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Yes for the Biennial!

By: CubaSí Editorial Staff

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A call circulates in the social networks "To the International Artistic Community", urging it not to participate in the XIV Biennial of Havana. The organizers of the initiative identify themselves as "Cubans who work for culture."

From alleged cultural positions it's intended to boycott the most important call for Cuban art, internationally recognized for years.

If the appeal is read, it's obvious that the demands are not artistic (even assuming the relationship between art and politics). They are related to the illegal demonstrations in July or the judicial processes faced by some citizens for their destabilizing actions. It's said that Cuban artists have been or are still in prison. We won't further the forcefulness of the artistic work of those individuals (if they had any); We can only assure that none of them have been arrested for making their art. They have been arrested for breaking the law. The condition of being an artist does not exempt any citizen from abiding the law.

Let's hope that the artists asked to boycott the Biennial would be informed. They will find out, one by one, the reasons why some citizens must respond before justice. I wish they did not join opportunist campaigns or gross manipulations of the truth.

The truth is that it's not the first time that a campaign has been made against the Havana Biennial. In the previous edition, the reason given was that certain creators were not allowed to participate in the event... ignoring that international practice is for biennials to invite participating artists, based on a theme axis.

Some relevant creators have signed the call. They have the right to do it. And it's a shame. Others who call themselves artists (although they don't have relevant work) have also done it. The Biennial can easily live without them.

But it should be clear that the Biennial they attack, organized like so many biennials worldwide by the cultural institutions of the State, is not a government party for the government to gloat about. It's a celebration of the artists

and their public. It's a platform for critical thinking (it would be convenient to approach the proposals: "pleasant" art is not socialized there). It's a privileged space for the confluence of creators and poetics. It's a showcase open to people, so that they take art as part of their daily routines.

Cultural authorities attacked by these "cultural workers" understand art and literature as emancipatory entities, as the spiritual realization of a people... never as a bargaining chip or as a gross justification for interventionist maneuvers.

Great artists (even very critical artists) have not signed the appeal. Nor will they sign it. They know the true role of culture in society, particularly notable in these times. The Havana Biennial will be a success, despite the clamor of those who want to make it hostage to extra-artistic interests.

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