

Press Release

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Feuchtwanger Fellowship for Hadeer El-Mahdawy

Egyptian Journalist Invited to be the 2019 Feuchtwanger Fellow at Villa Aurora in Los Angeles

The Egyptian journalist Hadeer El-Mahdawy is awarded the 2019 Feuchtwanger Fellowship by Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House and the University of Southern California. The fellowship was named after the Jewish writer Lion Feuchtwanger who had to leave Nazi-Germany in 1933 and lived at Villa Aurora in Los Angeles starting in 1943 until his death in 1958.

The Feuchtwanger Fellowship allows journalists from countries with restrictions on freedom of opinion, to live and work in Lion and Marta Feuchtwanger's residence in California for a period of six months. Hadeer El-Mahdawy was nominated by Reporters Without Borders. Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House, in cooperation Feuchtwanger Memorial Library of University of Southern California award this fellowship, which is financed by the German Foreign Office. It commemorates the German exile in the United States and the persisting suppression of freedom of expression in many parts of the world.

Since 2006, Hadeer El-Mahdawy has worked for various independent Egyptian media, she is currently a full time reporter for the independent bilingual news website *Mada Masr*. She focuses on domestically sensitive topics, such as political detentions, labor, women's rights, refugees, religious minorities or the seizure of private property and land. Hadeer El-Mahdawy's dedication to human rights puts her and fellow journalists under threat of being arrested or persecuted by the security apparatus. In 2008, EL-Mahdawy and her independent colleagues were denied journalists' union press accreditations, for their work challenging the authorities. She eventually received it, but only after protesting and going on hunger strike together with her colleagues.

In Egypt, reporters can expect violent confrontations with police and demonstrators, often being harassed by riot police and sometimes by furious crowds of people. Gratuitous arrests and torture are daily fare. State-censorship is widespread. Many media outlets openly take sides with the army and the government, only few Egyptian journalists dare to be critical. In Egypt, reporters can expect violent confrontations with police and demonstrators, often being harassed by riot police and sometimes by furious crowds of people. Gratuitous arrests and torture are daily fare. Self-censorship is wide-spread. Many media outlets openly take sides with the army and the government, only few Egyptian journalists dare to be critical.

Photo: Hadeer El-Mahdawy. Photo: Sabry Khaled (rights-free)

More information on freedom of the press in Egypt can be found here: www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/aegypten/



VILLA AURORA
THOMAS MANN HOUSE

All Feuchtwanger Fellows

1996/1997	Akinwumi Adesokan, Nigeria	2009	Sanath Balasooriya, Sri Lanka
1997/1998	Tin Tin Win, Burma	2010	Christopher Mlalazi, Zimbabwe
1998/1999	Kunle Ajibade, Nigeria	2011	Amir Hassan Cheheltan, Iran
1999/2000	Zineb Laouedj, Algeria	2012	Hassouna Mosbahi, Tunisia
2001/2002	Shahid Nadeem, Pakistan	2013	Sviatlana Kurs, Belarus/Poland
2003/2004	Pierre Mujomba Mumbere, Congo	2014	Pham Doan Trang, Vietnam
2005	Syl Cheney Coker, Sierra Leone	2015	Yasmine Merei, Syria
2006	Zeynel Abidin Kizilyaprak, Turkey (Kurdistan)	2016	Diane Nininahazwe, Burundi
2007	Mary Ayubi, Afghanistan	2017	Alida Tota, Albania
2008	Xu Xing, China	2018	Onur Burcak Belli, Turkey/Syria
2009	Galima Bukharbaeva, Uzbekistan	2019	Hadeer El-Mahdawy, Egypt

Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House e.V. (VATMH) is an independent broker of the Federal Republic of Germany fostering intellectual and artistic exchange between Germany and the United States of America.

The non-profit is located in the two residencies Villa Aurora und Thomas Mann House in Pacific Palisades, a part of Los Angeles, California and in Germany. VATMH organizes cultural events, and is a reminder of the European history in the Californian exile. VATMH conveys a contemporary diverse image of Germany und facilitates common thought on our societal, cultural and political challenges.

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