

Roswitha Haftmann Stiftung

Press release

Zurich, 27 November 2013

Rosemarie Trockel receives 2014 Roswitha Haftmann Prize. Special prize for Robert Frank.

The 2014 Roswitha Haftmann Prize – the best endowed art award in Europe – goes to the German conceptual artist Rosemarie Trockel. Photo and film artist Robert Frank receives a special prize.

The Board of the Roswitha Haftmann Foundation has awarded the 2014 Roswitha Haftmann Prize – worth CHF 150,000 – to the German artist Rosemarie Trockel (born 1952). Trockel is one of the most important artists of a generation that produces sophisticated work in a range of media and is actively involved in art-related teaching and research.

In the 1970s Trockel studied painting at the Werkschule in Cologne. By this time she was already making Super 8 films. She was invited to stage solo exhibitions in Cologne and Bonn in 1982. Her breakthrough came at the end of the 1980s in the US, when the Museum of Modern Art New York commissioned her to stage a solo show. This was followed in the early 1990s by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. Rosemarie Trockel's appearances at the documenta exhibitions X and XIII and the fact that she had been offered a single exhibition in the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1999 as the first woman garnered much acclaim. Trockel repeatedly returns to North Rhine-Westphalia with her projects. In 2007 she took part in the 'sculpture projects' in Münster.

The themes of her works are the elements that constitute society: norms, clichés, symbols and codes. Her drawings, paintings, ceramics, videos, sculptures and objects question their function and the way they are treated as self-evident. Trockel's works refuse to be pinned down to a specific iconography or theoretical orientation. She rapidly acquired the label of feminist with her early pictures made of machine-knitted woollen material, and indeed the subtle handling of clichés and conventions has become an integral part of her work.

As Professor of Sculpture at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Rosemarie Trockel has been passing on her knowledge to the artists of the future since 1998. She is a founder member of the Academy of the Arts of the World in Cologne and was admitted to the North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences, Humanities and the Arts in 2012. It is in recognition of both her artistic achievements and her academic work that she has been awarded the Roswitha Haftmann Prize.

FOUNDATION, PRIZE AND AWARD CEREMONY

Rosemarie Trockel is the fourteenth artist to receive Europe's most valuable art prize and the fifth woman to do so, after Maria Lassnig, Mona Hatoum, Vija Celmins and Cindy Sherman. The

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presentation will take place on 14 May 2014 at the Kunsthaus Zürich. 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 well as other members co-opted by the Board.

SPECIAL PRIZE FOR ROBERT FRANK

The deed of the Roswitha Haftmann Foundation provides for the jury to award special prizes at its discretion. It has now chosen to do so for the fourth time, and is bestowing on the photographer, film director and cinematographer Robert Frank a prize of CHF 75,000. Frank is one of the most important photographers of the second half of the 20th century. Born in Zurich in 1924, the Swiss-American artist has lived in New York for more than 60 years. He first came to prominence in the 1950s with works for 'Life', 'Vogue', 'Look' and 'Fortune', working alongside the leading practitioners of his trade. Edward Steichen requested his assistance in the selection of works for the legendary exhibition 'The Family of Man'. Frank's volume of photographs entitled 'The Americans' – the product of an ambitious pictorial reportage on the United States – set new standards in documentary photography. In 1958, Frank swapped his still camera for a movie camera. His first venture into the medium of film was a triumph: 'Pull My Daisy' (1959) was a ground-breaking portrait of the Beat generation. Since then, he has produced more than 20 films and video essays. Yet Frank has never turned his back on photography. His first solo exhibition was staged at the Art Institute Chicago in 1961. MoMA followed in 1962. Today, his volumes of photographs and writings are available in translation around the world and his films and photographs have found their way into major public and private collections. In 2008 an exhibition was devoted to him at the Museum Folkwang, Essen, followed in 2009 by the National Gallery of Art, Washington. Robert Frank's unique narrative style has exerted a lasting influence on numerous other artists.

For further information see: www.roswithahaftmann-foundation.com.

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