



Tallinn Biennial and Art Week curatorial theme “Global language”

2 July – 30 July 2020

Raising the question: WILL A GLOBAL LANGUAGE SAVE US? Is there a universal language, **a system of communication**, through which humankind could rise to a new level of understanding and cooperation for addressing our global challenges? What could that language be?

The way we experience and create art reflects the way our lifestyles and cultures are becoming more and more globalised. Art is international, as are our ways of life, challenges and everyday topics. But being international does not necessarily mean having similar understanding about life. While we are becoming less local and more global, we are shedding traditional cultural lenses and moving towards the perspective of the individual. There is an emerging paradox - we are constantly discovering that we are more similar and yet more different at the same time. We are not experiencing or viewing the world the same way. But at the same time we are sharing our fundamental hopes, fears and dreams.

How could we proceed together and rebuild a global culture, a shared space that envelops us all, yet leaves each of us enough room to breathe? A space that is enriched by our differences yet shows us how fundamentally similar and connected we are.

Languages, local and national cultural identities are the traditional threads of humankind's interwoven fabric. A number of its threads have been washed away, assimilated and pulled loose. As the national prisms are too exclusive and cultural prisms more and more intertwined, what remains is the language. Through language we are constantly retelling the story of the world, life and death. Through language we are able to recreate the story of us and them, of the past, present and future from reemerging perspectives. By each and every one of us bringing



our unique viewpoints, questions and ideas onto the global arena, we can be the co-creators of our shared space together.

Is it possible to find a universal language that would enable us to express each of our unique worlds and bring them together? Are we similar enough? Will we be able to face the current global challenges without a common language? What will we gain and what will we lose if we find one?

In past and present times **religion and other big ideologies** have been the uniting tool for humanity. The myth of the Tower of Babel describes how people joined their skills to build a tower that would reach heaven. When God saw the power of united people he confounded their speech so that they no longer understood each other and scattered them around the world. How can we now come together in common language?

Now that old Europe and America are facing ideological crises, **media** has taken over the role. Do we really know our desires, or is it something that the commercial consuming world has put in our heads via media? What is real **human nature**? We all need love and care, we have common urges and desires... is there actually a difference if we are black or white, male or female?

So what makes humans different from other animals? Some people think it is the ability of complex reasoning, abstract thinking in addition to complex language and communication skills we use to express our feelings. Others believe that the ability of being creative and establishing culture is unique for humans. Culture knows no borders, having helped humankind through difficult times and to stay 'human' in the face of war. Could **art and culture be the global language?**

People have a tendency to join forces in the face of a common enemy. We are facing several of these now, e.g. **climate change and global warming, migration and terrorism**. Can solving common concerns bring humankind together?



We are all collectively looking for new materials and threads suitable for weaving a new kind of fabric that would present the coexistence of humans and their shifting cultural landscape. Is it possible to find a universal language that would enable us to express each of our unique worlds and bring them together? Are we similar enough? Are we able to face the current global challenges without a common language? What will we gain and what will we lose?