

“The idea that art can seriously change the world has become questionable, utopian or even impossible. Art is powerless when faced by concrete and urgent social issues, while it remains an effective part of the system of power and dominance.”

Igor Zabel



Partner

**IGOR ZABEL
ASSOCIATION
FOR CULTURE
AND THEORY**

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**Igor Zabel Award for
Culture and Theory**



CONTEXT

Across Europe, countries have significantly been revising their budgets and the culture allocations seem to suffer mostly. Austria, Italy and Hungary, for example, have allocated less than 0.7% of their annual financial resources for culture.

While the heritage arts, usually displayed in museums, continue to get support, it is the contemporary artists, art historians

or theorists who may have difficulties to get their work acknowledged. If they happen to come from Central or Eastern Europe, their chances for any funding further diminish. The lack of art production money, absence of gallery scenes, deficiency of art markets in Eastern European countries, coupled with still conservative approaches in education and shortage of jobs thereafter, pose a huge challenge.



Photos:

1 Dunja Kukovec (Igor Zabel Association) at the Award Ceremony 2008

2 All recipients of the Award 2008: What, How & for Whom (WHW); Fouad Asfour, Erden Kosova, Prelom Kolektiv

3 The Croatian curatorial collective 'What, How & for Whom' also known as WHW from Zagreb is the winner of the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory 2008.

4 The winner of the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory in 2010: Piotr Piotrowski, Polish art historian and theoretician

IMPACT

For this reason, ERSTE Foundation established the biennial Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory in 2008. This Award supports the work of art historians and theorists in CEE and highlights the notion of arts and culture, encouraging the production of cultural knowledge and exchange between 'East' and 'West'.

Igor Zabel (1958-2005), the name generator for this Award, was an influential Slovenian curator, art critic, writer and theorist, the main propagator of his country's art scene during the 1990s. As

the senior curator of Ljubljana's Moderna galerija, he established cultural links between Eastern and Western Europe. Igor Zabel was, by all means, a role model for new generations of curators and critics of contemporary art.

The laureates of this Award, just like Igor Zabel, have brought together specific fields of knowledge and culture, and pointed to the necessity of their omnipresence in human lives. And these are the ideas that the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory cherishes.



FACTS

The award is not by application. An international jury made up of one artist, one curator and one theorist appoints the laureate. One of the members is always from Slovenia. In addition to the award, three working grants are offered. The laureate gives one of these grants, while the jury decides the other two.

With total prize money of EUR 76,000 it is one of the highest and most prestigious prizes for cultural activities related to Central and South Eastern Europe.

Candidates can be all those who work on broadening international knowledge of Central and South Eastern European visual culture. The award emphasises the importance of theoretical and scientific engagement, therefore it addresses international curators, theorists, writers, critics who come from or live and/or work in Central and South Eastern Europe, whose work spans this geography, respectively.



IGOR ZABEL AWARD FOR CULTURE AND THEORY

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