

RUHRTRIENNALE

FESTIVAL DER KÜNSTE _____ 21 22 23

VITA Barbara Frey

Theatre director Barbara Frey is the artistic director of the Ruhrtriennale 2021–2023.

From 2009 through 2019, Barbara Frey (*1963) was the artistic director of the Schauspielhaus Zurich, the first woman to assume that role in the history of the Schauspielhaus. Born in Switzerland, she studied German philology and philosophy in Zurich and, as a drummer, played in a number of Swiss bands. She has been working as a freelance director since her first production of Sylvia Plath writings in 1993, initially in Switzerland's independent scene and later at many large German language theatres. In 1988, she worked at the Basel Theatre under the direction of Frank Baumbauer as a musician and director's assistant. After completing stints with the Neumarkt Theatre, the National Theatre Mannheim and the German Schauspielhaus Hamburg, she was the resident director at the Berlin Schaubühne at the Lehniner Platz from 1999 through 2001 and held the same position with the German Theatre Berlin from 2005 through 2008. In 2009, she debuted Janacek's "Jenufa" at Munich's State Opera as the opera director. She worked as a producer at the Bavarian State Opera, the Semperoper Dresden and repeatedly at the Basel Theatre, at the Bavarian State Theatre in Munich as well as at the Salzburg Festival. In 2016, Barbara Frey received the Swiss Theatre Award for her achievements in theatrical work in Switzerland.

In 2022, her achievements as extraordinary artist as well as prudent artistic director were honoured with the most important Swiss Theatre Award, **the Grand Prix Darstellende Künste / Hans-Reinhart-Ring**.

Since 2006, she regularly worked at the Burgtheater in Vienna, among others with the production of Anna Gmeyer's piece "Automatenbüfett" 2020, which had been invited to the Berliner Theatertreffen 2021 and received the Austrian Nestroy Prize 2021.

For the Ruhrtriennale 2021, she staged **Edgar Allen Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher"** in the former Maschinenhalle Zweckel in Gladbeck, for the 2022 festival edition **"The Wide Country" by Arthur Schnitzler** in the Jahrhunderthalle Bochum, and in 2023 **"A Midsummer Night's Dream" by William Shakespeare** in the Kraftzentrale in the Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord. These productions were created in co-production with the Burgtheater in Vienna and its magnificent artistic ensemble and were first

performed at the Ruhrtriennale. Fjodor Dostoyevsky's "Notes from the Cellar Hole", played by Nina Hoss and set in the heights of the unique mixing plant of Zollverein in Essen, was her farewell production as Ruhrtriennale director at the end of the 2023 festival - celebrated by press and audience alike as a "small sensation" (WAZ), as a "bright joy of rhetoric, of proof, like a cuckolded child who has cracked the Rubik's Cube" (nachtkritik.de).

Every year, the Ruhrtriennale – das Festival der Künste – asks contemporary artists to present their works in the monumental industrial architecture of the Ruhr Metropolis. Mining and steel industry plants, coking facilities, machinery complexes, heaps and brownfields are converted into impressive production and performance venues that make the festival one of a kind. The Ruhrtriennale positions itself at the interfaces between theatre, music theatre, concert, dance and installation and always takes place in August and September. The directorship changes every three years. 10/2023