

*** PRESS RELEASE – 15 September 2018 ***

**Passion for Freedom Art Festival
10th-anniversary edition, 1 – 12 October 2018, London**

The Royal Opera Arcade Gallery & La Galleria Pall Mall
Royal Opera Arcade, 5b Pall Mall, London SW1Y 4UY

The **10th-anniversary edition** of internationally renowned **Passion for Freedom Art Festival** will open in London on **1 - 12 October 2018** at its new location – the **Royal Opera Arcade Gallery & La Galleria Pall Mall**. The exhibition showcases uncensored art from around the world, promoting human rights, highlighting injustice and celebrating artistic freedom.

Passion for Freedom was founded in 2008 by a small group of friends and over the past ten years has grown into an international network of artists, journalists, filmmakers and activists striving to celebrate and protect freedom of expression.

The competition attracts much worldwide attention. This year, we received **more than 200 submissions** out of which we will exhibit **over 50 shortlisted artists**. From Venezuela to Turkey to the United Kingdom, those artists ceaselessly show the restraints imposed on their art by their societies and question the limits of freedom of speech, expression, and information in their countries. Altogether, we will present you **100 original and brave artworks** at a prominent location right in the heart of London. Passion for Freedom recognises artists in various disciplines – painting, photography, sculpture, performance, video installations, as well as authors, filmmakers and journalists.

Competitors will be judged by a prestigious selection panel composed of international artists, academics and curators. Winners will be announced on the 6th of October at the Gala Award Night.

This year's judges are:

Andrew Stahl (United Kingdom)
Francisco Laranjo (Portugal)
Gary Hill (USA)
Lee Weinberg, PhD (Israel)
Mehdi-Georges Lahlou (Belgium)
Miriam Elia (United Kingdom)
Mychael Barratt PRE (Canada/United Kingdom)

We are thrilled to announce a **Special Theo Van Gogh Award** which we will be awarding this year to recognise and celebrate his courage and contribution to the fight for freedom of expression in arts.

Furthermore, we have invited renown freedom artist from all over the world to present their most recent works commenting on the subject of freedom and artistic expression.

Passion for Freedom 2018 Guest Artists are:

Agata Strzalka (Poland)
Andreea Medar (Romania)
Emma Elliott (United Kingdom)
Jana Zimova (Czech Republic/Germany)

Mimsy (United Kingdom)
Öncü Hrant Gültekin (Turkey/Germany)
Oscar Olivares (Venezuela)

Additionally, we are delighted to present *fresh off the press* the first edition of our **Freedom Book**, marking ten years of our exciting journey and our successes so far. The book will be premiered and available during the festival.

Passion for Freedom's first international art competition and exhibition took place in 2009 in London. Over the years, we have displayed more than **600 artworks from 55 countries**, including **China, Iran and Venezuela**, and **15,000 people have viewed the exhibitions**. This initiative is not merely a place where artists from repressed countries can showcase works they would be unable to exhibit in their home countries; it is a grass-roots movement for a life worth living.

The Mail on Sunday included Passion for Freedom Art Festival in their selection of **100 Hot Events this Autumn**.

'The festival has a simple mission – which is to display the work of artists who are thinking seriously about freedom, what it means and how you preserve it. Passion for Freedom celebrates the people who not only do it but who mean it. Go if you can – London's stunning 'Passion for Freedom' exhibition is worth an hour of anyone's time.'

Douglas Murray, journalist, broadcaster and best-selling author

The festival was recognised by **Madonna** and highlighted in her **Freedom Calendar 2014**. Passion for Freedom cooperated with **BBC** on its **2015 Freedom Year Program** and its continuous cooperation with Royal Holloway University on **the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta**.

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