

the right to legislate – and therefore ban – the right to abortion, just a few months before a wave of anger broke out in Iran, following the death of the young woman, Mahsa Amini. Iranian women then vociferously demanded the right to dress as they pleased. Wave after wave, movements for women's rights are part of a never-ending process. Witness the #MeToo movement, launched in 2017, calling for an end to sexist violence. Today's universal struggles echo those of yesterday.

**The strength of women today lies in the fact that they are fighting not just for their rights but also against the very essence of arbitrary domination**

Bertrand Badie

Once again, Bertrand Badie noted similarities between very different situations. Firstly, a feeling of humiliation linked to an awareness of centuries of hidden domination. Secondly, an objectivisation of the female cause around the right to control one's own body. *'Finally, there's a desire to impose a marker of political domination on women. In Iran, an unveiled woman is a direct challenge to Ayatollah Khamenei. The strength of women today lies in the fact that they are fighting not just for their rights but also against the very essence of arbitrary domination'*, was the analysis of the international relations specialist.



Watch the full debate on YouTube

Kléber Arhoul noted that with #MeToo, a voice was set free, sweeping all other voices into its wake. Bertrand Badie was delighted that the movement was illustrated in the film by processions of demonstrators. After all, demonstrating means making visible in the public arena a phenomenon that is intimate in nature, taking resistance to a higher level.

Resistance to government inaction on climate change is also moving up a notch. The third episode served to remind us that climate change is generating new forms of conflict, making communities more vulnerable and exacerbating inequalities. From Kenyan biologist, Wangari Muta Maathai's fight against deforestation in 1977, to Vandana Shiva's struggle in India for food sovereignty based on the principles of sustainable agriculture, preserving our resources is becoming a fundamental issue. That's why more and more citizens are occupying places of power and the media in the hope of galvanising as many people as possible, by adopting the codes of civil disobedience used in the struggles for women's rights and certain independence movements.

Kléber Arhoul expressed his disappointment that, despite the warnings issued by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) nearly 20 years ago, no coherent global policy has been implemented. However, there are still glimmers of hope, thanks to the many initiatives around the world. Bertrand Badie noted that this is the first resistance that unites the whole of humanity, with national security taking second place to the global interest. Eve Minault remarked that the demonstrations filmed in the series reveal an admission of powerlessness. This feeling was reinforced by the shocking images of burning forests and collapsing icebergs. Bertrand Badie concluded: *'We now need to translate this growing public awareness into concrete and difficult, collective decisions'*.

# ART AND CULTURE OF RESISTANCE IN UKRAINE

29 September, 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. – Auditorium



Ed Vulliamy and Cécile Hennion

Cécile Hennion introduced the speakers. The two artists were not physically present, but took part via video conference: one in exile in the United States, the other in Kiev. The moderator pointed out the major issues surrounding art, which, in times of war, can be both spoils of war and something to be destroyed. She emphasised the vigour of the artistic movement in Ukraine. The first question addressed was that of the role of artists, who take over from journalists who have run out of words, to describe the evils and emotions of war.

Iryna Tsilyk points out that the culture of resistance is inherent in Ukrainian culture, and that artists have always played their part in these struggles. After pointing out that the war with Russia began in 2014 – with the invasion of the Donbass – she said that her husband, who is also an artist and, like many other artists, joined the front line in 2015, is still there. With all the artists on the front line – not to mention those who died there, such as Wassyl Slipak, a singer at the Paris Opera, who died in 2016, and

## We are losing our greatest talents

Iryna Tsilyk

Volodymyr Vakoulenko, who was killed in 2022 – Ukrainian culture has come to a standstill, she asserted. *'We are losing our greatest talents. Survivors feel an even greater responsibility to collect testimonies and disseminate them throughout the world,'* she said, expressing her hope that this conference would allow the creation of bridges between people.

MODERATOR:

**Cécile Hennion**, Senior reporter for the newspaper, 'Le Monde'

SPEAKERS:

**Lesia Khomenko**, Ukrainian artist

**Iryna Tsilyk**, Ukrainian artist

**Ed Vulliamy**, British journalist and writer.

Having had to resign herself to exile in the United States when she left Kiev, Lesia Khomenko asserted that this distance allowed her, as an artist, to create something more global, more universal. She wondered about the representation of war, at a time when everyone can represent themselves on social networks. Having fought against her prejudices about war, she wondered how she could transform her experience into an artistic testimony, without yet having found an answer. This is because war is experienced *'in the body'* and generates *'vulnerability'*.

## The culture of resistance is inherent in Ukrainian culture

Iryna Tsilyk

After praising the exceptional nature of the Forum, Ed Vulliamy emphasised the term *'resistance'* in the title of the debate. Speaking of *'just resistance'* in the face of the genocide, particularly of a cultural nature, that Russia has been carrying out since 2014, the journalist criticised Russia's dishonesty in denying the existence of Ukrainian culture, while at the same time seeking to destroy it. The music specialist then went on to say that culture is flourishing in Kiev and Kharkiv, despite the bombings. He even pointed to an artistic resurrection in the face of war, despite the proximity of the trenches. He described every poem read and every piece of music played as a *'ball'*.

As a reminder of the importance of artistic testimonies, Cécile Hennion projected the painting, *'Guernica'*, by the Portuguese

artist, Vasco Gargalo, who used the style of Picasso's original canvas to protest against the crimes of Putin and Bashar El Assad in Syria. The trailer for Iryna Tsilyk's documentary, *'The Earth is as Blue as an Orange'* was then screened. Iryna Tsilyk, who won an award for her documentary at the Sundance Film Festival in 2020, described how she was deeply affected by this family living through the war in the Donbass region, while doing their utmost to continue living as normally as possible. She explained how she met this single mother and her children, who were themselves making a film about their lives in wartime. It made her wonder what artists



can do without being on the front line. *'We can tell stories and that counts,'* she said.

To explore the angle of *'art as a weapon'*, Cécile Hennion showed the works of Lesia Khomenko. They represent the military outfits worn by Ukrainian fighters. The artist described how she created them, mixing several images and giving them the look of superheroes, like the Marvel ones, she explained. She asserted that, through her paintings and their distribution, she is participating in the war of images on the



Internet. For the painter, punishing Ukraine for Maidan and its Orange Revolution is also one of the driving forces behind Russia's war. After all, a revolution that works is not a good sign for Putin. She evoked the *'festival'* aspect of Maidan, with concerts and pianos playing twenty-four hours a day, and the more recent importance of techno music as a weapon of rebellion.

To underline the importance of music in the resistance, Ed Vulliamy talked about the group, Boombbox, whose popular songs called on the people to rise up. The journalist recounted how leader, Andriy Khlyvniouk, went from being a rock star to a soldier without question, because of the attacks on Ukrainian children and people. He added the current creations of the group, Antytila, the composer, Evgueni Stankovitch, and the revival of folk music, as facts of cultural resistance.

In conclusion, Iryna Tsilyk thanked all the Ukrainian artists who are resisting with different tools and who, for her, are incredible. She didn't want to forget anyone: those on the front line, but also all those who fundraise, those who share the Ukrainian culture with as many people as possible and even the poets who



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the full  
debate on  
YouTube

make camouflage tools for the front. She also wished to thank those who highlight these processes, such as the Maidan Festival.

## Every war has given rise to many artistic works, whether in music, literature, painting or photography

Ed Vulliamy

Lesia Khomenko stressed the importance of the role of artists as witnesses to what she called the murder of a people. She went on to say that we will have to see what happens in a year's time. Finally, Ed Vulliamy wished to point out that every war has given rise to many artistic works, whether in music, literature, painting or photography. Asked by the audience how she was able to earn a living when she was in a country at war and her husband was at the front, Iryna Tsilyk explained that she was still a film producer and writer, and that she had also received offers from newspapers to write articles. She said that this was ultimately part of her healing process, giving her the necessary distance from the violence of everyday life. Even on the front line, her husband had recently written a new novel.

After living in Miami, Lesia Khomenko is now based in New York, where she admitted that it is difficult for her to sell her creations. She said that before her exile, she survived in Kiev as a teacher. She added that her husband spends his meagre pay just on food, clothing and military supplies.