

Press Release

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## THE FIRST BERMAN LITERATURE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO THE ISRAELI AUTHOR DAVID GROSSMAN

**The first Berman Literature Prize amounting to 750.000 Swedish Crowns is awarded to the Israeli author David Grossman**

### **The jury's motivation reads:**

"With his novel *When Nina Knew/Life Plays With Me* (2019, Swedish translation by Natalie Lantz *Med mig leker livet*, 2020) Grossman has illustrated a movable mosaic of memories where inherited traumas, family betrayals and love larger than life are merged into deeply human depiction of several generations of Jewish life in Europe and Israel."

"We are very happy to honor David Grossman as our first laureate" says the chairman of the jury, Daniel Pedersen. He continues: "Grossman embodies through his rich authorship the spirit in which the Berman Literature Prize was instituted. He is able to describe the way both trauma and memories are transferred between generations and in which he conjoins the emotional life with the great political events of the individual."

**David Grossman** is today one of the most internationally well-known Israeli authors. Since his debut in the early 80s his books have been translated to more than forty-five languages. In addition to the novels, David Grossman has written books of essays, novels for young adults, several children books, and a libretto for a children opera. Twelve titles have been translated to Swedish.

**David Grossman** was born in Jerusalem 1954 and studied both theatre and philosophy at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Before his debut as an author, he was active within media, both as a radio host and moderator. He has been wrestling with the trauma of war and the prospects for peace, as well as love, jealousy, and family relationships for more than three decades.

**Berman Literature Prize** was established in 2020 to reward an author whose works embody the statues of the Prize, in the spirit of the Jewish tradition and literary works aiming to explore the rich Jewish culture and at the same time "exceed times and cultures" thereby striving for the universally human.

**Berman Literature Prize** Berman Literature Prize is worth SEK 750,000 yearly and will be awarded for ten years. The first Berman Literature Prize award ceremony will take place in Stockholm, in October 2021.

**Berman Literature Prize** will go to an author who, regardless of background or genre, has worked in the spirit of the Jewish tradition. Members of the jury are Daniel Pedersen, Ingrid Elam, Hanna Nordenhök, Na'ama Rokem, Thomas Steinfeld and Svante Weyler.

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Catharina och Thomas Berman (©: Jonas Ekströmer/TT)

### **The Founders:**

Thomas Berman was born in Stockholm in 1943 and grew up in Norrköping. Catharina Berman (born Wranne) was born in 1949 and grew up in Stockholm. In 2019, the Berman family began discussions about a donation to a literature prize dedicated to the Jewish tradition. In the spring of 2020, the Berman Literature Prize was founded and the organization, consisting of a committee and a jury, was established.

**Berman Literature Prize** has the following ethos and declaration of intent:

### **»KNOWLEDGE IS SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU«**

There is more than one Jewish tradition, and the tradition that the Berman Literature Prize seeks to highlight has changed in constant dialogue with other cultures and languages. This means that for thousands of years it has preserved a rich history and literature, while simultaneously encountering the languages and texts of other cultures. Tradition and renewal have interacted, giving rise to a constant critical rereading of religious texts as well as literature and songs, poetry and philosophy. This is a tradition of knowledge in which interpretation, interpretative concepts and memory are at the centre, and because of historical circumstances involving persecution and discrimination, it is often written from a marginal position and from the experience of exile.

It is an ongoing exploratory discussion, and all the forms it takes have one thing in common: an impassioned and sincere belief in the ability of the literary text to transcend times and cultures, to let words convey experiences and thoughts between people. The aim of the Berman Literature Prize is to honour authors in recent years who, regardless of background or genre, have worked in the spirit of this tradition.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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Read more at:

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