DEUTSCHER TANZPREIS

Gabriele Brandstetter

AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING DEVELOPMENT IN DANCE

as part of the German Dance Award 2026

Jury statement

Gabriele Brandstetter is undoubtedly the pioneer of dance studies. Her great, internationally recognized achievement is the establishment of the subject as an independent university discipline.

Trained in theatre and literary studies, she devoted herself to dance from an interdisciplinary perspective at an early stage. In her work, she always combines aspects of theatre, music, art and literature studies, thus cultivating a way of thinking that transcends and overcomes disciplinary boundaries with dance at the centre.

The stages of her impressive career speak for themselves: after professorships at the universities of Giessen and Basel, she was appointed to the Institute for Theatre Studies at the Free University of Berlin. There, in 2003, she founded Germany's first Master's degree course in dance studies - with a decidedly cultural studies focus - as well as the Centre for Movement Research. Gabriele Brandstetter has initiated countless collaborations between dance, art and science, accepted international guest professorships and is the recipient of high-calibre awards (including the Federal Cross of Merit).

In her publications, but also in the research projects, exhibitions, conferences and festivals for which she is responsible, dance never coagulates into mere theory; it always remains a living movement. Gabriele Brandstetter's approach to dance is characterized by precise observation and the exchange between artists and academics on an equal footing.

This last point is characterized by the establishment of the Valeska Gert Guest Professorship at the FU Berlin, which she initiated in cooperation with the AdK and the DAAD. For 20 years, students have had the opportunity to work closely with well-known dance artists for a semester and thus train their theoretical considerations in practice.

Gabriele Brandstetter has literally set thinking - not only, but above all about dance - in dynamic motion(s) and has thus changed and expanded the concept of science as a whole. The central place that dance studies has been given in the round of the arts and humanities over the decades is inextricably linked to her person. With this in mind, the jury of the German Dance Award honours Professor Gabriele Brandstetter with the award for outstanding development in dance.