

THE POWER OF THE ARTS

TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

PRESS RELEASE

Sending a signal against racism and right-wing violence: Nation-wide theater project focusing the NSU terror group announced as a winner of *The Power of the Arts 2020*

- The tenth, previously undisclosed winner of the cultural promotion award *The Power of the Arts 2020* is *Kein Schlussstrich! Ein bundesweites Theaterprojekt zum NSU-Komplex* (No closure! A nationwide theatre project on the National Socialist Underground) by Licht ins Dunkel e.V.
- This project brings together theaters and members of civil society from all over Germany to send a clear signal against public amnesia regarding those affected by right-wing violence.

Gräfelfing, 29 Jan 2021 - The tenth winner of The Power of the Arts 2020 award, who has not yet been published for project-internal reasons, *Kein Schlussstrich! Ein bundesweites Theaterprojekt zum NSU-Komplex* by Licht ins Dunkel e.V. has now been announced. The issue of right-wing violence remains present and highly topical. The cultural promotion award initiated by Philip Morris GmbH, which explicitly supports cultural projects that advocate for an open society, honors the winning project for its important contribution in the fight against right-wing extremism.

2021 marks the 20th anniversary of the assassinations of Abdurrahim Özüdoğru, Habil Kılıç, and Süleyman Taşköprü. Even ten years after the perpetrators became known, the background to the NSU terror group remains largely unclear. Fifteen theaters and civil society actors have formed an alliance for the realization of the nation-wide project *Kein Schlussstrich! Ein bundesweites Theaterprojekt zum NSU-Komplex*. With the trans-media music format “Manifesto”, theater premieres, and a diverse supporting program, this decentralized theater project is bringing attention to the issue of racism, providing venues for debate, and sending a signal against public amnesia regarding those affected by the right-wing terrorism and racist violence.

“*Kein Schlussstrich! Ein bundesweites Theaterprojekt zum NSU-Komplex* embodies a courageous and necessary project that focuses on a critical issue of recent contemporary history. NSU terror affects all of us as a society. Art and culture are our only means for providing a venue to address this pain and work through the issue of racism beyond the political arena. The fact that artists from different cities and regions are coming together here is one of the special strengths this project has,” the jury states, elucidating its decision.

Even though years have passed since these crimes came into the public light and the court trials were finalized, the issues of right-wing violence, terror, and racism continue to be as current as ever. This past year brought yet another long line of horrifying examples to show us we are still far from being where we want to be when it comes to the fight against right-wing extremism and overcoming discrimination - be it the attacks in Hanau and Halle, or the growing level of right-wing radicalization at the protests of self-depicted “non-conformists.”

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That means it's all the more important to have initiatives like *Kein Schlusstrich!* coming to terms with what has occurred and sending strong signals against racism and right-wing violence.

“From the outset, the idea behind *The Power of the Arts* has been to combine cultural promotion with social and political concerns in the interest of a more open society. The project *Kein Schlusstrich!* is a particularly impressive example for social engagement in these times of social upheaval,” says Elfriede Buben, Head of Corporate Responsibility at Philip Morris GmbH.

In order to provide even more support for cultural projects during these special challenges under the Corona pandemic, the cultural promotion award *The Power of the Arts 2020* is awarding ten projects instead of the usual four. The further awardees were announced in November 2020:

- **SPIEGEL|Arche**, Rastenberg-Roldisleben (Thuringia): a space for encounters between heaven and earth in the spirit of art, standing for openness, tolerance, and curiosity. The space is comprised of two containers with exterior mirrors, stacked on top of each other. Fabian Knecht will be the first renowned artist to exhibit in SPIEGEL|Arche in 2021, providing visitors with a new perspective on their surroundings and themselves.
- **Sexability**, Berlin: an inclusive film & art project by nbw gGmbH's Thikwa Workshop for Theater and Art and Anne-Christin Plate to address the diversity of sexuality from the perspective of artists with disabilities.
- **Soura Film Festival**, Berlin: shines a spotlight on queer cinema from the Middle East and North Africa, and provides LGBTQI+ filmmakers who experience persecution or censorship with a platform and the opportunity to tell their stories.
- **Himmel über Adelsheim // A Prison Opera**, Stuttgart: The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra is working with conductor Anna-Sophie Brüning and rapper Afrob for this project featuring youth prisoners at the Adelsheim Correctional Facility to create a work of musical theater and bring their own stories to stage as an opera.
- **MeetKinoMobil**, Berlin: Berlin-based *MeetKinoMobil* gives young women with refugee and migration biographies access to art and culture through the medium of film using cinema and workshops in shared accommodations.
- **Access Maker**, Cologne: With its new program *Access Maker*, the performing arts company Un-Label from Cologne is deploying artistic workshops and consulting programs featuring artists with and without disabilities and with diverse cultural backgrounds to initiate a qualification process for more inclusion and diversity at cultural institutions.
- **Baynatna & FANN**, Berlin: Baynatna, the first Arabic-language library in Berlin is joined by the digital art and culture magazine FANN to create *Baynatna & FANN*: spaces for encounters, communication, and inspiration for artists, academics, and scientists.
- **Nach:Denkmal**, Hanover: Ten artists with a migration and refugee background are creating counter-monuments that position the stories of their communities in Hanover in the public space, encouraging a new approach to the culture of memory.
- **Musiklusion - Digital Participation**, Tuttlingen: People with and without disabilities develop collaborative music videos in the digital space for more social participation in an artistic-cultural context.

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About *The Power of the Arts*: *The Power of the Arts* is an initiative by Philip Morris GmbH in collaboration with the International Giving Foundation of the Deutsches Stiftungszentrum im Stifterverband, Netzwerk Junge Ohren e.V., and BOROS. The award is given annually and continues Philip Morris GmbH's long tradition of social and cultural engagement. With a total of 200,000 euros in prize money, *The Power of the Arts* is one of the most highly endowed sponsorship awards in the field of art and culture in Germany.

This year's jurors were: Dr. Hans-Jörg Clement (Director of Culture, Konrad Adenauer Foundation), Samy Deluxe (Rapper), Alexandra Georgieva (Ballet Director at Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin), Kübra Gümüüşay (Publicist and Activist), Lamyia Kaddor (Author), Diana Kinnert (Politician and Entrepreneur), and Maryam Zaree (Actor, Author, and Director).

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For high-resolution images, please contact our press office.

You'll find further information at www.thepowerofthearts.de

In the attachment, you'll find a presentation of all of the awardee projects.