

Press Release

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## MARIA STEPANOVA RECEIVED BERMAN LITERATURE PRIZE IN STOCKHOLM 2023

**The Russian author Maria Stepanova received Berman Literature Prize at an award ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden.**

Berman Literature Prize for 2023 was received by the Russian writer **Maria Stepanova** at a prize ceremony in Stockholm on Monday evening, October 23.

More than 300 invited guests attended, including Sweden's Minister for Culture Mrs. Parisa Liljestrand, at the 2023 Berman Literature Prize Ceremony. The price of SEK 750,000 also consists of a work of art in paper in the form of several pop-up books by Rang Li i and Nina Ulmaja.

The poet Ida Börjel gave the laudatory speech to Maria Stepanova. The donors Catharina and Thomas Berman and the chairman of the jury Daniel Pedersen presented the award and Maria Stepanova gave a moving speech.

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

"**Maria Stepanova** is being awarded the 2023 Berman Literature Prize for her genre-transcending family saga *Memory of Memory*. With winding, finely honed prose she breathes life into pictures, objects, places and documents, in a portrayal of the transformative power of memory, both for individuals and for forgotten collectives."

*In Memory of Memory* by **Maria Stepanova** is a wonderful book," says jury chairman Daniel Pedersen, "in which poetic reflections, theoretical reasoning and family saga are united and truly capture both individual and collective destiny in a remarkable literary construction".

**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** is for ten years awarded annually and the prize sum is 750 000 Swedish kronor. Previous laureates: David Grossman (2021), Péter Nádas (2022).

**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.



Catharina and 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 developed 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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