



Remarks by UNIMA General Secretary, Dimitri Jageneau, on the Upcoming Roundtable Discussion: “Culture of Peace” in Brussels

What does "a culture of peace" mean? Is it not a hollow repetition of words, akin to a "double intention" impossible to achieve, simply utopian, yet a necessity of international law and cultural rights, a will or a dream of "beautiful souls," out of touch with Realpolitik and the mechanisms of power and domination in relations between states and political groups? But culture is power, if not power itself, so is it the Power of Peace, one power among others? Or Power par excellence (peace as a concession of force)? But then, what is peace? And what does it mean for art and artists, especially for puppeteers and actors of the puppetry world? Is it a desire for a "culture," and not just any culture, but a culture of an idealistic or regulatory notion of "Peace"? Can "peace" be defined as the absence of conflict? As the affirmation of what is not, i.e., the affirmative of a negative? Does culture mean a process, a training, a path, a challenge to emancipate and assert a freedom and singularity that cannot be reduced to another culture?

Culture is an open contradiction, a ceaseless movement of affirmation that questions and metamorphoses itself; culture is porous, always open and curious. Culture is always and already a process and a questioning of human creativity, which needs a before for something else. And yet, cultures create civilizations. Civilizations cannot get along with each other, as Oswald Spengler thought (*The Decline of the West*). Huntington and neoconservative philosophy also believe that culture is contradiction and, above all, conflict, and that this is how we can think about the conflict of civilizations. They don't believe that there isn't "one" culture, but that there are "many" cultures within the same general culture of one mind, one language. Culture calls into question the notion of community and our membership in that community. Can we belong to several communities and several cultures? The question is always one of multiplicity, of tastes, of interests, of peer recognition, of the history of a "people." Standardization always jeopardizes the notion of culture.



Can't we define Peace as that which is not and that which should be, as the "coexistence" of individuals together so as not to fall back into a state of war? (Emmanuel Kant, Treatise of Perpetual Peace). What does this mean for a Worldwide Puppet Organization? Does Peace give value to a type of exchange and relationship that attempts to take account of different considerations and visions, even with disagreement? Far from being a compromise, which accepts differences as much as it accepts agreement in order to get along, Peace and Culture aim to establish a process of openly questioning one culture for another in an exchange and dialogue with a view to "mutual understanding." Could this assessment of "mutual understanding" help to avoid any conflicts, or at least, any wars and physical violence, murders, and massacres? All these issues will be addressed through historical, geographical, and cultural questioning, as well as artists' testimonies, in a vision of questioning but also of proposals and declarations for an international will of artists and puppeteers to affirm the lack, the absence, and the impossibility, but on the contrary, the necessity, the dream, and the possibility of a better world with the power of culture and creativity.

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General Secretary of UNIMA (2021-2025)