



PRESS RELEASE

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2021 Thomas Mann Fellowship Recipients

The Thomas Mann House Advisory Board selected the following six fellowship recipients for a 2021 residency at the former home of Thomas Mann in Los Angeles:

Political scientist **Christoph Bieber**, journalist and deputy editor-in-chief of ZEIT-Magazin **Maria Exner**, art critic **Magdalena Kröner**, political scientist **Christine Landfried**, computer scientist **Andreas Nitsche**, and business journalist **Felix Rohrbeck**.

The Thomas Mann House is a space for debate on the most pressing questions of our time. During their three-month stays, the 2021 Thomas Mann Fellows will address the following topics:

- Christoph Bieber researches possibilities for a Smart City Policy that is aligned with the dignity and autonomy of urban residents.
- Maria Exner examines journalists' and the media's responsibilities for public opinion in an era of technology-driven polarization. What can they contribute to a successful self-reflection in the public sphere?
- Magdalena Kröner explores how the close network of culture and digital technology in California can promote an unbiased interdisciplinary dialogue on the chances and risks of digitalization.
- Christine Landfried analyzes how new forms of political participation such as citizen's conferences can help recover trust in democratic policies.
- Andreas Nitsche demonstrates how technological solutions can promote cohesion in polarized societies.
- Felix Rohrbeck assesses appropriate policy responses to the distribution of wealth which is exceedingly perceived as unjust.

Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State for International Cultural Policy, issued the following statement about this in Berlin: "The COVID-19 pandemic has once again demonstrated that we will only be able to solve the global challenges of our time if we act together. We are focusing on global dialogue as opposed to nationalistic ivory-tower thinking. The exchange between Europe and the United States therefore continues to be vitally important. In politically turbulent times, it is important to build new bridges across the Atlantic. The Thomas Mann House is the perfect place for this. During Thomas Mann's exile, the house became a meeting place for European and American intellectuals. Today, it is once again a hub for the transatlantic dialogue. I am delighted that thinkers from different

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disciplines will once again take up quarters in the Thomas Mann House in the coming year to ponder the most pressing questions of our time in search of answers for the future.”

Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media **Prof. Monika Grütters** commented, “The newly selected Thomas Mann Fellows are uniquely qualified to develop pioneering ideas in the Thomas Mann House’s two main areas of focus: ‘Defacement -Digital Ethics’ and ‘States of Insecurity – Social and Cultural factors of Societal Cohesion.’ The corona outbreak has exposed the crucial importance of societal cohesion for the resolution of global challenges. Especially in these times, we depend on interdisciplinary approaches and ideas of fostering societal cohesion. This also applies to the development of ethical standards for digital communications. I am convinced that the eminent figures nominated for the fellowships will make important contributions within the transatlantic exchange and in the spirit of Thomas Mann.”

Due to the corona pandemic, the Thomas Mann Fellows 2020 - Mohammed Amjahid, Rainer Forst, Friedhelm Marx, Birte Meier, Christoph Möllers, Heike Paul, Claus Pias, Bernhard Pörksen, Andreas Reckwitz and Michael Zürn - make up for their stay in Pacific Palisades in 2021.

The members of the independent advisory board are **Prof. Dr. Peter-André Alt** (President Hochschulrektorenkonferenz), **Christine Benner** (Deputy Chair, IG Metall Metalworkers’ Union), **Christian Hänel** (Head of Department – Future Issues and Foundation Development, Robert Bosch Foundation), **Prof. Dr. Peter Jelavich** (Professor and Department Chair, Department of History, Johns Hopkins University), **Dr. Thomas Kempf** (Board of Directors, Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Foundation), **Janina Kugel** (Board of Supervisors & Senior Advisor), **Prof. Dr. Miriam Meckel** (Founding Editor ada, Professor, University St. Gallen), **Prof. Dr. Ulrich Raulff** (President, IfA – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), **Dr. Steven Sokol** (President, American Council on Germany) and **Dr. Heinrich Wefing** (Head of Politics Department, Die Zeit).

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 and Halbach-Foundation**. Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House are 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.



**VILLA AURORA
THOMAS MANN HOUSE**

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

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