



PRESS RELEASE

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2020 Thomas Mann Fellows Chosen

The Thomas Mann House Advisory Board selected twelve fellows for a 2020 residency at the former home of Thomas Mann in Los Angeles from 77 applicants.

They are: Author and journalist **Mohamed Amjahid**, philosopher **Prof. Dr. Rainer Forst**, political scientist **Prof. Dr. Michael Zürn**, legal scholar **Prof. Dr. Christoph Möllers**, architectural journalists **Doris Kleilein** and **Friederike Meyer**, literary scholar **Prof. Dr. Friedhelm Marx**, TV journalist **Birte Meier**, American studies scholar **Prof. Dr. Heike Paul**, media historian **Prof. Dr. Claus Pias**, media scientist **Prof. Dr. Bernhard Pörksen**, and art historian **Prof. Dr. Katharina Sykora**.

During their three- to six-month stays they will examine the following questions:

- What can American English teach us with regard to the development of a new German language, which allows inclusion, visibility, and the emancipation of minorities? (Amjahid)
- Which standards of legitimacy are normatively appropriate as well as empirically feasible for national and international public institutions in the context of morals, law and politics? (Forst, Möllers, Zürn)
- How can we envision an architectural and urban planning culture that examines societal processes and informs new ways of cohabitation? (Kleinlein/ Meyer)
- What are the visions for and debates on Europe that have defined the interwar period in the US? What is the American perspective on current European crises? (Marx)
- Which narratives, practices and iconographies in European-American cultural and political imaginaries give rise to a "civic sentimentality"? (Paul)
- What can Germany learn from California with regard to the gender pay gap? (Meier)
- How do contemporary descriptions of the "digital age" around 1970 as anti-communist strategies during the Cold War influence our current understanding of the future of digital cultures? (Pias)
- How can digital enlightenment and a revised concept of media maturity contribute to a new journalistic accountability in digital interdependency networks? (Pörksen)
- How did Ulrike Ottinger's oeuvre influence debates on gender, geopolitics and cultural transfer on both sides of the Atlantic? (Sykora)

Minister of State for International Cultural Politics **Michelle Müntefering** said in Berlin: „No other matter occupied Thomas Mann during his time in America as much as the question of the sources of



fascism, democracy itself, and freedom, which are topics of global urgency. The Thomas Mann fellows are going to research these issues in the coming year. In order to seek remedies to strengthen social cohesion, we will have to look for answers on both sides of the Atlantic. The output will contribute to foster transatlantic dialogue and mutual understanding.”

Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media **Prof. Monika Grütters** commented: „These stellar nominees will be able to build bridges between continents and people. They will do this from an emblematic locality from which emanated impulses for a democratic and humanistic Germany. With creativity and experimental spirit, the new fellows will further enliven transatlantic exchange of ideas, facilitate trans-border communication and point to the things that unite us. In times like these, it is particularly crucial for European-American collaboration that the Thomas Mann House -with its program of discourse and dialogue- will be a venue to assess our common American and German values and goals.”

The Thomas Mann House was bought by the German government in June of 2016 and inaugurated by German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in 2018. The Thomas Mann House is a residence for distinguished researchers, thinkers and intellectuals from a variety of disciplines, who will tackle the challenges of our times, and foster intellectual and cultural exchange between Germany and the U.S.

The residencies are financed by the Berthold Leibinger Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation, the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Foundation. Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House is funded by the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media as well as the Goethe-Institut.

Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House, an independent and politically unaffiliated organization of the Federal Republic of Germany, fosters the intellectual and cultural exchange between the United States and Germany.

The institution awards fellowships in the two residences, Villa Aurora and Thomas Mann House, in Pacific Palisades, a suburb of Los Angeles, CA., organizing cultural programs in the U.S. and Germany. It is a reminder of the history of the European exile in California, while presenting a lively, current and diverse image of Germany, and allowing to contemplate societal, cultural and political challenges.

The members of the independent advisory board are **Prof. Dr. Peter-André Alt** (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz), **Obi Felten** (Alphabet / X Foundry), **Christian Hänel** (Robert Bosch Stiftung), **Prof. Dr. Peter Jelavich** (Johns Hopkins University), **Dr. Thomas Kempf** (Alfried Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Stiftung), **Prof. Dr. Miriam Meckel** (University of St. Gallen / publicist), **Dr. Steven Sokol** (American Council on Germany) and **Dr. Heinrich Wefing** (Die Zeit).