



| Association Internationale
des Critiques d'Art |

32 rue Yves Toudic – 75010 Paris – FRANCE

The Censorship Committee

Subject : Freedom of expression under threat in Poland

January 28, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

AICA's Committee on Censorship and Freedom of Expression has compiled a listing of dozens of incidents over the last five years in which freedom of expression has been curtailed or diminished in Poland for political motives. These include cancellation of exhibitions, removal of works from exhibition, withdrawal of funding, harassment by the police, persecution by means of the judiciary (lawfare) and, last but certainly not least, outright censorship. A report documenting some of the most egregious violations of the right to freedom of expression is available here.

In many cases, censorship or cancellation has been premised on the grounds that a work offends religious feeling or disrespects national symbols. While each violation is disquieting in itself, the sum of these attacks on artists and their works constitutes a pattern of outright assault on freedom of expression. What we are witnessing is the systematic persecution of dissenting voices and minority viewpoints under the guise of patriotism, religion and family values. Public officials and cultural administrators seem keen to vie with each other to see who is quickest to enforce the ideology of the ruling PiS (Law and Justice) party. The result is a preemptive culture of censorship and self-censorship that defies European laws and disregards universal values.

As an organization dedicated to artistic freedom and the welfare of art and artists, AICA International calls on the European Commission to take action against the continuous violation by the present Polish government of the right to freedom of expression – guaranteed by article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is inadmissible that a member state of the European Union should abet and enable a political climate in which artistic freedom is trampled underfoot by the censoriousness of bureaucrats, large and small.

On behalf of AICA,



Lisbeth Rebollo GONÇALVES
President of AICA



Rafael Cardoso
Chair of Censorship Committee