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2 March 2016

Konrad Wolf Prize 2016 awarded to Nicola Hümpel / Nico and the Navigators

The Akademie der Künste has awarded the Konrad Wolf Prize 2016 to Nicola Hümpel, the director and co-founder of Nico and the Navigators. The award, which is endowed with prize money of €5,000, will be presented on 13 September. The jury comprised the Akademie members Nele Hertling, Reinhild Hoffmann and Barrie Kosky.
“Since they were formed, Nico and the Navigators have been exploring the absurdities and abysses of people’s behaviour, rituals and habits. They create bizarre and quirky images where, in individual body language, the corporeality of the *Navigators* becomes the narrative. In many different ways, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, architects and visual artists join forces from different countries, each contributing their own experiences. It is on this basis that Nicola Hümpel then initiates her research and improvisations. The stories, often decisively structured by music, emerge in the vibrant settings designed by Oliver Proske. With their ‘radically lyrical landscapes of ideas’, they turn their intimate gaze, as Nicola Hümpel says, ‘like a magnifying glass on the germ cell of human contradictions. In this process, they seek to raise primaeval questions about what it means to be human, yet without offering any definitive answers’. ” (Nele Hertling)

Nicola Hümpel, born in Lübeck in 1967, studied at the University of the Fine Arts of Hamburg (HFBK). In 1998, together with Oliver Proske, she founded **Nico and the Navigators** in Berlin. From 1999 to 2005, as artist in residence at the Sophiensaele in Berlin, she worked together with her ensemble to develop the *Menschenbilder* series. In 2000 with *Eggs on Earth*, a production nominated for Berlin’s Theatertreffen festival, Nico and the Navigators achieved an international breakthrough. In 2006, they presented *Wo Du nicht bist*, with compositions by Franz Schubert, marking their first musical theatre production. The productions developed by Nico and the Navigators have been shown in over 50 cities worldwide. Since 2007, the ensemble has received Berlin Senate funding. Their latest production *Die Stunde da wir zu viel voneinander wussten* was premièred in the Kampnagel Hamburg in 2015. Nico and the Navigators’ own productions are supplemented by cooperation projects with, for example, the Residenztheater in Munich or the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Nicola Hümpel also teaches the method of “guided improvisation”, which she developed with her ensemble, at numerous drama institutions and at festival workshops.
In 2013, the Theater der Zeit press published *An der Erde hängt der Mensch und an ihm der Himmel*, an illustrated book to mark the ensemble’s 15th anniversary. In 2011, Nicola Hümpel and Oliver Proske were the recipients of the George Tabori Prize. In April 2016, in cooperation with Nico and the Navigators, Nicola Hümpel is producing *Reigen* by Philippe Boesmans at the Oper Stuttgart.

The **Konrad Wolf Prize**, named after the film director and long-standing President of the East German Akademie der Künste is awarded annually for outstanding artistic achievements in the fields of the performing arts as well as film and media art. The recent award winners include Christoph Schlingensief/ Opera Village in Burkina Faso (2015), Jürgen Holtz (2014), OSTKREUZ photo agency (2013) and Meg Stuart (2012).

Awards Ceremony
Tuesday 13 September 2016, 7 pm, free admission
Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, Berlin-Tiergarten