

Good morning, dear Mrs President, respected members of the Alliance of European academies, colleagues and friends!

Above all, I would like to express our gratitude for understanding our situation when it is difficult and sometimes impossible not only to travel but even be present in the virtual space, online, due to cuts of electricity and the lack of internet. Unfortunately, such are sad realities of our world. And one of our over-tasks is, obviously, to make this world better.

The National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, founded in 1996 in independent Ukraine is based on historical principles and values inherent to Ukrainian society, that is: democratic approach in decision-making, freedom of expression and worldview. These are keystones of activities of our Academy which is presented today by 104 academicians and members-correspondents. They are divided by profile sections: fine arts, music, film art, history and theory of arts, and synthesis of plastic arts. Besides, there are 38 foreign members and 27 honored academicians. 2 scientific research institutes are working under auspice of Academy: Modern Art Research Institute and Institute of Cultural Studies.

The Pandemic Coronavirus 19 followed by the Russian aggression and full-scale war lasting in Ukraine for about 300 hundred days impacted, of course, the Academy's activities. Many planned events have been forced to transfer to online – conferences, round tables, presentations. However, even under such circumstances such as cuts of electricity and internet or air alerts, the Academy continues working. Exhibition halls of Academy Presidium and Modern Art Research Institute, located downtown, as well as partner museums and centers host the works of academicians and their disciples, scientific magazines of our institutes publish papers of researchers and theorists, music works, performances and films of Academy members meet with spectators and listeners as well in Ukraine as abroad.

We are open for different forms of collaboration, from information placement on our website, articles in our magazine to conferences, film demonstration, performances and exhibitions.

Today, the Academy of Arts is an open platform for expressing views and position of artists. The artistic freedom, as seen by examples of Western and Central Europe, depends to significant extent on the institutional environment which can support an individual artist. It is clear, that the architectonics of the institutional background which has been composed after two world wars in the 20th century happened on the European territory requires an updated response to the challenges of our time. It deals as well with political and social institutes as with institutes providing creative and social activities or – wider – the humanitarian dimension.

Changes occur gradually in all spheres. The European Alliance of Academies was created in response to the pandemic Covid 19, and then to a threat to European and universal values due to the Russian aggression is one of evidences of this. Another one is the political solidarity of European and world governments with Ukraine. The

phenomenon which has no analogues in the historic perspective: by scale, comprehension, consistency and inviolability.

At the same time the institutional environment may turn out to be weak, conservative enforcing some artists to break the frames that are constraining them, or to stand against existing oppressive systems. We can see it by examples of pre-war and between-war Europe in 20 century or by modern dictatorship regimes in Eastern Europe.

It is not be a chance that the epoch of modern created the image of a lone hero capable to resist the system and to emerge victorious from this resistance impacting on the course of events and sometimes even on the fate of the planet. Between two world wars and after the Second World War such hero inspired and gave hope.

The postmodern epoch, especially after the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the USSR, questioned inerrancy and grandness of a lone hero which became a protagonist in art pieces of different genres: fine art, cinema, theatre, literature. It turned out that the world which seemed secured and solid was insecure and fluid, using the term coined by the Polish-British philosopher, Zygmunt Bauman.

The epoch of neomodern in which we live seems to make the world concrete, accentuating the image of a hero, from one hand, and multiplying him, from the other. However, such plurality doesn't level out a hero, but, contrary, like elevating him in all complexity of components. The bright example is today Ukraine where the collective hero gains recognition in the world. Here are only few examples.

The Andriy Sakharov Prize of European Parliament "For the Freedom of Expression" has been awarded to the brave people of Ukraine in person of the President of Ukraine, selected leaders and the civil society.

By the German Prize "M100 Media Award" in 2022 people of Ukraine were honored "for their courage in the fight against Russian invasion".

The Board of Pulitzer Prize granted special awards to Ukrainian journalists covering events under conditions of Russian invasion.

By the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded Ukrainian civil society in person of Center for Civil Liberties whose leader, Oleksandra Matviichuk, has said at the solemn ceremony: "This is not a war between two states, it is a war of two systems – authoritarianism and democracy. We are fighting for the opportunity to build a state in which everyone's rights are protected..." In particular, we can say, the freedom of expression. And as Oleksandr Matviichuk summarized, with this aim, "You don't have to be Ukrainians to support Ukraine. It is enough just to be humans".

And what about the art and artists? Under the conditions of the war against the past, for the present and the future, what is, by and large, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Ukrainian artists standing for the universal values, enjoy the wide freedom of expression, through creative activities and civil position.

Many professional artists took arms and joined the ranks of defenders of Ukraine, many others joined the volunteer movement devoting their time and efforts to supply the front and to help civil population in cities and villages damaged by the war. The artists paint posters, create murals, decorate with pieces of art walls of shelters, and organize charity performances, concerts, film demonstrations, exhibitions. Charity activities for fundraising to support artists and scientists became the important component of today's work of the Academy of Arts. Painters, musicians, filmmakers, theatre personalities conduct charity events as in Academy in Kyiv, as in other cities of Ukraine and abroad.

Summarizing, it should be noted that the artist in the modern world on creating the image of a hero which changes the world, becomes an active participant of this process, and his or her creative activity takes various forms, from artistic expression to civil rebellion and upholding of universal values and ideals, trying, as it was said at the beginning, to improve this world.

Kyiv, 16 December 2022