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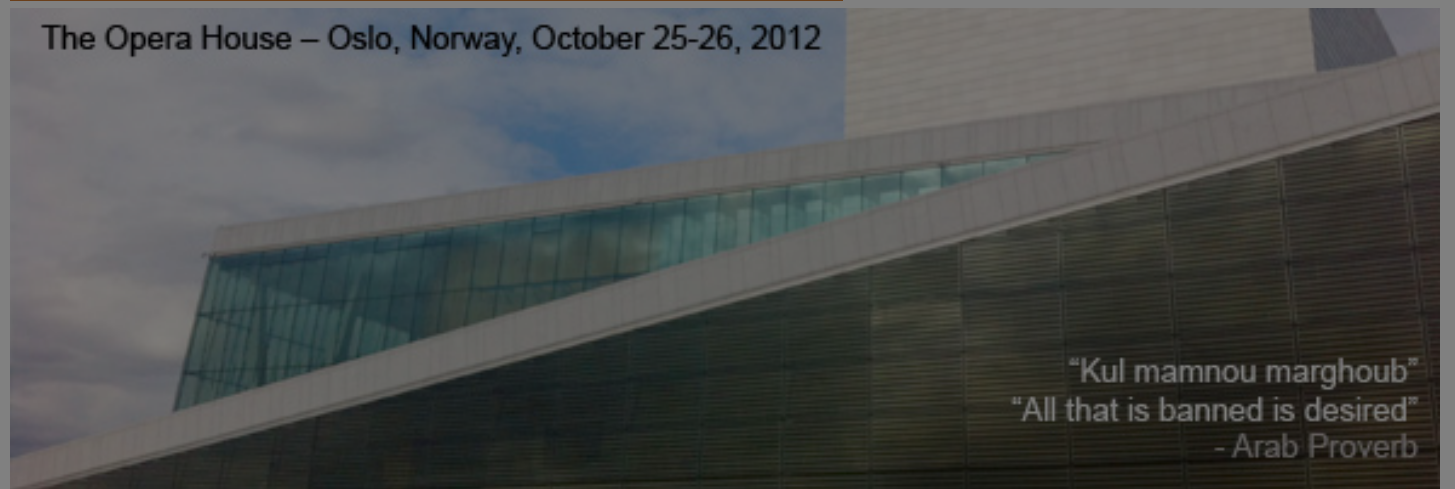
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## Freedom of Expression

The Opera House – Oslo, Norway, October 25-26, 2012



Over the two days of *'All That is Banned is Desired' – A World Conference on Artistic Freedom of Expression*, artists, journalists, activists, scholars, curators and others will respond to censorship of the arts around the world. The conference takes place at the Opera House, Oslo, Norway on 25-26 October. It is organised by Fritt Ord and Freemuse. Attendance is by invitation only and those people interested in taking part in the conference can [register interest](#). The conference will discuss and investigate why, where, and how artistic expressions is condemned, banned and persecuted. In particular, it will focus on the three principal agents of censorship – religion, state and market. Although the effects of censorship can be easily identified in cases where artists are imprisoned or killed, the social and economic repercussions of censorship are more difficult to measure. A culture deprived of its artistic creations and cultural heritage clearly loses an important link to its history and identity. Cultural artefacts carry with them the power to influence the minds and motivations of the masses and with it, the power to divert people from an awareness of and compliance with the normative behaviours of a society, as dictated by religious and political ideologies. The control of culture is thus a major concern for both clerics and politicians. But where religion and state decline in importance in the control of artistic expression, another censor appears quite ready to step in to fill the censorial void – namely the market. And there is no guarantee that it will prove to be any less censorious than its religious and political predecessors. Censorship is characterized by the contradictory fact that by imposing limits it provokes reactions to those limits. By limiting freedom it helps fuels the desire for even greater freedom, as the title of the conference evokes: 'All that is banned is desired'. In many ways, the power of nation-states to carry out censorship is being undermined as global communication networks expand and international trade barriers crumble. This means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for governments to control what their citizens have access to; however, history suggests that nation-states will be reluctant to relinquish control. Conference participants will be invited to debate these and other concerns in relation to specific cases. These cases will be drawn from a wide range of conditions and contexts and will include some that are well known and others that are known to only a few. In addition to deepening our understanding of the fundamental propositions of freedom of expression, the conference will also work toward proposals for monitoring censorship globally, and organising to advance freedom of expression for artists around the world.

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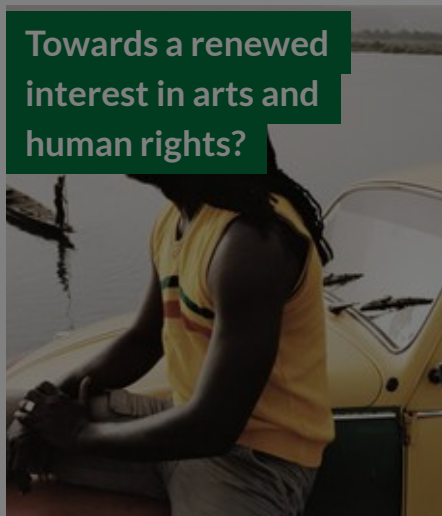
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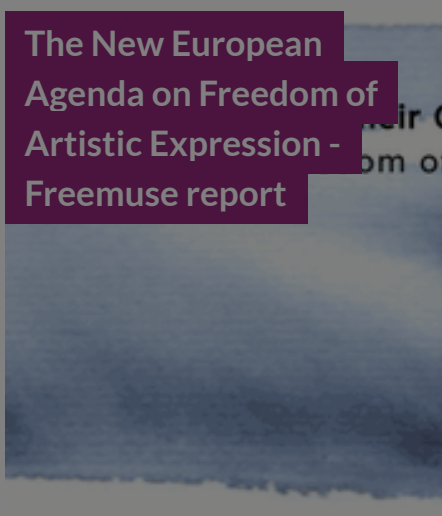
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