

Museums under Political Control

Workers from Moderna galerija

28 Feb 2022

L'Internationale would like to share the statement of MG workers, their deep concern about the degradation of Slovenian democracy, and the severe consequences it is having for cultural workers, art institutions, and the teams working in them.

Moderna galerija was the initiator and founder member of L'Internationale and the confederation members would like to express their support to our colleagues and the difficult situation they face every day. We join them in asking for solidarity and support from the wider art world in this very difficult moment.



MG+MSUM staff, 2022.

The Case of Moderna galerija (MG+MSUM), Ljubljana

In 2020, the long-term mandate of Moderna galerija's Director Zdenka Badovinac ended and she reapplied for her job, as she had done several times before. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia as the founder of Moderna galerija issued a call for applications for the post of the Director of MG+MSUM. Instead of reappointing the director, and despite the loudly voiced opposition of the broader professional public, the Ministry repeated the call for candidates three times, changing in the process the statutes of MG+MSUM and the qualifications and requirements for the post, in order to enable the appointment of the Ministry's favoured candidate, Aleš Vaupotič. His eventual appointment was one of the many politically motivated changes regarding the directors of the national cultural

institutions in Slovenia implemented by the current government that we have been witnessing over the last two years.

Since the appointment as Director of MG+MSUM of Aleš Vaupotič, the staff of the museum have had a very difficult experience. The new director has acted extremely arbitrarily towards the museum's past work, reputation and the institution's history, and has conducted toxic work relations with most of the employees. On many levels – in terms of the museum's public service and its vision and mission – the vast majority of the staff have come to realize that such activities are destructive of the institution and represent a serious threat for its mission – a mission that the expert staff continue to support.

On numerous occasions staff have notified the Director of their disagreement on individual issues. The employees have appealed against the irregularities in management, suggested improvements by email and personally at staff meetings but these have all been without any concrete, visible effect. As a result, after a year of working (or not working) together the staff have publicly issued the letter below.

The Director's immediate reaction was to ask for a dialogue but this comes after a year of futile attempts on the staff's part to hold a dialogue with the management and make it take their positions into consideration. His reproach that staff is refusing to talk is therefore ungrounded and misleading and cannot be taken seriously.

For the museum employees this is a major step. As they say: "our profound concern for the future of the museum, its reputation and status, its national and international collaborations, and the professional standards of art museum work have driven us to bring to the public attention the irregularities in managing the museum and issue a public appeal for the resignation of the Director and the Assistant Director."

Read the full [Public Letter of Protest here](#).

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