

PRESS RELEASE (9th of November 2020)

Chinese writer Chun Shu starts her residency in Schwanenwerder



Chun Shu (春树) on the cover of the *Times Magazine*

Two private non-profit funding institutions – the Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Chinesischen kulturellen Austausch e. V. (GeKA, Berlin) and the Cordts Art Foundation (Hamburg) - will jointly launch their three-year artist-in-residence project "China's Women Artists Reside in Berlin-Schwanenwerder" in the month of November 2020.

The first participating artist is Chun Shu, well-known poet and writer from Beijing. Chun Shu was born in northern China in 1983 and is considered a representative of China's transformation generation. She has published five novels, three essay collections and two poetry collections. Her first two novels - including "Beijing Doll" (2002) - were temporarily banned by Chinese authorities, but are now back in print. Some of her works have already been translated into English.

According to Chun Shu, she was immediately relaxed on the first day on what is probably the most exclusive island in Berlin. She will now live and work there for two months. "The energy is just right. I feel inspiration and have a very good feeling that I can create something new here during the residency."

Chun Shu accepted the joint invitation of two dedicated women: Franziska Cordts and Prof. Yu Zhang (张彧). Even though their life paths differ, they both share a passion for art as well as social commitment. Franziska Cordts (born Seifert) is a founder and sculptor who has been working in Asia for three months in the winter for 15 years. She has a distinct appreciation for the connection to Asian people and materials in art. "A connection between Chinese and German culture feels easy when meeting people. Despite the rigorous differences of both societies and cultures, there is an immediate emotional connection for me. Everything artistic remains open and surprising." The Cordts Art Foundation is a solo project of the founder Franziska Cordts, but is passionately accompanied by Tim Cordts, her husband.

The initiator is Chinese-born entrepreneur and art lover Yu Zhang (张彧), who has lived in Berlin for 28 years. "While China is my motherland, by now Germany is my fatherland, so I am a civil society "ambassador" between the two countries", thus her self-conception. Since 2008, Zhang has continuously promoted art and cultural exchange between Germany and China. For example, she initiated various exhibition projects for GeKA e.V. with the Nationalgalerie/Staatliche Museen zu

Berlin, the Museum für Fotografie/Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Museum Bildende Künste in Leipzig and the Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg, but also with various cultural institutions in China, including the Goethe Institut in Beijing and the Central Academy of Art in Beijing. Her high standards regarding the artistic quality in her projects are well-known. She is strongly convinced that culture, along with business and politics, is the most important pillar in bilateral exchange.

Both funders want to make a difference against the mainstream in the Corona pandemic. Therefore, they have invited three Chinese artists from three different genres for the start of their project in 2020 and 2021. Due to travel restrictions, these artists are already in Europe and can therefore travel to Berlin. In spring 2021 Chun Shu will be followed by the feminist painter Jiny Lan, who is currently working in Düsseldorf, and the Chinese food designer Yuan Yuan from Paris.

At the end of Chun Shu's residency, a personal conversation is planned between her and the German bestselling author Jan-Philipp Sendker. He lived in Asia for a few years and was correspondent for the *Stern* magazine in Hong Kong, among other things.

Further information and picture material can be requested.
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www.die8derwege.info, www.kunst-gemeinsam-gestalten.de)

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