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Press Release of the Salzburg Festival

Nina Khrushcheva: Keynote Speaker at the Opening Ceremony of the 2024 Salzburg Festival

(SF, 3 April 2024) **Nina Khrushcheva**, born in Moscow and living in New York, has been an expert voice on contemporary Russian history and politics, establishing herself as an incisive analyst and critic of Vladimir Putin's regime. As the great-granddaughter of former Soviet Communist Party leader Nikita Khrushchev, she also has a personal biographical connection to Russian politics. Her commentary appears in major outlets, for which she observes developments and changes in Russian society from various cultural perspectives, reflects on the influence of literature on politics, and discusses the complex relations that shape Russia today.



Nina Khrushcheva © private

‘Nina Khrushcheva has been analyzing Putin’s behaviour and inconsistent Western responses to Russia for decades, not shying away from uncomfortable assessments and narratives. As a critic of Putin who is directly affected by this situation, she holds up a mirror to both the “worst barbarian” and faltering democracies,’ says Artistic Director Markus Hinterhäuser, ‘while also striving to respectfully engage with Russian culture.’

As Nina Khrushcheva comments herself about the close relationship between art and politics: ‘The power of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* or Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* surely lies in their insights into the human condition, not just the Russian one. In any case, refusing to engage with Russian culture will not change Putin’s calculations or force him to withdraw his forces from Ukraine. What it will do is cut off a potential source of information about his objectives and motivations.’ (Project Syndicate, 30 June 2022)

In her keynote speech, Nina Khrushcheva will address one of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s main premises that beauty will save the world. In the current political and cultural environment of war, crisis, animosity and division, what is the role of art?

The opening ceremony takes place at 11:00 a.m. on 26 July at the Felsenreitschule.

Nina Khrushcheva is professor of International Affairs at New School University in New York. She is an editor of and a contributor to *Project Syndicate: Association of Newspapers Around the World*. Her articles have appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Financial Times* and other international publications. She is the author of several books, including *Imagining Nabokov: Russia between Art and Politics* (2008) and a co-authored political travelogue *In Putin’s Footsteps: Searching for the Soul of an Empire Across Russia’s Eleven Time Zones* (2019). Her latest book (forthcoming in Russian) is *Nikita Khrushchev: An Outlier of the System*.

Recently, Nina Khrushcheva summarized in an article entitled ‘Preparing Russia for Permanent War’: ‘The goal of current Kremlin propaganda is not to convince people that life in Russia is safe and prosperous. It might have started out that way, but as the Ukraine war drags on, Putin has had to adapt. Now, echoing Stalin’s narrative that progress toward socialism brings more challenges, requiring intensification of the class struggle, Putin is using propaganda to prepare Russians for more war.’ (Project Syndicate, 23 January 2024)