

Roswitha Haftmann Stiftung

Media release

Zurich, 26 September 2022

Europe's best endowed art award goes to Gülsün Karamustafa

On Friday evening, 23 September, Gülsün Karamustafa, one of Turkey's leading artists, accepted Europe's best endowed award for contemporary art, the Roswitha Haftmann Prize at the Kunsthaus Zürich.

The Board of the Roswitha Haftmann Foundation decided back in July last year to award the Roswitha Haftmann Prize 2021/2022, which is endowed with CHF 150,000, to the Turkish artist Gülsün Karamustafa. Some 100 invited guests from the worlds of art and culture attended the formal presentation. They were welcomed by Dr Christoph Becker, Chair of the Board of the Roswitha Haftmann Foundation and Director of the Kunsthaus Zürich. The Prize was presented by Karola Kraus, Vice-Chair of the Foundation Board and General Director of the Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien. Prof. Bernhart Schwenk, member of the Foundation Board and Chief Curator of Contemporary Art at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, gave the laudation.

A LEADING ARTIST

Karamustafa, whose work spans multiple genres including painting, installation, video and performance, is one of Turkey's leading artists. She is inspired by the aesthetic of Byzantine icons and reverse glass painting, but breaks with the traditions of canonical art. 'As one of the most artistically and indeed politically compelling voices of our time,' stated the Board of the Roswitha Haftmann Foundation, 'Gülsün Karamustafa has earned the Roswitha Haftmann Prize many times over.'

CV AND AWARDS

Born in Ankara in 1946, Gülsün Karamustafa studied at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, where she still lives and works. Her career began in the 1970s and is an early contribution to the societal debate around migration, feminism, gender and the legacy of colonialism that is more relevant today than ever before. Her stance, which also draws on her own experiences, provoked the Turkish government. Her passport was revoked, rendering her unable to travel abroad for 16 years. In 1981 she obtained her doctorate from the State Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, where she had been lecturing since 1975, with a thesis on 'The Interaction Between Painting and Poster'. Thereafter, she devoted herself entirely to her art, with great success: her works have been acquired by prestigious institutions including Tate Modern, London, the Guggenheim, New York, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Museum Ludwig in

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Cologne, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, and major private collections. She attracted further attention with solo exhibitions in Europe and the US and participation in biennials in Istanbul, Sao Paulo, Singapore, Kiev and Seville. Since the turn of the millennium, Gülsün Karamustafa has inspired an entire generation of artists to contribute their works to a socio-political discourse. Her own commitment to that debate has earned her accolades including the Prince Claus Award from the Netherlands.

FOUNDATION AND JURY

Gülsün Karamustafa is the twentieth artist to be honoured with Europe's best endowed award for art. The Prize was originally the initiative of Roswitha Haftmann (1924–1998), whose Foundation has awarded it since 2001 to a living artist who has created an oeuvre of outstanding quality. The winner is chosen by the Foundation Board, which includes the directors of the Kunstmuseum Bern, the Kunstmuseum Basel, the Museum Ludwig in Cologne and the Kunsthaus Zürich. As provided for under the Foundation's rules, Christoph Becker, the current Chair, will be succeeded by Ann Demeester, who will also take over as Director of the Kunsthaus Zürich on 1 October 2022. Additional members are co-opted by the Board.

Further information about the recipients of the Prize to date and the Foundation can be found at www.roswithahaftmann-foundation.com.

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