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RUSSIAN ART HISTORIAN, WRITER AND CURATOR EKATERINA DEGOT WINS THE IGOR ZABEL AWARD FOR CULTURE AND THEORY 2014



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jovana

This year the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory is sending out a strong signal to Russia. The first prize (EUR 40,000) goes to Ekaterina Degot, the art director of the Academy of the Arts of the World in Cologne, who is known for her critical comments on the official politics of her home country. One of the three Igor Zabel working grants (each worth EUR 12,000) is traditionally awarded by the laureate. This year it goes to the Russian activist, writer and translator Kirill Medvedev for his publishing house, Free Marxist Press. The jury awarded two grants to theorists who examine the close interaction between political and cultural developments: the art theorist Karel Císař from Prague and the art historian Miklavž Komelj from Ljubljana.

With this year's winner, the Igor Zabel Award is sending out a clear signal of support for the new Russian dissident scene. Faced with the overheated nationalist climate created by the conflict in Ukraine and a new era of East-West confrontation, the scene is finding it increasingly difficult to attract attention within and above all outside of Russia.

Ekaterina Degot was awarded the prize for her interdisciplinary work as a critic and curator who primarily focuses on socio-political and aesthetic topics in Russia and Eastern Europe. Her recent blog contributions to the debate on a boycott at Manifesta in St. Petersburg received a great deal of attention. In a subtle manner, she made it clear that it would have been fatal to cut off Russian artists from international exchange at this moment in time, even though there was always a risk that the renowned exhibition could be misappropriated to cultivate the image of an undemocratic system. "I am extremely grateful for the award, especially because I see it as a gesture of solidarity with intellectuals of Russia in one of the darkest moments of this country's history", commented Ekaterina Degot the decision of the jury.

The awards ceremony was held on the evening of 6 November at Viennese Secession in a setting designed by the Austrian artist Josef Dabernig. It was followed by a party featuring music from Lüften (Rainer Binder-Krieglstein and Andreas Fränzl), providing the Viennese art scene with an opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas with the laureates.

In the afternoon the prize winners presented themselves at a conference, whose motto “Continuing Dialogues” was borrowed from Igor Zabel. It took place at the mumok and the prize winners gave insight into their work in interviews with the jury members.

Endowed with total prize money of EUR 76,000, the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory has been awarded every two years since 2008 and will thus be awarded for the fourth time in 2014. The prize is an initiative of ERSTE Foundation and is offered in cooperation with the Igor Zabel Association for Culture and Theory (Ljubljana). It honours exceptional cultural achievements by art historians and art theorists whose work is related to Central and South Eastern Europe and encourages cultural dialogue. The prize winners are selected by an international jury. In 2014 the jury consists of philosopher Keti Chukhrov (Moscow), artist and architect Apolonija Šušteršič (Ljubljana) and the curator and deputy director of mumok, Rainer Fuchs.

for more information visit:

www.igorzabel.org

[Press release](#)

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Photo: Igor Zabel Award Winners 2014: Ekaterina Degot, Kirill Medvedev, Karel Císař, Miklavž Komelj © Barbara Zeidler

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