

The International Office

Paris, 14 October 2019

Letter of endorsement to the Japan branch of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) concerning its statement on the closure of “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’ ” at Aichi Triennale 2019.

Subject: Closure of “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’ ” at Aichi Triennale 2019

cc. Index on Censorship

The international Association of Art Critics (AICA) is a global organisation, established in 1948 by UNESCO, comprising art critics who are actively engaged in improving International cooperation in the fields of artistic creativity, mediation and endeavour.

On August 7 AICA Japan issued a statement, signed by its president Fumio Nanjo, on the closure of a section “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’ ” within the Aichi Triennale 2019.

AICA Japan's statement expresses grave concern about the situation, firmly stating that “the suppression of expressive activities by violence and threats is unacceptable.” It continues, “Although it is the role of local authorities, including the police, to protect citizens’ activities from violent acts, giving in to violent demands for the closure of the exhibition on the grounds of protecting citizens from that violence is problematic.”

AICA International underlines emphatically the conclusion of the letter: "AICA Japan observes the developments at the Aichi Triennale 2019 with great concern. We hope that proper social conditions can be created in Japan in which all the works originally displayed at the opening of this international contemporary art exhibition could be freely shown again."

AICA International hereby endorses the protest of AICA Japan. We add that AICA believes that freedom of expression and thought is an important principle and as a basic civil right must be defended. A hallmark of any democracy is its willingness to allow, consider and withstand critical as well as benign points of view and to accommodate divergent artistic expressions.

Yours Sincerely,

Lisbeth Rebollo Gonçalves
President AICA International

Robert-Jan Muller
Chair, AICA Committee of Censorship and Freedom of
Expression

