

the spirit *of* the poet

Solingen, 26th of June 2019

Spirit of the Poet – international works in the spirit of Else Lasker-Schüler

Seven contemporary artists and the trauma of persecution, flight and displacement – some process their own painful experiences, others focus on current global affairs. From the 5th of July until the 25th of August 2019, the Center for Persecuted Arts presents their very different but equally empathetic works under the title *The Spirit of the Poet*. The opening takes place on the 4th of July at 6pm. All seven artists are renowned in the international art scene, but for several of them the new exhibition will be the first time to be shown in Germany.

Forced migration and restriction of freedom are a cruel reality worldwide. The Iraqi artists Hanaa Malallah and Hayv Kahraman both had to leave their home country, which they are now dealing with in their works. The Berlin and Istanbul-based artist Azade Köker has examined various cities, including Aleppo and the effects of the war. Maja Bajevic fled Sarajevo during the Balkan war. With his lyrical imagery, E ғef Yild ғ m commemorates an Armenian poet. The Israeli artist Eyal Segal poses questions about the meaning of home, and Simon Wachsmuth embarks on a journey into his family's history, following his grandmother, who as a Jew survived the Shoa in Shanghai.

All of the artists work in the spirit of the great Jewish and German artist Else Lasker-Schüler. In *The Spirit of the Poet*, they transform her world view of resistance, of ruthless honesty, of the yearning for a perfect world in the midst of chaos, and transport it into the present. Following the footsteps of the exceptional artist, The Center for Persecuted Arts hon-

ors her on the occasion of her 150th birthday. Emancipation, a free self-determined life, not being engrossed and yet being aware of ones roots – that is what Else Lasker stands for to this day. In 1933 she escaped from the Nazis and fled via Switzerland to Israel. She died in Jerusalem on the 22nd of January 1945.

The exhibition *The Spirit of the Poet* at the Center for Persecuted Arts will be opened on Thursday, 4th of July 2019 at 6 pm by the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Klaus Kaiser, and the Chairperson of Landschaftsversammlung Rheinland, Anne Henk-Hollstein. Artists Azade Köker, Hanaa Malallah, Eyal Segal and Simon Wachsmuth will also be present at the opening. *The Spirit of the Poet* will be on show until the 25th of August. Original works by Else Lasker-Schüler herself will also be exhibited, kindly provided by the Else Lasker-Schüler Society.