

Open letter from Russian arts and cultural workers against the war in Ukraine

We, the undersigned artists, curators, architects, critics, art-managers – cultural workers in the Russian Federation – have initiated this open letter, which we believe to be an insufficient, but necessary step on the road to peace between Russia and Ukraine.

On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation began an aggressive and shameless military campaign on the territory of Ukraine. The reasoning given behind that campaign was the “protection of The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR)”. The Russian military, however, is spread across the whole country and is striking its biggest cities: Kiev, Lvov, Kharkov, and Odessa, among others. These cities are home to our relatives, friends, acquaintances and colleagues. We demand an end to this war with the independent and sovereign state of Ukraine, one that has been ongoing since 2014. We demand peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, insisting that they be held respectfully and on equal terms.

The war is a tragedy both for the people of Ukraine and Russia. It comes with countless human casualties, bringing down the safety, security and economy, placing Russia under complete isolation from the international community. All while being completely senseless and pointless: any peace forced with violence is absurd. The reasoning behind this so-called “special military operation” is a construct made entirely by the representatives of the Russian state. We are in opposition to this war being carried out in our name.

The most important thing for us right now is the fate of the Ukrainian people, their life and safety.

Speaking as members of a professional community, we must mention that the further escalation of the war will bring upon irreparable consequences for culture workers. This escalation will take away our voices. our few remaining opportunities to work, popularize and develop culture. This takes away our future. Everything that has been done in our culture over the past 30 years is under threat: international connections will be broken, private and public cultural institutions will be frozen, partnerships with foreign actors – torn. All of this will destroy the already fragile economy of Russian culture, bringing down its importance for our society and the international community. Working in culture in circumstances like these will be impossible.