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Balzan Prizes 2019 Awarded in Bern

750,000 Swiss Francs (approx. €680 000, $760 000, GBP 620 000) for each of the four subjects.

Prizewinners must allocate half of the amount to research projects

Bern, 15 November 2019 - Today, During the Awards Ceremony at the Federal Palace in Berne, this year’s Balzan Prizes were presented to:

Jacques Aumont (France) for Film Studies,
Michael Cook (UK) for Islamic Studies,
Luigi Ambrosio (Italy) for Theory of Partial Differential Equations,
the research group composed by Erika von Mutius, Klaus F. Rabe, Werner Seeger and Tobias Welte of the German Center for Lung Research (DZL) (Germany), for Pathophysiology of respiration: from basic sciences to the bedside.

the President of the National Council of the Swiss Confederation Marina Carobbio presented the parchments to the 2019 Prizewinners; the Presidents of the Balzan Foundation "Prize" and "Fund", Enrico Decleva and Gisèle Girgis-Musy, delivered the official speeches.

In accordance with the ceremony’s usual formalities, each Prizewinner gave a speech of acceptance and thanks after being introduced by the Chairman of the General Prize Committee, Luciano Maiani. According to established tradition reflecting the Italo-Swiss nature of the International Balzan Foundation, the Awards Ceremony takes place in alternate years in Rome, in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic, and in Bern, in the presence of a Representative of the Federal Council or of the National Council of the Swiss Confederation.

The following citations were given for the Prizes:

■ Jacques Aumont: “For his role as the founder of “film studies” as an academic discipline. For his contribution to the definition of the concept of film aesthetics and of film as a figurative art. For his contribution to the interpretation of the language of film and its history”.

■ Michael Cook: “For the exceptional impact of his work on several research areas in Islamic Studies most notably: the study of the origin and early history of Islamic thought, the intellectual, social and political history of Islam through the ages and the place of Islam in global history; for the outstanding quality of his scholarship in depth, temporal and geographical breadth and methodological rigour as well as the use of a comparative approach; and for the meticulous philological analysis of primary sources in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, Syriac, South Arabian and Sanskrit”.

■ Luigi Ambrosio: “Luigi Ambrosio is a remarkable mathematician whose astonishing capacity for synthesis has made it possible to create hitherto unimaginable bridges between partial differential equations and the calculus, of variation. His influence on the analysis of very general spaces is exceptional”.

■ Research Group Erika von Mutius, Klaus F. Rabe, Werner Seeger, Tobias Welte: “For the outstanding achievements of four exceptional scientists working on respiratory diseases, Erika von Mutius, Klaus F. Rabe, Werner Seeger and Tobias Welte, who, under the leadership of Seeger, joined their efforts in translating innovative research into new treatments to improve the quality of life for these patients, while also motivating and training the next generation of scientists, within their common German Center for Lung Research”.

The International Balzan Foundation awarded 750,000 Swiss Francs (approx. EUR 680 000; USD 760 000; GBP 620 000) for each prize, a figure which places the Balzan Prize amongst the largest prize funds in the world of Science and Culture. The winners are each required to allocate half of their prize money to funding research projects carried out preferably by young scholars or scientists in their respective fields.

The Ceremony was preceded, on Thursday 14 November, by the Balzan Prizewinners Interdisciplinary Forum, a public event dedicated to the Balzan Prize subject areas for the current year, with the Prizewinners playing the prominent role.