

Press Release

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Akademie der Künste Takes Over the Archive of Eberhard Fechner

The Akademie der Künste has acquired the artistic estate of its former member Eberhard Fechner (1926–1992), a deceased television and documentary film director. Today, on 21 October, Fechner would have been 90 years old.

Eberhard Fechner is one of Germany's most significant filmmakers. In recent decades his films created a panorama of German history, providing a cross-section that penetrated all levels of society. His most prominent works include *Tadellöser & Wolff* (1975), an adaptation of the novel by Walter Kempowski; and *Wolfskinder* (1990), about the flight of six siblings from East Prussia; but primarily concern his filmed interviews. For his most important film, *Der Prozeß* (1984), Fechner interviewed defendants, public prosecutors, defence lawyers and above all witnesses of the trial held in Düsseldorf from 1975 to 1981 against those responsible for the Majdanek concentration camp. Fechner reconstructed the atrocities perpetrated in a concentration camp and recorded the difficulties faced by both the German justice system and the German public during this pursuit of justice.

Der Prozeß is a powerful television document about National Socialist crimes and their prosecution, and is one of the most important German films about the Holocaust.

The size of Fechner's **archive** encompasses 40 shelf meters. It includes film scripts, photographs, production documents, several thousand pages of correspondence – with Günter Grass, Walter Jens, Egon Monk, Walter Kempowski, et al. – as well as more than 1,500 hours of interviews, sound recordings which Fechner conducted for his award-winning documentaries, such as *Nachrede auf Klara Heydebreck* (1969), *Die Comedian Harmonists* (1976) and *Der Prozeß* (1984). These recordings are a great resource, especially since only a small part of the interviews have been integrated into Fechner's films. A project position has been established to index and develop the extensive Eberhard-Fechner-Archiv. Processing of the archive is expected to take several years.

Fechner was among the founding members of the Film and Media Arts Section at the Akademie der Künste in 1984, and was its deputy director until his death in 1992. In 2011, Fechner was honoured with a star on the Boulevard of Stars, a walk of fame on Potsdamer Platz in Berlin.

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