

Press Release, September 2026

VG Bild-Kunst *HAP Grieshaber* award – an award by artists for artists

Award recognises an artistic approach with a social and political stance

VG Bild-Kunst in collaboration with Deutscher Künstlerbund (German Artists' Association) presents the HAP Grieshaber award – the only German art award by artists for artists. It is one of the most prestigious awards in Germany, with a financial award of EUR 25,000. It has recognised outstanding contributions to contemporary fine art for over 25 years.

The award is closely linked to VG Bild-Kunst and Deutscher Künstlerbund: In 1950, HAP Grieshaber was one of the founding members of Deutscher Künstlerbund and a member on its Executive Board for over a decade. Since the 1970s, he has been an extraordinary advocate for the copyright law of fine art artists. HAP Grieshaber played a key role in establishing VG Bild-Kunst and was a member of its Administrative Council.

Until 2025, the selection was carried out by Stiftung Kunstfonds, to whom we extend our warmest thanks for their collaboration to date. The HAP Grieshaber award will now be awarded following a new concept.

The award honours artistic practices that engage actively and consistently with socially relevant, political, and contemporary themes – following the intangible and spiritual succession of HAP Grieshaber, who throughout his life opposed conformity and resigned from his professorship in protest.

The award is deliberately aimed at full-time freelance artists who have no affiliation to any institution. Candidates come from all German federal states, to highlight artistic practices beyond the established mainstream.

The winner is selected through a two-stage process where at first, nominated individuals from all 16 German federal states, if possible, propose candidates. An independent jury, comprising non-academic members, then reaches a final decision.

The jury of five high-ranking members appointed for the 2026 format consists of:

- **Fritz Balthaus**
- **Alexandra Deutsch**
- **Thomas Eller**
- **Saeed Foroghi**
- **Ngozi Ajah Schommers** (HAP Grieshaber award winner 2024)

In addition to the financial award, the winner will be granted an exhibition in the project venue of Deutscher Künstlerbund in Berlin, as well as a public placement programme. The award is initially valid for a period of five years (2026 to 2030).

The winner is expected to be announced at the end of November 2026. The exhibition in the project venue of Deutscher Künstlerbund, featuring the award ceremony, will open in spring 2027.

VG Bild-Kunst is headquartered in Bonn and has a representative office in Berlin. It is the only German collecting society to represent the copyright interests of more than 70,000 image authors from Germany and a further 260,000 authors from sister societies around the world. It ensures that creative professionals in the creation class of fine art, photography, illustration, design, and film receive appropriate remuneration for the use of their works. More than 17,000 fine art artists alone have entrusted the organisation with the defence of their reproduction rights. In addition to collective rights management, VG Bild-Kunst continuously supports cultural projects through its foundation Stiftung Kulturwerk.

Deutscher Künstlerbund e.V., based in Berlin, is one of the oldest national associations of fine art artists in the German-speaking world. Since 1903, the association has been actively campaigning for artistic freedom and improved conditions for artists. In addition to political advocacy, the association organises exhibitions and plays a key role in high-profile art awards.

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