



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berlin/Los Angeles, February 25, 2021

## **FREEDOM FROM FEAR – A transatlantic dialogue on the human right to live without fear**

### **A video series presented by Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House**

The video series "Freedom from Fear" created by Berlin directors **Florian Giefer** and **Peter Göltenboth** (pet&flo directors) for Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House presents reflections of fourteen prominent artists, authors, philosophers and scientists from Los Angeles and Germany on the human right to live without fear. The first six episodes will be screened free of charge on March 4 from 6 p.m. (CET) on monitors outside the Maxim Gorki Theater's studio stage in Berlin. At the same time, the first episode will premiere on the [Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House YouTube Channel](#).

In his 1941 State of the Union address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed four goals for "people everywhere in the world:" Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These four Freedoms became part of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Roosevelt equated "Freedom from Fear" mainly with overcoming war and violence. Today, the global consequences of the pandemic, climate change, and of rapid digital evolution and the resulting social change trigger fears all over the world. As social seismographs, the protagonists of the "Freedom from Fear" video series reflect on the significance of the right to live without fear in search of answers: How can literature, dance, music, philosophy, and politics conquer social fears?

Georg Büchner Prize Recipient **Felicitas Hoppe** accords more importance to freedom from fear than to freedom of speech or religion, since "freedom from fear, dread or threat [is] actually the prerequisite for the other three freedoms propagated by Roosevelt, which means, if I cannot guarantee this {freedom}, I will neither be able to exercise freedom of speech nor religion, and my basic needs will not be met."

Multi-media artists **Sam Durant** is known for addressing social, political, and cultural questions in his work. He states: "Persecution, prejudices, racism, all these negative things – we need to step outside the fear that's holding us back from imagining how we can change." In answer to his question, how dance can conquer fear, Berlin choreographer **Sasha Waltz** replies: "We are only free, if we carry fear along and listen to it."

"Freedom from Fear" sets out to instigate a transatlantic debate on the "new *New Deal*." What economic, social, and political reforms would be necessary to meet current challenges like inequality, racism, loss of trust in politics, and conspiracy theories? In her seminal work *Monarchy of Fear*, Martha Nussbaum has described how emotions play a key role in the structure of a just society. Political scientist Judith Shklar (1928–1992), who fled Nazi persecution by emigrating from Latvia to the United States together

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with her family and whose political thinking was shaped by the experience of powerlessness and social impoverishment, states in her influential essay *Liberalism of Fear*: "Systematic fear is the condition that makes freedom impossible, and it is aroused by the expectation of institutionalized cruelty as by nothing else." According to Shklar, it is not the common good that should be the primary objective of political action, but the avoidance of "cruelty, and the fear it inspires, and the very fear of fear itself."

### IN BERLIN

#### Public Viewing from March 4, 6 p.m. (CET):

Maxim Gorki Studio Stage  
Hinter dem Gießhaus 2  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

### WORLDWIDE

#### First episode premieres on March 4, 9 a.m. (PT) on

[https://www.vatmh.org/freedom\\_from\\_fear](https://www.vatmh.org/freedom_from_fear)

New episodes will be released every two weeks. Subscribe to our YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/VillaAuroraThomasMannHouse>

**Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House** is an independent, politically neutral cultural mediator of the Federal Republic of Germany. Our organization fosters intellectual and cultural exchange between Germany and the United States of America.

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