



## **Parallel Session 15: "Enlarging choices: Artistic freedom and Diversity of Contents"**

**3 May 2019, 16h-17h30,**

**Venue: African Union HQ, Small Conference Room 2**

**Addis Abbeba, Ethiopia**

**This event is supported through the Aschberg Programme for Artists and Cultural Professionals**

### **Description**

The potential of the media to promote peace and democracy relies not only on the freedom of expression ensured through pluralistic and independent media but also on the freedom to imagine and create diverse artistic or cultural expressions. Together, they can provide the content required for a diversity of narratives and a platform for a diversity of voices to be heard. Artists and other creative professionals working alongside journalists to bring transparency and clarity in the world of disinformation, are increasingly at risk and their environments are not safe. There is an increased documentation and awareness of violent attacks and persecution of artists and artistic expressions around the world. Without this safe space for creative expression, diversity of discourse and image is at risk.

Against this background, it is key to keep focus on free, independent and pluralistic media and culture sectors. Ensuring diversity of content in cultural and media programming, and access to such diversity for all groups in society, is also fundamental. Artistic and creative expressions, as an integral part of the human right to freedom of creation and expression, are thus critical to the wellbeing of citizens, the stability of creative sectors and the functioning of democratic societies.

How can media professionals and cultural actors work together to raise awareness of their work to enable citizens to make informed decisions and to address the challenges that restrict their rights to freedom of expression and movement, artistic freedom and creative expression? How to ensure inclusive participation to cultural life and wider circulation of ideas and creative goods through exchange and cooperation platforms.

**Film projection:** "[What is artistic freedom to you?](#)" (15')

### **Speakers**

Danielle Cliche (UNESCO), Chief of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions  
Brahim El Mazned (Morocco), Director of Visa for Music festival  
Hanok Mebratu (Ethiopia), Film Director  
Meaza Worku (Ethiopia), Playwright

Moderator: Ole Reitov (Denmark), journalist and former Executive Director of Freemuse



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## Biographies of speakers/moderator



**Danielle Cliche** joined UNESCO in 2009 as the Secretary of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and as Chief of Section, Diversity of Cultural Expressions. She is responsible for the implementation of the Convention worldwide and manages a team responsible for related operational programs that strengthen cultural governance in developing countries and foster a dynamic cultural sector, through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity. Ms Cliche was previously research manager at the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts Institute) and founding co-editor of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe. Since the early 1990s, she has carried out a wide range of international comparative research studies in the field of culture. Ms. Cliche graduated from the University of Ottawa with a degree in communication theory, culture, and international comparative politics. She earned her PhD from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 2009.



**Brahim El Mazned (Morocco)** is the founding director of Visa For Music, the main Forum/Market for Music from Africa and the Middle East, and the artistic director of the Timitar Festival. He was selected as one of the 100 most influential in sustainable cultural development in "*Les Aventuriers de la culture: Guide de la diversité culturelle*". Brahim has become, after more than twenty-five years in the Moroccan cultural world, an essential reference in the programming of world music as well as in the organization of major artistic and cultural events. He has also been a jury member for several events in Africa, Europe, the Central Asia, Southeast Asia, South America, and beyond. He has hosted conferences, meetings, artistic residencies and cultural projects in more than 50 countries around the world. He has created an anthology dedicated to the art of Aïta (Chioukhs and Chikhates of Morocco) which received the "*Coup de cœur*" prize from the Académie Charles Cros. Brahim is also a member of several institutions: the European Forum of Worldwide Music Festivals (EFWMF), Hiba Foundation, All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA), Global Music Market Network (GloMMnet), etc. In 2016, he also created MoMEx, an export office for the promotion of Moroccan music throughout the world.



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**Ole Reitov (Denmark)**, moderator of the session, is an independent, international expert on artistic freedom and cultural diversity. In 1999, he co-founded Freemuse, and acted as Freemuse Executive Director 2013-2017. In this period, he was the Freemuse representative to the UN Human Rights Council and served as expert consultant to the UN Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights, Ms. Farida Shaheed, in co-developing the first [UN report on artistic freedom](#). He

edited and co-wrote the 2015 and 2016 “Art under threat” – Freemuse annual statistics on censorship and attacks on artistic freedom. His assignments have included missions to Nepal, Bhutan, Mali and Botswana. Coming from a background as cultural journalist with particular focus on music and cultural policy, he has worked globally for three decades in almost 50 countries for the Danish National Broadcasting (DR), served as foreign correspondent in New Delhi for Swedish National Radio (SR). As advisor to the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (2000-2003), he organized the first ever Nordic Conference on Cultural Diversity. As a member of the International Network for Cultural Diversity, he actively worked for the preparation and ratification of the 2005 UNESCO Convention. He is a member of UNESCO’s Expert Facility.



**Meaza Worku (Ethiopia)** is a playwright and essayist, known for her numerous radio plays, television series, comic books and dramas. She studied Theatre Arts at the University of Addis Ababa and went on to launch a career in acting and directing. *Aquarachu/The short cut/* (2002) was her first drama directing on television, and *Yekirbruk/short-sighted/* (2003) was her first television play. She then joined Fana Broadcasting Agency to work as a radio journalist and entertainment program producer, and produced more than 20 short radio plays, soap operas, short stories, articles and comic books. *Zinegnochu /Celebrities* (2011), her first stage play, has been on show at the Addis Ababa Culture & Theatre Hall since

April 2012. In 2011 she wrote her second play *Desperate to Fight*, which was selected for development by the Sundance Institute East African Theatre program. The play was read at the Theatre lab venue on Manda Island, Kenya and New York’s Baryshnikov Theater in 2012. *Desperate to Fight* was also selected for the WPIC (Women Playwrights’ International Conference), held in Stockholm in August 2012. With the support of the Sundance Institute East Africa Theater Program, the play was staged in Ethiopia in Amharic & English. She is now writing and directing the TV drama “Derso Mels”, showing on Fana Television.



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**Henok Mebratu** is a film director and a producer (Action media). He has worked on numerous television and radio commercials, over 20 documentaries, a couple of TV Shows and 5 feature films (as an editor / VFX Supervisor). At Action Media, he specializes in providing full production support (fixing services) for foreign companies coming to Ethiopia and Africa. Services include: Visa Processing, Film permit, Drone Permit, Customs Clearance for Production Equipment, Hotel Booking, Travel Arrangements, Equipment Sourcing, Film Crew Sourcing, Casting, Location Scouting, Translation, Transcription, even Editing and Post. He was selected by the International Emerging Film Talent Association (IEFTA) and the Ethiopian Film Initiative (EFI) for the “Emerging talent” at Cannes Festival (2012) and the “Berlinale Africa Hub” (2019) sections to discuss Ethiopia’s emerging film industry. Henok is also a founder of a social media campaign called #iamgofere ([www.facebook.com/iamgofere](http://www.facebook.com/iamgofere)) with over 122,000 followers addressing issues of history, freedom, and artistic expression.