

A Theodor Heuss Medal for 2014
is awarded to the performance artist

Erdem Gündüz

for his silent protest as ‘standing man’ on Istanbul’s
Taksim Square, with which championed the advancement
of democratic values in Turkey in an extraordinary manner.

Erdem Gündüz was born in 1979 in the Turkish capital
of Ankara and grew up in Izmir. In Izmir, Gündüz initially
studied in the fields of electronics and agriculture. In
2003 he transferred to the Yildiz Technical University to
study in the field of art, design, music and dance. In
2008 Gündüz completed his studies with a Master of
Performing Arts from the Mimar Sinan Fine Art Univer-
sity. He attended a class at the John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C and the
‘ImPulsTanz’ class at the Vienna International Dance
Festival.

Erdem Gündüz let his body do the talking when he used
his silent protest to oppose the authoritarian system in
Turkey and to demonstrate for more democracy and
freedom. For the performance artist, a functional society
is fundamentally based on equality and respect, meaning
that class differences need to be removed and women
granted the same rights as men. He also draws attention
to the fact that a democracy consists of more than elec-
tions: the protection of minorities, civil rights, women’s
rights, participation, checks and balances and freedom of
the press are also essential democratic values, and the
dancer and choreographer finds them lacking in Turkey’s
democratic system.

With his silent condemnation, the choreographer and
artist Erdem Gündüz has moved many people – not just
in Turkey. He became known around the world as ‘dura-
nadam’, ‘stehender Mann’, ‘standing man’ and he used
the image created of him to draw attention to numerous
deficiencies in Turkey’s democracy. This year, this achieve-
ment will be honoured through the awarding of a The-
odor Heuss Medal.

Stuttgart, 12. April 2014



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