

(May 7 2019)

**PRESS RELEASE
FROM INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART (IAA)**

IAA President Bedri Baykam, held a press conference in Istanbul at the Piramid Sanat and announced the decision of the UNESCO Executive Board, of having voted 'World Art Day' as one of the International Days marked by UNESCO. The decision can be read among others on the website of UNESCO, in the file concerning the decisions of the 206th session of the Executive Committee. Near him, one could see his fellow artist friends who initially had taken together with him that decision of UPSD, which had taken to Guadalajara this proposal. The press conference raised a lot of interest in the Turkish media.

**WORLD ART DAY HAS BEEN ACCEPTED
BY THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD
FOLLOWING IAA's PROPOSAL**

We are proud to announce that WORLD ART DAY has been accepted by the UNESCO Executive Board during their 206th Board Meeting session in Paris.

From 2020 on, April 15, the birthday of Leonardo da Vinci will be celebrated as World Art Day, in the whole world!

8 years ago, in 2011, at the 18th General Assembly of IAA, in Guadalajara Mexico, the proposal of the Turkish National Committee UPSD, presented by Bedri Baykam and co-signed by several countries' delegates (Christos Symeonides/Cyprus, Liu Dawei/China, Dev Chooramun/Mauritius, Rosa Maria Burillo Velasco/Mexico, Anders Liden/Sweden, Hilde Rognskog/Norway, Kan Irie/Japan, Pavol Kral/Slovakia, Anne Pourny/France) to designate a World Art Day on the birthday of Leonardo da Vinci, 15th of April, was accepted unanimously by all participating countries in that General Assembly.

Since then, every year starting with 2012, the world found out more and contributed generously to World Art Day with IAA National Committees, celebrating the event in their respective countries. Even some other countries that didn't have an IAA National Committee, contributed to those events of celebration.

In August 2018, as IAA we sent an official proposal to the General Director of UNESCO, Mrs. Audrey Azoulay. Pursuing a period of bureaucratic follow up and correspondence, Mexico and Turkey Delegations in UNESCO have brought the proposal of IAA to the Agenda of the UNESCO Executive Board Meeting. Also following our direct diplomatic meetings and dialogues in Paris with several different Ambassadors at the UNESCO Headquarters, on April 16, 2019, the Executive Board of UNESCO, has discussed the IAA proposal, co-signed by 41 countries from all parts of the globe and at the voting, it was unanimously accepted by all 57 countries.

So according to this decision of the Executive Board of UNESCO, World Art Day will be one of the International Days marked by UNESCO from 2020 onwards. Every year, under UNESCO's umbrella and guidance, World Art Day will be celebrated by all countries and artists on April 15, the birthday of Leonardo da Vinci. The decisions of the Executive Board, as accustomed are waiting to be ratified by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2019, before becoming active in 2020.

Thus, the date suggested originally, April 15, the birthday of the world's most famous artist of all times, Leonardo da Vinci and "World Art Day" are associated for ever. The great Renaissance legend, remembered again this year for the 500th year of his loss, is a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary creator in so many different fields, who always managed to stay contemporary for every other generation of artists up until today.

IAA thanks UNESCO director Mrs. Azoulay and all the Executive Board Members for having generously supported this proposal, which will contribute a lot to global artistic awareness, exchanges and dialogues.

Our thanks and gratefulness also go to the Mexican Ambassador, **His Excellency Federico Salas** and **Turkish Ambassador, His Excellency Altay Cengizer** who extended their full cooperation and support to back up our proposal. We also thank all Ambassadors and diplomats whom I had the privilege of meeting in Paris last March.

We, the World Executive Committee of IAA, must certainly not forget to recognize all the valuable and consistent contributions of all the IAA members, who over the last 8 years have brought to life endless events on World Art Day, as well as each and every artists' contribution worldwide.

Thanks to each event, each exhibition, conference, street festival, panel discussion or workshop, the world found out more and more about **World Art Day** that aims to bring nations, cultures, countries, continents together through peace and artistic education and dialogue, which are amongst the most important UNESCO values.

We believe that the world will be saved not through wars but through art and consequent international cultural exchanges.

Now, no matter rich or poor, famous or not, young or old, professional or not, every artist and art lover all over the world, have a common day to celebrate, for the same great cause, cherishing the world in harmony with the arts!

Once again, we wish to reiterate our sincere thanks to Mrs. Azoulay and all members of the UNESCO delegations for having shared our passion and who made possible the birth of an internationally marked **World Art Day**. This was a great partnership in solidarity between diplomats, artists and art lovers.

Now it's the real time for art!

World Art Day, for a healthy dialogue between world cultures, all over the planet!

Bedri Baykam
President
International Association of Art
-Official Partner of UNESCO

IAA World Executive Board

Pavol Kral/Slovakia, Marta M. Perez/Puerto Rico, Katarina Jönsson Norling/Sweden, Christos Symeonides/Cyprus, Dolores Ortiz Minique/Mexico, Ryoji Ikeda/Japan, Franklyn Glover/Ghana, Maja Moroz/Poland, Francis Desiderio/Belgium, Marta Yglesias Piza/Costa Rica