

Press Information

Museum Folkwang

Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum in London, receives the International Folkwang Prize for his outstanding commitment to the promotion of the arts.

The prize, endowed by the Folkwang-Museumsverein, is being awarded for the first time this year. The award ceremony will be on 18 October, 2010 in Museum Folkwang.

October 2010 – The director of the British Museum, Neil MacGregor (b. 1946) will accept the International Folkwang Prize on 18 October in Essen. With the prize, the Museum-Folkwangsverein honors his outstanding commitment to the promotion of the arts of diverse cultures and across borders. The prize, endowed with 25,000 Euros and being awarded this year for the first time, is going to one of the most successful museum directors of today.

The jury especially highlighted the close ties between research and promotion of the arts in MacGregor's work as well as his services in securing the world's patrimony. In exhibitions he also made less well-known cultures and periods accessible from a contemporary point of view to a large number of people. He promoted cooperation and exchange between countries especially in those places where the political situation made this more difficult. With his *History of the World in 100 Objects*, which he produced for BBC Radio 4 and BBC World Service, he communicated scientifically based art and historical knowledge to circles extending far beyond museum-goers.

The International Folkwang Prize will, in the future, be awarded every two years in memory of Karl Ernst Osthaus, who founded the Museum Folkwang in 1902 and within a few years developed it into one of the most important European museums of modern art. As early as 1912, Osthaus exhibited ancient and especially non-European art on an equal footing with, and next to modern European art. Osthaus was convinced of art's power of social transformation and of museums' social responsibilities; he placed great emphasis on promoting and understanding art from all cultures and periods. He expressed his credo succinctly as: Change through culture – culture through change.

The jury of the International Folkwang Prize is made up of members of the board of the Folkwang-Museumsverein. The Folkwang-Museumsverein is co-owner of the Museum Folkwang collection and is responsible for its development with the City of Essen in cooperative partnership.

Achim Middelschulte, chairman of the Museumsverein: "Few recognized so early on and so clearly as Karl Ernst Osthaus that museums are not only places of wonderful artworks and fantastic collections,

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but that they also have a very important role in society. Nowhere else can art be made as accessible to a broad circle of people so vividly as in a museum, no other institution in modern society so naturally links pleasure and learning as a museum. Neil MacGregor provides a shining example of how this task should be seen and approached today. In doing so he has earned the greatest respect throughout the world. We are fortunate to be able to honor this important museum man with the International Folkwang Prize.”

The award ceremony will take place as part of the festive annual reception of the Folkwang-Museumsverein on 18 October, 2010. The laudation will be held by Peter-Klaus Schuster, General Director of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin from 1999 to 2008.

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