

# INDEPENDENT CULTURE MANIFESTO

**We, the Polish arts community – artists, cultural organisers and educators – intent on safeguarding the right of all Polish citizens to enjoy unlimited access to culture, do hereby establish the Movement for INDEPENDENT CULTURE.**

We do not represent any party or ideology. We have differing views on politics, different aesthetic preferences and philosophical viewpoints; we come from different parts of the country and different social spheres. What brings us together is the idea of an independent culture, one that is free, open, and nourished by diversity.

Polish culture is just like the Polish people: right-wing and left-wing, conservative and avant-garde, patriotic and cosmopolitan, Christian and secular. Culture cannot be merely an instrument of politics or ideology. Culture, like democracy, is a space for dialogue where freedom and diversity are respected. Whenever democracy is under threat, culture becomes a guardian of democratic values.

For many years, politicians in Poland have been trying to use economic leverage, administrative pressure and religious sanctions to keep independent-minded artists from being heard in the public sphere. In doing so, they are taking away Polish people's freedom of choice and restricting their access to culture.

Attempts to subordinate culture to any political faction affect all of us, as well as future generations. We have an obligation to keep our cultural legacy intact, so as to be able to pass it down to posterity. A nation without access to an open and diverse culture loses its ability to communicate effectively, think critically, and becomes vulnerable to manipulation.

We will not allow that to happen.

We will fight for Polish culture. On the pages of books and newspapers, on movie screens, on theatre stages, in art galleries, on television and the Internet, in public spaces, and wherever we encounter viewers, spectators, listeners and readers.

We are beginning our educational and artistic activities by announcing the civic celebration of the centennial of Poland's independence. INDEPENDENT CULTURE will commemorate the anniversary without any political context or propaganda. We will make our presence felt throughout Poland: in big cities, in towns and villages, and everywhere that people believe in the power and importance of culture.

An independent country deserves independent culture. To all those who believe in this idea, we say Join us!