



Awarded ars docendi prize: Mozarteum Professor Helmi Vent
Bild: SN/HÖD

Discord at the Mozarteum

Controversial: Professor Helmi Vent is being awarded the Austrian State Prize for Teaching Excellence. Nonetheless, the Mozarteum is closing down Vent's institute.

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SALZBURG (SN). As a professor at the Mozarteum, Helmi Vent taught artists for decades. The space in which she did this was called LIA – Lab Inter Arts, an experimentation and performance platform for students (formerly DanceMusicTheaterWorkshop). Be it an up-and-coming trumpeter or a set designer, Vent helped each of the participants to find their own artistic language.

For this achievement, Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research Karlheinz Töchterle will present her with the Austrian State Prize for “excellence in teaching” at a ceremony today, Tuesday, in Vienna. Vent, who was nominated by the Mozarteum Students’ Union, is the only academic from Salzburg to receive this award.

Nevertheless, when Vent becomes Professor Emerita in the fall, the arts university is going to close down the LIA institute – a controversial decision. Student representative Elisabeth Gellner criticizes that a “unique platform of experimentation is being lost”. Vent herself says that the decision makes her “very sad”. However, she adds, it was indicated to her a year and a half ago that her position was not going to be refilled. Vent’s explanation: “For many colleagues, LIA has been an ‘unloved child’.”

Rector Reinhart von Gutzeit comments that the university plans to establish two new chairs in the field of artistic research in the academic year 2014/2015. “That is fairly close to what Professor Vent was doing. The field will not disappear.”

Vent sees things differently. The important laboratory project work will no longer be available at the Mozarteum, she emphasizes. A note in passing: The four members of the teaching staff whom the Rectorate of the Mozarteum had nominated for the State Prize were not selected.