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## Introduction

Presentation of Peace Letters 15 @ IIPPE Conference URJC

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the director of the international Initiative for Art and New Media from Cologne, which was founded in 2000 and has been active under the name "The New Museum of Networked Art" since 2010, I am pleased to present my two-part contribution to the conference in Madrid as part of the "Committee of Activism" "Peace Letters to Ukraine 15" under the motto "Is it now the time for activism?" as it is scheduled in the conference program at Room 2, this room, starting today, Wednesday, on 11.15h until 13h and starting on 14.45h until 16.30h

Peace Letters to Ukraine - international artists in solidarity with Ukraine, is a media art project, which is designed for the unknown duration of the Russian war of annihilation against Ukraine. Initiated just a few days after the start of the war on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2022, the Peace Letters project wants to support additionally 30 Ukrainian video artists among their more than 250 participating international artist colleagues who have expressed their solidarity, and thus support art and culture in Ukraine.

The Peace Letters Project belongs to the circle of other media art projects, which are oriented towards humanitarian goals within the framework of The New Museum of Networked Art, in the overarching commemorative context of "The 7 Memorials for Humanity", which is based on a large number of different thematic film collections, including "The d/i/light Memorial" with its famous Shoah Film Collection, the initiative against forgetting (this means the Holocaust), anti-Semitism and racism involving 100 artists from thirty countries. Similar aims to preserve the memory of the past - Genocide No More - pursues, among others, The Cambodia Memorial with its film collection dedicated to the victims of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge Genocide. "The Climate Change Memorial", on the other hand, with its various film collections on the Anthropocene, is forward-looking. In this respect, the question of the motto "Is it now time for activism?" is not reported to the initiative with its artists, but to the viewer.

The "Peace Letters Marathon" represents one type of campaign by the Peace Letters. In 2022, the summer and winter marathons led in the spirit of Jules Verne around the world in 80 days. The Summer Marathon running this year from 13 July to 09 September, starting in July in Berlin, with its subsequent



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venues - Bremen, Cologne in Germany, Basel (Switzerland), Venice (Italy), Thessaloniki (Greece), Izmir (Turkey), and Quito in Ecuador and Los Angeles (USA), has as the last stop Madrid in the form of this conference on 6-8 September 2023.

The Peace Letters screening programs, specially prepared for the artistic activities like the two programs prepared for this conference, are based on several internal sources.

Peace Letters 1 - Ukrainian video artists with their works, Peace Letters 2 consisting of more than 100 videos by international artists that emerged from an open call on the Internet, Peace Letters 3 and Peace Letters 4, with historical video art programs that have been used for collaboration over the years 2008-2018 honoring the collaborating Ukrainian arts and culture institutions in Lviv, Kiev and Kharkiv, Peace Letters 5 includes solidarity contributions in the form of 10 video screening programs curated by 10 international curators, and - all available as a huge pool for curatorial activities.

The following Peace Letters 6-16, based on the venues, document the international cooperations through the presentation of the curated solidarity programs.

Peace Letters 15 was set up specifically for the conference as the final venue of the 2023 Summer Marathon.

Due to the unforeseeable end of the war, not much is left of the initially overflowing solidarity for Ukraine.

In particular, actions such as Peace Letters, which repeatedly point out that this war, in addition to terrorizing the Ukrainian population and the destruction of their material goods, is primarily about the erasure of identity and everything immaterial, such as art, culture and a history spanning thousands of years is of particular importance, even if you can't buy anything from it in a material sense.

Peace Letters 15 is officially announced at the conference as "Filmmakers' Response on the War in Ukraine", which is not actually the case. The title gives the impression that the screening program consists of film works that were made after the beginning of the war and thus creates false expectations. In fact, it is the Peace Letters project that represents the immediate response to the



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war as an initiative and media art project, while the curated screening programs include works by video artists created in the 10 years before the start of the war in 2022, addressing conflict situations, in which in various countries and contexts the people or, on their behalf, activists, rise up against the political establishment, whereby the works of the Ukrainian artists in program 2 refer to the actual beginning of the Ukraine war, when Russia annexed Crimea in violation of international law in 2014.

In particular, video program 1, which immediately follows, places the Ukraine war in a global context, which shows the war started by Russia as a different, because unexpected, 3rd World War, which actually affects the vast majority of humanity directly or indirectly - a war for the world's resources, which is exacerbated by climate change and its dramatic consequences.

The question that Peace Letters 15 poses to the viewers, also beyond the conference, as to when they actually believe that it is time to leave their comfort zone in order to become active to save their own existence, is of course more likely to understand rhetorically. Because it was already high time!

Finally, I would like to make one more correction for better understanding, because the creators of the cinematic works are not filmmakers in this sense, but artists who work with moving images, from my point of view it is at least necessary to point out the difference between film art and video art.

I also invite you to learn more about The Museum of Networked Art's projects by visiting the project links listed.

Since I believe that the video works speak for themselves, I would now like to invite you to get involved in the 1st of the two screening programs with open eyes and hearts, and later on 14.45h in the 2nd screening program.

Thank you for your attention.

<https://peace-letters.nmartproject.net/>

<https://peace-letters.nmartproject.net/p-l-u-15/>

<https://peace-letters.nmartproject.net/p-l-u-16/>

<https://nmartproject.net>

<https://7mfh.nmartproject.net>

<https://agricola-de.cologne>