

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



**FREE TO  
CREATE**

**CREATE TO BE FREE**

CULTURE AND THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

# "FREEDOM OF ART IS ESSENTIAL TO ANY DEMOCRACY...

— and an important measure of its maturity"

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and in co-operation with the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), the Council of Europe is planning to set up a new digital #exhibition "Free to Create, Create to be Free". This accompanies the simultaneous launch of a Manifesto on Arts, Culture and Freedom of Expression in the Digital Era.

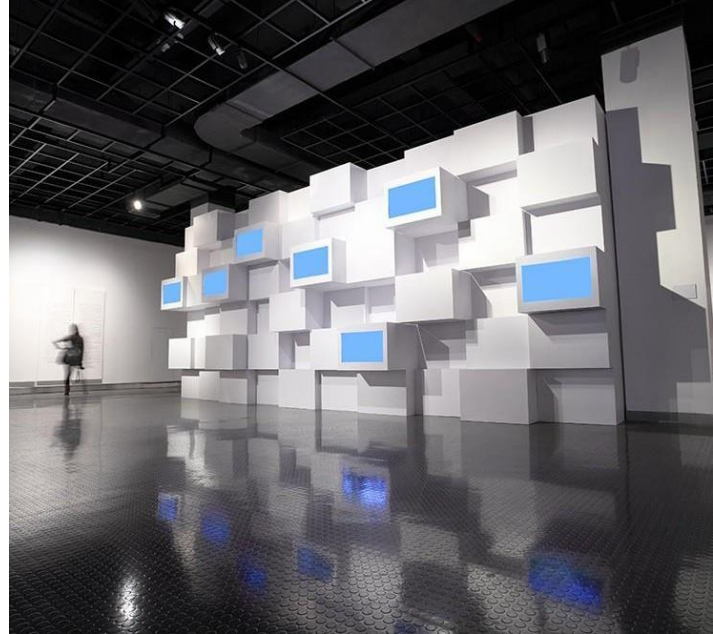
The project is a follow-up to the 30th Council of Europe Art Exhibition "The Desire for Freedom: Art in Europe since 1945" (2012-15), drawing attention to the significance of arts and culture and their interrelation with the right for freedom of expression, as expressed in Article 10 of the ECHR, in upholding Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.

A digital #exhibition is the next step in re-evaluating classic exhibitions for the needs of the 21st century. It provides a fresh view promoting the importance of freedom of artistic expression and the role of art and culture in these times when democracy is under great pressure from the regional and global challenges relating to political, economic, technological and environmental issues. It also provides a new, innovative means to communicate on and disseminate Council of Europe values.

As the COVID-19-crisis has already shown, freedom of artistic expression is systemically relevant for the functioning of pluralist democracies. Arts and culture are essential for well-being, fostering democratic processes and raising awareness for human rights. The purpose of the Council of Europe's digital #exhibition is to widen exponentially the accessibility and outreach of arts and culture.



"FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THRIVES THROUGH PRACTICE AND BECOMES AN EMPTY WORD WITHOUT THE ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY, WHILE WITHOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, THE ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY WITHER". [1]



## OBJECTIVES

By creating a digital #exhibition with works of art by artists from member States, the Council of Europe offers an opportunity to its member States to:

- demonstrate the interrelation between art and culture and freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, and thus highlight the significance of the role of arts, culture, and creativity in promoting human rights and fostering democratic values in society;
- facilitate the mutual understanding of different perspectives reflecting various applications of freedom of artistic expression and representing the diversities of cultural expressions by engaging with artistic works from our member States; raise
- the level of debate and transnational exchange on the topic of freedom of expression, encouraging member States to formulate creative solutions and supportive reactions in their own countries;

- constitute a better understanding of the challenges relating to freedom of expression and human rights in today's society, by inspiring critical reflection on artistic freedom related to political, economic, technological and environmental issues; make full use of the great potential and opportunities of digital technologies for wide-spread communication on the exhibition and its featured art works, as well as for innovative creations, creative processes and new productions;
- offer forward-looking formats on how to present visibility for artists working on major questions of today`s societies, linking the presentation of artistic practice with a communication and interactive reflection-space.

[1] Jaroslav Andel: 2019.

## GUIDELINES

Participating member States may be guided by the following parameters:

- The exhibition would include one to two artistic works per participating member State and specifically feature the works offered by the incoming and outgoing member State holding the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers;
- The selection of the national exhibit would be organised in a multi-stakeholder consultation process, involving civil society and art professionals. Thus, the process would result in co-operation between governments (Ministries responsible for culture) and independent cultural organisations, curators or other institutions in the field of arts and culture;

## digital #exhibition with works of art by artists from member States

- In order to ensure a diverse programme and create an inviting and dynamic centre attracting a wider audience, the framework for the works of art should remain open in terms of content and concept, allowing member States to select freely and reward diversity and creativity, while at the same time keeping in mind the main theme: freedom of artistic expression<sup>[2]</sup>; The permanent digital #exhibition would be accessible everywhere and specifically made available in museums and other relevant arts, culture and education institutions in interested member States and hence reach a very wide audience;
- Access to the digital #exhibition would also be offered in different locations at the Council of Europe's headquarters;
- The exhibition would be coordinated and communicated by the Council of Europe on the digital platform, ensuring that the diversity of the artistic projects is kept vivid and at the same time does not lose sight of the overall concept.

<sup>[2]</sup> Artwork containing scenes of explicit violence, racist, xenophobic or LGBTQI+-hostile content and gore will be desk rejected.



The Council of Europe would use online artworks only for non-profit purpose on the website and the social media channels (and press releases):

- Chosen works would list the artist's name, name of the work, description and technical details, information on the selection process of the artwork, and a link back to the artist's website (optional);
- Artists would retain their copyright of any image and sound in the submitted artwork, also for dissemination purposes in press releases, social media and online content;
- Images would not be sold, exchanged or copied from the site.

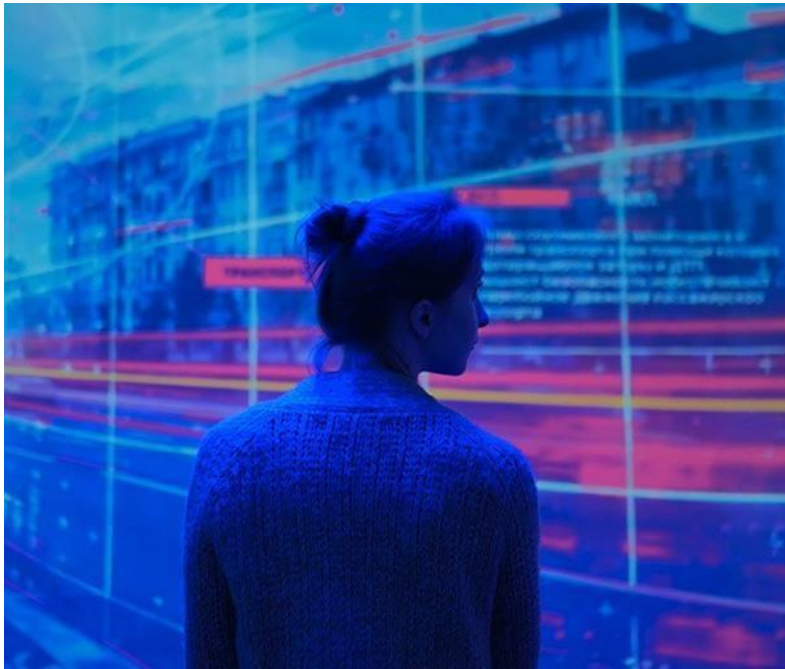
The opening date for submissions is planned for early January 2021. Details on the submission procedure and possible formats will be made available by the Secretariat.

The Council of Europe would set up a small taskforce or Board to oversee, channel and coordinate the digital #exhibition, with the Chair of the CDCPP as a member.

## PARTNERS

To bring this project to fruition, partnerships and support - including voluntary contributions - are being sought. Supporters would benefit from a project partnership with the Council of Europe - a unique human rights and democracy organisation - and the visibility generated thereby for their organisation. Access to all exhibition works and the related documentation will be free for re- use. Starting with 1-2 art works per member State, the exhibition would grow over the years and offer an exciting art collection.

Communication and interactive reflection spaces would be added to the exhibition website for enhanced impact and visibility.



The project would not only promote the role of arts, culture and creativity in boosting human rights and democratic values in society and highlight the artists as protagonists in this process but would also showcase all those who support this important mission. Further details and technical instructions will be available from the Council of Europe Secretariat and website.

# CONTACT

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