**Jury statement Kaiserring of the City of Goslar 2026**

The awarding of the Goslar Kaiserring to Gabriele Stötzer honors an important figure who, through her pioneering role in the field of artistic activism, quickly became a central role model for younger generations of (female) artists. Gabriele Stötzer not only stands for an experimental, high-quality oeuvre, but has also been a pioneer in the field of networking and collaboration. Important aspects of her early work (such as the juxtaposition of the individual and the masses) are regaining relevance today and lending her work a newfound topicality.

Gabriele Stötzer (born in Emleben in 1953, married Gabriele Kachold between 1973 and 1979) has been considered one of the most renowned and important artists since the early 1980s. In her oeuvre, she explores role attributions and critically examines power relations, especially those that prevailed during the GDR era. In addition to her artistic work, she made a name for herself as one of the most important artistic networkers in Erfurt and the former GDR. In 1980 and 1981, she ran the Galerie im Flur in Erfurt, which was later banned. In 1984, she founded the “Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt” (Erfurt Women Artists' Group, also known as “Exterra XX” for a time), which analyzed traditional (role) images in an experimental way. Stötzer's artistic and intellectual influence, her search for, and investigation of truth, is also reflected in her intensive publishing activity as an accomplished author. She is also active in the field of research and historiography and has, for example, examined the files of 32 artistic personalities from Erfurt in order to analyze and document the role of the Stasi in relation to the artistic underground in Erfurt. At the center of all her activities is the vulnerability and fragility of human beings.

Stötzer's works from the 1980s captivate with their reactionary and revolutionary nature—continuously rebelling against a rigid and disempowering system. Taboos and established structures are systematically addressed and broken down. Like a seismograph, Stötzer captures her time, the injustices, utopianism, and patriarchal traits that cling to it, documenting and questioning them in her works. As one of the most important protagonists of the 1980s, she rebelled against traditional subjects, socialist realism, and an official art scene dominated by male colleagues. In doing so, she not only created new images of women, but also new artistic perspectives, continuously and significantly expanding the rigid concept of art that prevailed during the GDR era, which continues to this day.

She uses archaic images, experimentalism, cross-genre approaches, and subjective photography focused on the human body as artistic means. With a broad media presence, she explores her questions in photography, painting, performances, drawings, ceramics, stage plays, fashion, plein airs, and as an author. She uses her own body as an artistic subject and medium, but also as a consciously chosen property that eludes social oppression. Collective work and the inclusion of non-artists were also progressive, radical art practices at the time and underscore the search for freedom and space.

Works such as “Urfrauengalerie” (1984) and “Mumie” (1984) are exemplary and iconic examples of Stötzer's pioneering work. The “Urfrauengalerie” portfolio consists of 74 photographs that have been painted over and assembled into eight tableaux. The subject is an elderly lady from the hospital, captured in the photographs with immediate and strong black-and-white contrast. The traces of painting on the photos also testify to the transdisciplinary approach. For the work “Mumie” (1984), she symbolically covered the female body in gauze bandages, referring to the de-individualization and accompanying rigidity of human beings. In the 1980s, she also created experimental Super 8 films that seek the resonance of one person with another. Stötzer often chooses a close camera focus that frequently explores the naked female body and imbues it with new interpretations. In films such as Trisal (1986), she draws on ancient myths to address themes such as death and rebirth. The photo series “Schwingungskurve” (Vibration Curve, 1982) illustrates Stötzer's symbolically charged work. A nude model paints five vertical lines on a glass pane; a curve is drawn around the lines, whereby the five lines can be read as the five human senses and the glass pane as the invisible boundary that stands for the way of thinking in the GDR era.

Dr. Florence Thurmes, Director General of the Chemnitz Art Collections