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PRESS RELEASE

Aat Vos receives the Karl Preusker Medal 2021

The umbrella organisation of the German library associations **Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID) e.V. (Library and Information in Germany – Federal Union of German Library Associations)** has awarded the **Karl Preusker Medal 2021** to the Dutch architect, creative guide and author **Aat Vos**.

The Federal Union pays tribute to Aat Vos for his innovative spatial concepts, which have helped libraries to make their mark on urban society as “third places”.

The award ceremony will take place on **28 October in Ludwigshafen am Rhein** and will be live-streamed starting at **4pm**. The eulogy will be delivered by the author and lecturer **B. Joseph Pine II** from **Columbia University**.

In their statement, the jury said that the pandemic had emphasized how important physical spaces were – and would continue to be in the future – in counteracting isolation in society. Good spatial design can transform libraries into urban marketplaces, enabling them to fulfil their important cultural remit as democratic spaces.

The fact that libraries in Germany are today almost automatically motivated to establish themselves as “third places” alongside people’s homes and places of work is largely due to the innovative projects of Aat Vos. In cooperation with the creative architect and interior designer, spaces have arisen in the urban environment based on a completely new concept of design and programming.

The design is developed collaboratively with the library’s users and staff during an intensive design (thinking) process. “This turns the library itself into a learning organisation”, says BID president Dr Sabine Homilius. The first question to be answered is: “What motivates us, what effect should the library have, both on and for people?”

This approach has already been implemented in several projects within Germany, preceded by two important German pilot projects:

The design of the district library **Hubland** in **Würzburg** (2019) was from the outset people-centred: during the development process the needs of those visiting the library had priority, with the functionality of the library itself being adapted accordingly.

In the case of the **Kalk** district library in **Cologne** (2018), a place of neighbourhood cultural encounter was created to attract young families, creative individuals and migrants.

Through projects like these Aat Vos has extended awareness of libraries’ desire to reach out to urban society as inclusive Third Places, his influence reaching far beyond professional circles to encompass both



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Germany and the wider world. He has therefore been honoured with one of German librarianship's highest awards.

Aat Vos will be presented with the Karl Preusker Medal on 28 October in Ludwigshafen am Rhein. The eulogy will be delivered by B. Joseph Pine II, lecturer at Columbia University and co-author of the well-known work "The Experience Economy".

The award ceremony will take place in the former cinema hall of the Bürgermeister Reichert House, where Aat Vos will be designing a children's library for Ludwigshafen City Library.

The event will be streamed live, starting at 4 pm.

Karl Preusker Medal

The award has been presented to individuals and institutions since 1996 for outstanding contributions to the promotion and support of the cultural and educational activities of the library sector. Among the recipients of the medal to date are the former President of the German Federal Republic Horst Köhler, Ranga Yogeshwar, the Allianz der Wissenschaftsorganisationen (Alliance of German Research Associations) and Wikimedia Deutschland e.V. The jury includes representatives from politics, journalism and library associations.

The Karl Preusker Medal commemorates Karl Benjamin Preusker (1786-1871), who on 24 October 1828 founded a school library in Großenhain in Saxony which was later to become the first public library in Germany.

For more information on the Karl Preusker Medal, please visit

www.bideutschland.de/de_DE/karl-preusker-medaille (in German) and

www.bideutschland.de/de_DE/karl-preusker-medaille-2021 (in German)

Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID) e. V. (Library and Information in Germany, the Federal Union of German Library and Information Associations)

is the umbrella organisation of the institutional and staff associations covering the library sector and other central institutions for the promotion of culture in Germany. BID represents the overall interests of these bodies at national and European level, and within international institutions.

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