

Press Release

9 June 2023

In Recognition of Jeanine Meerapfel, President of the Akademie der Künste, on her 80th birthday on 14 June 2023

Jeanine Meerapfel celebrates her 80th birthday on 14 June 2023. The filmmaker, screenwriter and producer has been the Akademie der Künste president since 2015. She was elected a member of the Akademie in 1998. At the helm of the artist's association, currently comprising 418 members, Meerapfel sets important accents concerning political, cultural-political and artistic questions.

She continuously takes a stand against antisemitism in Germany. In her *Academy Dialogue* series, she spoke amongst others with the Israeli sociologist Natan Sznaider and the French rabbi Delphine Horvilleur about Jewish identity, antisemitism and remembrance culture. Freedom of expression in the arts is also a particular concern of Meerapfel. In autumn 2020, she initiated the "European Alliance of Academies" – an association of currently 60 art academies and cultural institutions from countries in the European Union, the United Kingdom and Norway, working together for the freedom of the arts and the autonomy of institutions (www.allianceofacademies.eu).

Jeanine Meerapfel brings her cinematic expertise to the work done in the Akademie and addresses film-political topics in larger discussions, for example, in the *Akademie Dialogue* series. Artificial Intelligence's (A. I.) impact on human life is one of her main focuses. She has inspired numerous educational special events and exhibition programmes at the Akademie der Künste, such as *Gedächtnis und Gerechtigkeit* (2016), *Uncertain States: Artistic Strategies in States of Emergency* (2016–17), *Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives* (2021) and the educational project "Berlin – Portbou. Auf den Spuren Walter Benjamins" (2021). In spring 2024, Meerapfel, in collaboration with the arts sections at the Akademie der Künste, is planning an extensive event programme on the subject of UTOPIAS (19 April–26 May 2024).

Jeanine Meerapfel was born in Argentina in 1943, the daughter of Jewish emigrants. Following studies in journalism in Buenos Aires, in the 1960s, she studied with Edgar Reitz and Alexander Kluge at the Filminstitut der Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm (HfG Ulm). She shot her first feature film, *Malou*, in 1980 with Ingrid Caven; Michael Ballhaus was the director of photography. Since then, she made numerous award-winning documentaries and feature films on migration, remembrance and identity. Among them: *Im Land meiner Eltern* (1981), *La Amiga* (1988) with Liv Ullmann playing the lead, *Amigomío* (1995) and *Der deutsche Freund* (2012), as well as audiovisual essays made in collaboration with Floros

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Floridis: *Confusion / Diffusion* (2015) and *Moving Sand / Topos* (2019).
Meerapfel's current documentary film essay, *Eine Frau* (2021), made its world premiere in 2021 at the Mar del Plata International Film Festival (Argentina). It was screened at numerous film festivals and cinemas in 2022 and 2023 and was awarded several prizes. In addition to her cinematic oeuvre, Meerapfel has taught as a professor at the Kunsthochschule für Medien in Köln (Academy of Media Arts Cologne).

The Bundesverband Regie (BVR) named the filmmaker its honorary president in February 2021. For her successes as a filmmaker and author and her engagement for human rights, freedom of expression and diversity of cultures, in 2020, Jeanine Meerapfel was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit (1st Class).

The Akademie der Künste expresses its sincere congratulations to its president on her birthday.

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