

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY,

DEAR STUDENTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

For the 4th year in a row, the International Festival "The reflection of disability in art" is present and has been placed under the auspices of H.E. the President of the Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou. Also, the whole project is supported by the Thessaloniki Film Festival and the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

The Festival started as an idea inspired by art. The purpose of the festival is to highlight the importance of everyone's access to art but also to honor art as an inalienable right of expression, communication, creativity and culture of all people.

The 4th International Festival with an absolute sense of responsibility takes place online. It has been taken care for (a) the interpretation in the Greek sign language during all the Events of the Festival and (b) the screening of a universally accessible film that will be screened today and was funded by the Festival. All movies are with English and Greek subtitles. The music pieces from the RoDi Music Orchestra are also performed in Greek Sign Language.

Every year there is a film competition and a photography competition. This year, for the first time we have a music composition competition. The criteria for participation focus on promoting the concept of self-determination, educational and social inclusion and the emancipation of the disabled.

Last year, at the 3rd Festival, the participation of the public exceeded all expectations and the experience gained was a legacy for this year's event.

Every year I choose to announce the opening of the festival focusing on one dimension. This year the emotions are mixed, strange, undefined.

The first word I thought of was solidarity, not charity, not kindness... but solidarity ...

But why; Because now, perhaps more than ever, we all need to feel like a community. Because, as Mr. Nikolakopoulos states in his speech at the Society of Greek Writers, solidarity is a key element in building social cohesion. "Thus, as a social being, the human must claim the right to life with dignity, as a Citizen and not as a subject. This claim starts from the requirement of observance by all, state and citizens, of Solidarity, namely the basic agreement that ensures the individual dignity of man with equality and the ability to meet basic needs, such as: the right to work, the right to health

and the right to education. That is, the claim and the struggle of the person for the right to culture "

And as the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish writes

"To think of others ..."

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others

(do not forget the pigeon's food).

As you conduct your wars, think of others

(do not forget those who seek peace).

As you pay your water bill, think of others

(those who are nursed by clouds).

As you return home, to your home, think of others

(do not forget the people of the camps).

As you sleep and count the stars, think of others

(those who have nowhere to sleep).

As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others

(those who have lost the right to speak).

As you think of others far away, think of yourself

(say: "If only I were a candle in the dark").

This event would not have been viable without the support of all those who, individually, collectively, personally or anonymously, stood as helpers, inspirers, guides, companions and for whom I am personally grateful.

So, with pleasure and special honor, I announce the opening of the 4th International Festival "The reflection of disability in art".