

Press release**Phyllida Barlow receives the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung's 2022 Kurt Schwitters Prize**

Hanover, 22 July 2021

Phyllida Barlow has been awarded the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung's 2022 Kurt Schwitters Prize. The accolade will be presented for the 13th time next year and is worth 30,000 euros.

The British artist was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1944 and lives in London. After graduating from Chelsea College of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art in London, she lectured at various art schools and taught as a professor at the Slade School of Fine Art until 2009. Internationally, Phyllida Barlow gained a name for her vast, often temporary-looking sculptural projects, which she presented in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2017) and Haus der Kunst in Munich (2021) and other places. She usually works with simple materials that are readily available such as plywood, colourful cotton fabrics, adhesive tape, plaster or cement. She arranges these components loosely, or layers and assembles them so that the performative nature of her sculptural work is still apparent. Barlow's fragile sculptures, some of which appear to be unfinished, challenge traditional sculptural concepts of monumentality or perfection, blurring the lines between sculpture, painting and architecture. Phyllida Barlow is considered a prolific exponent of an artistic form that often playfully and humorously explores material properties and the limits of the sculptural form.

The international panel of judges explains why it picked Barlow as follows:

“As a student in the 1960s, Barlow's early rejection of art school norms was fundamentally shaped by a number of international artists whose work seemed to challenge the more conventional practices of contemporary British sculpture. Her student work shows a progressive understanding and response to a range of modern sculptors from Miro to Giacometti and Bourgeois. Of those early 'mentors' the influence of Kurt Schwitters appears to have been both foundational and enduring. Schwitters' own work - the small-scale odd-ball sculptures he made in the UK, the amalgamation of painting and sculpture in his collage works, the extraordinary Merzbarn he constructed in Eldewater and his nonsensical sound art, all resonated powerfully for an artist drawn to the absurd and compelled to challenge outmoded - as she saw them - borders between painting and sculpture. The influence of Schwitters is most visibly present in the large-scale engulfing installations Barlow has made, over many years, using discarded, redundant and mundane materials, which convey a sense of modernism's failed utopia, and a fascination for the contemporary urban environment.”

The Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung's 2022 Kurt Schwitters Prize will probably be presented in autumn 2022. The award ceremony will be accompanied by an extensive solo exhibition of the artist's work at the Sprengel Museum Hannover.

Contact:

Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung . Martina Fragge . deputy director

**The press release and a portrait of the artist can be downloaded in the media centre at:
www.nsk.de**

The **judges** of the 2022 Kurt Schwitters Prize:

Suzanne Cotter, director of Mudam, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg

Tone Hansen, director of Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo

Dr Johannes Janssen, director of the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung, Hanover

Frances Morris, director of Tate Modern, London

Joanna Mytkowska, director of Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej, Warsaw

Stephanie Rosenthal, director of Gropius Bau, Berlin

Dr Reinhard Spieler, director of the Sprengel Museum Hannover (chairman)

The purpose of the Kurt Schwitters Prize is to pay tribute to artists “whose work is characterised by its reference to Kurt Schwitters and excels because it ventures into new areas of artistic design and ideas, or whose work helps to connect and integrate artistic genres.”

The award of the Kurt Schwitters Prize plays a key role in the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung's programme to promote culture. The organisation stands apart for its year-round commitment to sponsoring fine arts, music, museums and preserving historical monuments.

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