

Press Release

19 December 2022

4th Conference of the European Alliance of Academies Admission of the Ukrainian National Academy of the Arts

From 15 to 16 December 2022, 42 members of the European Alliance of Academies from 19 different countries came together at the Akademie der Künste at Pariser Platz in Berlin to discuss the restrictions that war and crisis have placed on artistic freedom. Numerous actors from the realms of art and culture commented on their experiences. In his online message of greeting, Victor Sydorenko, President of the Ukrainian National Academy of the Arts, appealed for solidarity between arts and cultural institutions in Europe and invoked the possibilities of cooperation. The Ukrainian Academy was recently admitted to the European Alliance of Academies, with a large majority voting in favour.

Following his expulsion from the Ukrainian Film Academy, filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa, a member of the Akademie der Künste, warned against “replacing one form of propaganda with another”. Hanna Bilobrova, co-director of the documentary *Mariupolis 2* and fiancée of the murdered documentary filmmaker Mantas Kvedaravičius, showed film clips illustrating the absurdity of the war, the destruction and anguish it brings and the lives lived behind the headlines. Bilobrova took the film footage from Mariupol to Lithuania so she could finish the film after the death of her partner.

The internal working sessions included reports from artists and cultural workers from Poland and Hungary who have to contend with financial constraints and restrictions imposed by the government on the content of their work.

Jeanine Meerapfel, president of the Akademie der Künste: “Art will not bring the war to an end or change the political situation. Yet we have a responsibility to read the books, present the music and show the films that bear witness to it. That is what we are attempting to do with the European Alliance of Academies, which rises above national borders: we have soft boundaries, but clear goals.”

The conference came to a unanimous decision to support the institutions concerned, be it through projects involving transnational cooperation or through local actions that generate positive publicity.

Responding to the question of what politically engaged art means, filmmaker Andres Veiel made the case in the closing discussion that doubts, contradictions and ambiguities should be tolerated in the process of artistic creation. Composer Iris ter Schiphorst called on the art academies represented at the conference to create space for debate between artists and members of civil society as a means

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to address inequalities and set in motion the much-needed transformation of society.

The writers Cécile Wajsbrot and A. L. Kennedy used the power of their art to describe the global situation: their words had a profound effect on the audience.

The video messages from Minister of State for Culture and the Media Claudia Roth and UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights Alexandra Xanthaki highlighted the importance of the European alliance and pledged their continued support for it.

The newly developed digital platform *LOOM – Interweaving the Arts in Europe* will allow artistic interventions to take a stance on socio-political issues and facilitate artistic cooperation between members of the European Alliance of Academies. The first call for artistic projects has already gone out under the title *Ignorance Is Strength? Artistic Expression and Biopower in the (Post)Pandemic Age*: artists reflected on their own practice in the wake of the pandemic and addressed current social and political changes.

Further information:

www.allianceofacademies.eu

www.loom.allianceofacademies.eu

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