



press release  
Amsterdam, 23 April 2018

### **European Cultural Challenge**

Courageous Citizens for change meet in Amsterdam to catalyse change

In May 2018, ECF celebrates the tenth anniversary of the ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture, which honours inspiring people and organisations that courageously and creatively imagine new paths for Europe. To mark this occasion, we will bring together cultural change-makers from our networks across Europe and beyond for the first European Cultural Challenge. The 2018 PMA laureates – Forensic Architecture and Borderland Foundation – will be on stage to accept their award and to work with our communities as part of the Challenge.

The European Cultural Challenge is designed as an advocacy retreat that will bring together more than 100 stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds, with the aim of exploring cultural responses to the pressing challenges facing Europe. Participants are previous ECF award laureates, grantees, partners, as well as researchers, artists, foundation and business representatives, media-makers and policy-makers. Collectively they will work on tangible cases and challenges, and explore perspectives for solutions, future advocacy work and programmes.

The Challenge is centered around three main themes: Systemic Change Alternatives, Shrinking Space for Civil Society, and Diversity & Equality. It will take place on May 15 and 16 at Hotel Arena in Amsterdam. The opening lecture will be presented by Gilane Tawadros, Chief Executive of DACS – a London-based not-for-profit visual artists' rights management organisation, and Vice Chair of the Stuart Hall Foundation, which supports new generations of creative thinkers, provokes original thinking and debate, and asks difficult questions that challenge the status quo.

The European Cultural Foundation believes answers to these difficult questions can be found in the cultural realm, as democracy needs imagination.

At a time when the foundations of the European Union appear increasingly difficult to sustain, the need for radical and structural change is undeniable. From the rise of populist politics fuelling the fragmentation of societies to the increasing economic instabilities people are facing every day, the challenges for our continent require a collective response that is struggling to emerge. In this challenging context, the role of culture is becoming more crucial than ever before.

Since its inception in 1954, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) has been striving for an open, inclusive and democratic Europe in which culture is seen as a key driver. We would like to see a continent where culture's ability to imagine and enact the



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world differently plays a pivotal role in reconfiguring the social fabric – a continent in which Europeans share more and look to the future with trust. A Europe of *Courageous Citizens*.

This first European Cultural Challenge is organised in collaboration with and thanks to the support of the [Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind](#) (Paris/Lausanne), and in partnership with [Open Eyes Economy Summit](#) (Krakow), [Castrum Peregrini](#) (Amsterdam), [Commons Network](#) (Berlin) and [Culture Action Europe](#) (Brussels).

**Editor's Notes (not for publication):**

European Cultural Challenge

Where: Hotel Arena, 's-Gravesandestraat 55, Amsterdam

When: May 15, 11.00 - 22.00, May 16, 09.00 - 13.00.

Participation in the European Cultural Challenge is on invitation only. If you are interested in covering the Challenge, or if you wish to receive more information, please contact:

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**For more information:**

European Cultural Challenge

<http://www.culturalfoundation.eu/european-cultural-challenge-2018/>

Princess Margriet Award for Culture

<http://www.culturalfoundation.eu/pma-2018>

To mark the tenth anniversary of the Princess Margriet Award, ECF is pleased to launch the book *Courageous Citizens: How Culture Contributes to Social Change*. Co-published with Valiz, the book examines key themes that have emerged over this past decade.

<http://www.valiz.nl/en/publications/courageous-citizens.html>