

Kunstpreis Berlin 2017 – Jubiläumsstiftung 1848/1948
Großer Kunstpreis Berlin an Emin Alper
Preisverleihung am 18. März 2017 in der Akademie der Künste

Dankesrede von Emin Alper

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort.

Thank you very much. I must say that I am really honoured by this award. As a relatively new filmmaker, it is hard to imagine anything more encouraging than this prestigious award.

In the last years, when I got any award and posted the news of this award in my facebook account, the standard reaction of my facebook friends was something like this: "Dear Emin, you made us proud and happy in these very horrible and dark days". And the news of the award of Akademie der Künste also drew similar reactions with the same emphasis to the "dark days".

Yes, as you know very well, we are getting through very difficult days, maybe one of the most darkest periods in the history of my country. Since 2013, we slowly but steadily started losing our democratic rights, day by day, by the very efforts of a popularly elected government. But everything suddenly accelerated since the failed coup of last summer, and we were forced to live in a kind of permanent state of emergency, in which we are completely devoid of the protection by law. For almost seven months, we are living without constitution and without our basic, inviolable rights. Fear, sadness, helplessness are reigning our days. In these days, when I read my friends' notes in facebook, I feel happy more than anyone else just because of making them a little bit less pessimistic. And I feel happy just because of the solidarity that we showed to each other through messages, tweets and etc., although I do not know many of these people. So I start my thanks with my facebook friends who are generous enough to be happy with my awards. Thank you all!

In these days, I did not get only messages from the people in my country, but from the people all around the world. I got so many mails from my relatives, from academics, filmmakers, producers and friends living abroad, who expressed their empathy with our situation and offered any kind of help they can provide. The solidarity of people all around the world, but especially in Europe was moving. I want to thank all these people because of their support and just because they did not let us feel alone. We need solidarity. We really need it today maybe more than any other time. Because the recent developments all around the world showed us that our liberties and democratic rights are not still guaranteed safely enough and they can be under threat any moment in anywhere, even in the Western countries. Once again we are getting through the days that we understand that the fight for freedom and democracy is universal and this fight will continue all around the world until the last man or woman will be unchained. That's why we need each other. So once again, thank you all, all democratic people of the world, for your solidarity.

Besides my virtual friends in facebook, I really want to thank my real friends. I owe them a lot. I learnt many things from them, I discussed with them, I laughed with them, I fought with them. They read my scripts, (they generally liked them, at least they told me so), they gave feedbacks and encouraged me in my works. I thank them a lot. But I send special thanks to my friends in the academy who lost their jobs in the last purges. They were picked up as the victims of a ruthless witchhunt. Not only they but many progressive

academics paid the cost of being oppositional to the government policies or simply of signing a petition for peace, by losing their jobs and passports. I thank them all, because they represent the enlightened face of my country and they contribute to the bright future of my country by trying to educate broad-minded, free-spirited, self-conscious, self-confident and courageous generations.

And I also want to send my special thanks to the journalists of my country who are in jail now. I thank them because of their articles, the news they made, the effort to uncover the blanket over the truth. And of course, I thank them for their bravery that gives us hope.

I also want to thank the politicians in jail. Since they made democracy meaningful. They showed their people the peaceful ways of claiming their rights rather than resorting to violence. They made our political life colourful.

I thank all the innocent people in jails, who pay the cost of being oppositional, believing in democracy and fighting for democracy. I thank them because they made my country a liveable place. As long as they are in jail, it is not so... But I do not lose my hope. We, the Turkish people, can make our country again a liveable place, a country progressing towards democracy and liberty. We should not lose our hope. We can imagine a new start in the referendum in April. And then we will start hoping again, we will start to hope to build our country again.

Finally, I want to thank the people who are really close to me and who contributed to my success. I want to thank my producers, who believed in me a lot and did so many sacrifices to realize my dreams. I thank my relatives in Turkey and my mother and brother who try to watch my news in a town in the middle Anatolia, and my dear father who observes me from the skies. I also thank my German relatives, who cheerfully came from all around the Germany to join this ceremony. And I, of course, thank my dear wife Anna, whose support always gave me a lot of courage and power.

Finally I want to thank the Akademie der Künste, and the jury members, who really surprised me and honoured me by giving this award and made us less pessimistic in these "very dark days". I have shot just two films, but I hope I will make some more. And in every film I will try to do my best to deserve the honour of this award. Thank you very much.