5th Festival "The Reflection of Disability in Art" of the University of Macedonia

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The 5th International Festival "The Reflection of Disability in Art – iRoDi Festival" continued its live screenings on Friday, December 8th, at the University of Macedonia. The day was dedicated to the theme "Dimensions of life". Besides the films, viewers had the opportunity to watch a musical theater performance by the title "Two first hours" from the students of the 1st E.E.E.E.K. Thessaloniki and the 28th General High School of Thessaloniki and to sing together with the students, who received the warm applause of the audience. The festival was also attended by Yavuz Özer, director and producer of the film “Ercan &amp; Aysun”, who addressed a greeting to those present and emphasized his joy at participating in the festival.

On the seventh day of the Festival, on December 9th, the artistic program opened with the joint appearance of the Special High School for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing of Thessaloniki with the Choir and the Music Club of the 1st Standard High School of Thessaloniki. In a unique collaboration entitled “Si(n)g(n)ing Together” the students sang and performed two songs in Greek Sign Language proving that music is a bridge of communication that overcomes barriers and limitations. Then, students of the Special High School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Thessaloniki danced bachata, a type of Latin dance, stirring up the audience with their dancing figures.

The evening continued with the second day of the Festival dedicated to the theme "Art and Disability". Artists with disabilities from around the world who approach the various forms of art through their view, presented their own prespectives using art as a means of expression, communication and coexistence. The evening closed by the inclusive dance group Exis, where among the movements of a duet on stage, the moving bodies refer to balance and equality within a relationship.

On the 8th and last day of the 5th International Festival, the day started with the theater workshop "Co - creating the new environment: the inclusive approach in the educational process” by the actor and theater instructor Vassilis Oikonomou. With the accompaniment of music, the participants expressed through the targeted improvisation, contained in the "Man-Goal-Action" methodology of the actor, elements of their self and personality. Then discussion followed wishing to highlight the values of co-education and mutual understanding in educational process.

Afterwards, was shown the movie "Troades" by the inclusive theater group THEAMA in co-production with Grondzki Theatre (Poland) and the Gato Escaldado Theater (Portugal) as part of the program D.I.V.A., Diversity, Inclusion and Visibility in Arts, a co-funded project of Creative Europe.

In the afternoon of December 10th, took place the Closing Ceremony of the 5th International Festival "Rodi - The Reflection of Disability in Art". The ceremony began with the greeting of Mrs. Fyka Georgia, who referred to the institution of the Festival, saying characteristically that "If there is a Festival that responds to the reality of disability in society, that is iRoDi Festival". Afterwards, the floor took Mrs. Kartasidou Lefkothea, the person in charge and heart of iRoDi, thanking all the creators who participated, the volunteer team for its contribution as well as those who honored the Festival with their presence.

Mrs. Kartasidou proceeded to present the awards for the films that participated. The first prize was given to Riani Singgih's film “A sonorous Melody', the second to Irani Farhad's film 'I am Irani' and the third to the Evrim Inci’s film "The Wall". The audience award was won by Mahdi Zamanpoor Kiasari’s film "Water, Wind, Dust & Bread", while the student award was won by Jordi Fradera’s film "Dummy".

Then followed the impressive artistic-dance performance of Dagipoli Dance Co in conception-choreography by Giorgos Christakis and participation of Eleni Kontzila, Iolis Spiliopoulou and Ellis Boyakis. Afterwards, was presented the play "You can trust me" by EKEK AmeA - Lakkia, where the students highlighted their need for us to believe in them and their potential to join the labor sector. In the play took part the students Flioura Maria, Tsamtsis Aristidis, Tzafa Emine, Kastias Ioannis and Adamidou Konstantina.

The evening ended with a highly immersive symposium by the theme "Right in life". The discussion was moderated by Mrs. Anastasia Psalti, Professor of the Department of Educational and Social Policy of the University of Macedonia. In the discussion participated Mr. Christakis Giorgos, disabled dancer and choreographer, Mrs. Hainoglou Kalliopi, Assistant Professor at the Department of International and European Studies of the University of Macedonia, Mrs Kyriakidou Eleni, Social Worker and PhD Candidate of the Department of Educational and Social Policy of Macedonia, Mrs. Fyka Georgia, Social Worker and Member of the Movement of Disabled Artists, and Mr. Dantanidis Spyros, disabled filmmaker-CoCreator of Cool Crips and vice president of the "Walk" Association.

The discussion referred to the problems of people with disabilities, the society's attitude towards them, the lack of financial assistance from the state and the issue of independent living of disabled people. In conclusion, disability is not a consequence of any damage but of obstacles, limitations and discrimination imposed by society itself. It is ultimately a political, economic, social and class issue and for this situation to change, this will have to come from the root, from the foundations of society which is education.

After 8 days of film screenings and numerous events, the curtain of the 5th International Festival "The Reflection of Disability in Art" fell. The organizing committee and the volunteer team of the Festival renewed their appointment for the next year with more projections, ideas and actions, always with the aim of highlighting art through the perspective of disability.