

## **Culture as a Peace Act: A Collective Statement**

We gather as cultural workers in a time of war, when cities are reduced to rubble and borders are redrawn by violence. We gather in a time of disinformation, when lies spread faster than truth and trust collapses into divisions. We gather in a time of fear, when democracy is attacked not only by weapons but by silence. We meet in the times when nature is annihilated. In such times, culture is not a luxury. Culture is conscience. Culture is resistance. Culture is survival.

Where culture is silenced, democracy is weakened. Where rivers are poisoned and forests destroyed, culture withers. The destruction of democracy, culture and nature is one and the same act of violence and it must be resisted as one struggle.

Culture carries knowledge and grants freedom. It offers fantasy, and teaches empathy. It is the voice of the unheard, the presence of the invisible, the breath of societies and local communities that refuse to be reduced to numbers. Where fear and censorship prevail, culture withdraws and it is our collective task to bring it back, again and again, wherever it is threatened.

From this conviction we come together to articulate a shared statement of principles, for culture to act as a force for peace, for resilience, and for dialogue.

We declare:

- War destroys; culture creates. War silences; culture speaks. Every poem, every song, every work of art is a refusal of the logic of war. Culture must confront violence. Culture is not neutral.

- Culture must defend democracy. Cultural institutions must not always be diplomatic. To defend dialogue, to protect diversity, to give space to difference and create spaces where we are allowed to feel uncomfortable is our duty.

- Culture and nature are inseparable. To protect the dignity of humanity is to protect the dignity of nature.

- Culture must serve communities. True cultural work begins locally. Without community, culture is hollow, without context, culture is powerless.

- Culture must resist disinformation and polarisation. It must create critical spaces, sharpen thinking, offer tools to question, and rebuild trust through encounter rather than echo.

- Culture must cross borders. Where politics builds walls, culture builds bridges. Where nationalism divides, culture shows humanity's shared inheritance. Cross-border cooperation is not a luxury but a necessity, the very condition of peace.

- Culture must be protected. Institutions of culture require more than survival; they require strength. They must be financially resourced, networked, and made visible, so they can act not as ornaments of political regimes and states but as intellectual and emotional expression of populations.

We believe culture is indispensable to peace, democracy, and human dignity.

We value truth, memory, and the courage to resist silence.

We aim to strengthen communities, empower voices, and honour contexts.

Culture cannot end every war, but it can resist the logic of war.

Culture cannot heal every wound, but it can keep alive the possibility of dialogue.

Culture cannot save democracy alone, but without culture, democracy cannot survive.

For these reasons, we declare: Culture is an act of peace.

Artists and cultural workers, join! Unite to defend democracy. Unite to keep alive the imagination of freedom when freedom itself is under attack.