context of the Berlin Palace, the Potsdam Garrison Church and the Römer in Frankfurt), representing his positions in articles, debates and books, including *Bauen am nationalen Haus. Architektur als Identitätspolitik* (2023). He is co-initiator of the initiative Schlossaneignung (2024).

Marion Poschmann, writer, poet and novelist

Born in Essen in 1969, she lives in Berlin. Studied German, philosophy and Slavic studies, scenic writing. She is a visiting professor and poetics lecturer at several universities. Selection of publications: *Grund zu Schafen*, poems (2004), *Schwarzweißroman* (2005), *Hundenovelle* (2008), *The Pine Islands*, novel (2017), *Nimbus*, poems (2020), *Chor der Erinnyen*, novel (2023). Awards (selection): Peter-Huchel-Preis, Wilhelm-Raabe-Literaturpreis, German Prize for Nature Writing, Düsseldorfer Literaturpreis, Klopstock-Preis für neue Literatur, Bremer Literaturpreis.

Falk Richter, author and director

Born in Hamburg in 1969, after studying directing at the Hamburg University of Music and Drama, he worked as author and in-house director at the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, the Maxim Gorki Theater, the Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg and the Schauspielhaus Zürich. He has staged plays and operas on the major German-speaking stages, at European festivals and around the world, including his own plays, which have been translated and performed worldwide. He often seeks new interconnections between text, dance and music. He has been invited to the Theatertreffen on several occasions and has received numerous awards, including being named Director of the Year 2018 by the magazine *Theater heute*. He was named Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2024.

Ilse Ritter, actress

Born in Schaumburg near Rinteln in 1944, she studied at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, and has been performing on stage for over 60 years. She was a protagonist at Peter Stein's Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer and under Peter Zadek's directorships at Schauspielhaus Bochum and Deutsches

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Schauspielhaus Hamburg, where she was a member for a total of 20 years. She has also worked with Klaus Michael Grüber, Luc Bondy, Claus Peymann, Frank Castorf, Simon Stone, Falk Richter, and has appeared in numerous film and television productions. She was named Actress of the Year by the magazine *Theater heute* in 1985 and 1994, and is one of the dedicatees of Thomas Bernhard's play *Ritter, Dene, Voss*.

Ursula Sax, sculptor

Born in Backnang in 1935, she lives and works in Berlin. Starting at an early age she devoted herself to sculpture in public spaces. From the 1960s to the 1980s she was invited to take part in numerous competitions, producing sculptures that were realised in Berlin and elsewhere. In her work, Ursula Sax conducts artistic research on different materials, underlining their specific properties and transforming them into new forms. Elements of dynamics, movement and participation took on an increasingly important role in her work and characterize her performances, such as that of central work *Geometrisches Ballett (Hommage à Oskar Schlemmer)* (1992).

Julia Scher, media artist

Born in Hollywood, California in 1954, today she lives and works in Cologne. She has taught at numerous institutions, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Cooper Union for Art and Science, the University of California, Harvard University and Columbia University. In the mid-1980s Julia Scher emerged as a precise yet playful analyst of social and technological change. For over 30 years she has been exploring the subject of video surveillance as a concrete phenomenon of control on the one hand, as well as its effects on private and public space on the other.

Dietmar Schwarz, music theatre dramaturge, opera director

Born in Biberach an der Riss in 1957, Dietmar Schwarz studied literature and theatre in Munich and at the Sorbonne. He began his career at theatres in Freiburg and Bremen and at the Frankfurt Opera, before becoming head dramaturge for music theatre at the Bremen Theater in 1994. This was followed by positions as opera director at the Nationaltheater Mannheim in 1998 and at the Theater Basel from 2006 to 2012, which was twice voted Opera House of the Year by *Opernwelt* magazine under his direction. Since 2012, he has been artistic director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where he is responsible in particular for the focus on contemporary music theatre and the repertoire of the French Grand Opéra.

Edgar Selge, actor and author

Born in Brilon in 1948, he studied at the Otto Falckenberg School in Munich. Following his studies he acted at the Schillertheater Berlin, and starting in 1979 for nearly 20 years, in the ensemble of the Münchner Kammerspiele under Dieter

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Dorn. He has made guest appearances on all the major German-language stages, worked on cinema and television productions and created an extremely popular television character as Inspector Jürgen Tauber in the series *Polizeiruf 110*. Awards include the 2016 Actor of the Year prize by *Theater heute* magazine and the theatre prize DER FAUST, multiple Grimme Awards, the German Film Prize, the Bavarian Film Prize and the German Television Prize. His autofictional novel *Hast Du uns endlich gefunden* was published in 2021.

Jette Steckel, director

Born in Berlin in 1982, she studied directing at the Theaterakademie Hamburg and began her career in 2006 at the Thalia Theater Hamburg, where she is now in-house director. She has directed at Schauspiel Köln, Burgtheater Wien, the Salzburg Festival, Deutsches Theater and Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz; she made her opera debut in 2013 in Basel with *Tosca*. For her first productions at the Thalia Theater, she was awarded the Young Director Award by the magazine *Theater heute* in 2007 and the Eysoldt-Preis für Junge Regie in 2008, followed by the Theaterpreis Hamburg – Rolf Mares and the Der Faust Theater Prize, among others. In 2024, she was invited to the Theatertreffen for the first time with *Die Vaterlosen* by the Münchner Kammerspiele.

Thomas Struth, photographer

Born in Geldern in 1954, he lives and works in Düsseldorf and Berlin. He studied at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1973 to 1980 – first painting with Gerhard Richter and Peter Kleeman, before turning to photography with Bernd Becher from 1976. His early photographs show sober urban landscapes; starting in the mid-1980s he increasingly turned to human portraits – both family pictures and individual portraits. In his well-known series of museum photos, he captures visitors looking at works of art. Since 1990, he has been represented in numerous international exhibitions and collections, including in New York, London, Venice and Seoul.

Yoko Tawada, writer, poet, essayist, radio play and theatre author

Born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1960, she lived in Hamburg from 1982 to 2006 before moving to Berlin, where she lives today. She studied literature in Tokyo (Waseda University), Hamburg and Zurich. Since 1986 she has published in German and Japanese, including the works: *Opium for Ovid (Limited Edition)* (2000), *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*, novel (2014), *Paul Celan and the Trans-Tibetan Angel*, novel (2020), *Eine Zungengymnastik für die Genderdebatte* (2023). Selected awards include the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize, the Goethe Medal, the Murasaki Shikibu Prize, the Erlanger Literaturpreis für Poesie als Übersetzung and the Kleist Prize.

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Xu Tiantian, architect

Born in 1975 in Putian, Fujian Province, China, she lives in Beijing. After studying architecture at Tsinghua University in Beijing and at Harvard Graduate School of Design, she was a founding director of DnA_Design and Architecture in Beijing. She taught at the Yale School of Architecture, New Haven. In 2023 she was speaker at the World Congress of Architects. She represents a contemporary position that combines architectural, cultural, social and ecological architecture. Selection of works (projects in China, Zhejiang province): Shimen Bridge, Shimen (2018); Tofu Factory, Caizhai (2018); Huiming Tea Workshop, She Autonomous District, Jingning (2020); conversion of abandoned quarries into cultural sites, Jinyun (2022).

Almut Zilcher, actress

Born in Graz in 1954, she completed her training at the Mozarteum in Salzburg in 1974. She has been a member of the ensemble at the Deutsches Theater Berlin since 2006. She has also performed at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus and Thalia Theater Hamburg, Schauspielhaus Bochum, Schauspiel Frankfurt, Schauspiel Köln, at the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz as well as the Salzburg Festival. She has worked with a multitude of directors including George Tabori, Leander Haußmann, Karin Beier, Hans Neuenfels, Ulrich Rasche and been involved in a long-standing collaboration with Dimiter Gotscheff, for which she was named Actress of the Year in 1992 and – together with Gotscheff, Samuel Finzi and Wolfram Koch – received the Berlin Theatre Prize in 2011.

Harf Zimmermann, photographic artist

Born in Dresden in 1955; after dropping out of a journalism degree, he worked in a photo lab before beginning his studies at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (Academy of Visual Arts) in Leipzig under Professor Arno Fischer in 1982. He has been a freelancer since 1988. 1990–1999 founding member of OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen, Until the 2000s he worked for international magazines such as *New York Times*, *Geo*, *Mare* and *Stern*.

To this day, he mainly takes analogue photographs on large and very large negative formats. The series *BRAND WAND* and *Hufelandstraße 1055 Berlin* are based on his interest in factual photography and long-term studies.

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