

Mayor Bovenschulte presents Olaf Schlote with the Order of Merit for his commitment to the common good

Senate Chancellery

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14 July 2021

Olaf Schlote has been awarded the Federal Cross of the Order of Merit for his longstanding commitment. The President of the Senate, the mayor Dr Andreas Bovenschulte, presented the award during a coffee reception at the Senate Hall today (14 July 2021).

Mayor Bovenschulte presented Olaf Schlote with the Federal Cross of Merit. Schlote's wife Eva-Maria Köhn (second from right) and his daughter Jana Schlote were also present. Photo: Senate Press Office

Photographer and artist Olaf Schlote has made an important contribution to the common good through his art. His artistic works and projects deal with existential themes such as persecution, reconciliation, and death. Many of his projects are uniquely influenced by his years of work with the artists at the Blaumeier Atelier, with memorial sites of the Nazi regime and with Holocaust survivors.

Schlote began working with the Blaumeier Atelier for Art and Psychiatry in Bremen in 1993. From the outset, his art has explored war, trauma, together with the history and consequences of the Holocaust. His latest exhibition depicts his journey to Auschwitz, Majdanek, as well Stutthof in Israel and features haunting portraits of the survivors.

Olaf Schlote: "For me, it was both a great adventure and an uncertain journey. It means a lot to me that it has been possible to build a great deal of trust, especially with Israel and the Jewish community. Change is dependent on trust and personal relationships: my art reflects this." The exhibition will be on display at the Focke Museum from 9 November 2021 to March 2022 and will subsequently be shown in Haifa during the national days of remembrance, most likely at the Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa.

Schlote is involved in various teaching assignments and also participates in teaching-research projects that combine photography, journalism, film, and science. Through this work, he creates a culture of enlightenment, intellectual stimulation and understanding, both on the national and on the international level.

"Mr Schlote addresses issues that are important to us all. His commitment makes a significant contribution to ensuring that socially important issues are discussed more widely. I am particularly impressed by his contribution to remembrance work that incorporates a hopeful view of the future. His work helps ensure that history is not forgotten. On behalf of the Federal President, I would like to honour Olaf Schlote today and thank him in the name of the Senate for his outstanding achievements," said Mayor Bovenschulte.

NB editorial offices:

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