OSUN-WIDE STUDENT VISUAL CONTEST

OSUN Connected Learning Contest Winner

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Course: Freedom of Expression (Network Course)

This contest was dedicated to the topic: "Civic consciousness or dystopia? What are the limits of freedom of expression during the Covid-19 pandemic?". The students were invited to submit their creative works in 4 formats: video and animation, comics, poster series, photo essay. The aim of the contest was to ask students to consider the following question: How does freedom of expression change during a pandemic (specifically in social, academic, and creative areas of life)? Students were then asked to find expressive visual images that reveal ideas and experiences that might otherwise be difficult to communicate. The submission of creative works was conducted via social networks using the hashtags #PandemicFreedom and #OSUNVisualContest, which made this assignment a meta challenge, virtually uniting the students across the globe and improving the visibility of students' academic efforts during the lockdown.

More details about the OSUN Visual Contest are available via the following link:
https://en.ehu.lt/news/osun-visual-contest-results/

At the moment, the online exhibition compiled of the students' creative works submitted to the Contest is expected to be published shortly.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of Expression is a Bard/OSUN Network Course exploring the historical, constitutional, legal, social and political implications of freedom of expression both in global and regional contexts.

Practical and pedagogical value

This is my third year that I've been co-teaching the Bard (from 2020 — OSUN) Network Freedom of Expression Course at EHU, and during 2 previous seasons of this course I used to ask my students to complete the creative task of making a political / social activist poster related to the spectrum of problems within the realm of freedom of expression. I used to propose that the students both submit their posters within my course and apply with them for the Mut zur Wut Contest in Germany, which is also dedicated to political movements and courage to say. This year, Mut zur Wut was cancelled due to technical issues and it was decided to relaunch it as a biennial contest, so I began thinking about the alternative for my students in order to maintain their motivation to create their posters within my course and feel that their efforts within my course might have an impact beyond it.

This spring my course began right at the moment when the pandemic reached Lithuania and Belarus, where most EHU students come from, and it became a very serious problem for most of us as it was not only a threat to the health and lives of us and our loved ones but it also became a frustration in terms of our academic and creative plans. I saw my students suffer a lot from the situation and I shared their feelings too as I had several creative projects of my own, which either were closed or postponed for a while. What is more, most of the students tried to avoid speaking about Covid-19 and I understood that this situation affects their emotions badly as well. In the Freedom of Expression class we were exploring the phenomenon of Greek parrhesia (courage to say, freedom of speech) and as most of my students are involved in creative fields I thought that, instead of applying for Mut zur Wut, it will be a good idea to launch a contest closer to home, at least within the Freedom of Expression course at EHU. My colleagues at EHU and Bard College supported this idea and encouraged me to propose for it to become an OSUN-Wide Contest, open to all students across the Network. I feel that it was very important both for me and for 18 students from various campuses in Europe, Asia and the US and I wish that we could arrange contests like this one (dedicated to freedom of expression) in upcoming years as well to share the experience globally and link our campuses and students. But even if there is no such opportunity in the future, I will try to find a way to have this activity as a creative assignment reflecting the ongoing processes related to freedom of expression within the course at EHU to maintain this as a tradition.

This assignment was successful in a remote learning context as it became a very accurate reaction to the current situation, allowing students to share their feelings about their experience of living in the circumstances of the lockdown both creatively and academically. This assignment is flexible within the disciplines in humanities or social sciences as it is always possible to find a relevant ongoing case from everyday political and social agendas related to the topics of the course. The pedagogical core of this assignment is that it allows students to think of a problem, apply theoretical knowledge gained within the course, think critically and creatively in order to express their ideas, and have fun sharing their creative

works through social networks and by subscribing to each other's accounts to see how their works are accepted by a wider audience. The students had a month to prepare their works but most of them submitted their application a week after the contest had been announced, which shows their high interest in the topic, as well an interest in the opportunity to share their experiences. Thanks to the support of OSUN, we issued certificates for all participants of the contest, compiled an online exhibition and awarded the winners with grand-prizes. If I were to deliver this only as a course assignment, I would provide the students with bonus points for their creative works in order to support their efforts and encourage them to proceed with working in such a format.

The assignment

Below is a full description of the OSUN-Wide Student Visual Contest used on the web-site of European Humanities University to launch the call for the Contest, including technical requirements for creative works for each nomination and genre/format. This activity might be used as a course assignment, e.g. selecting only one form of creative works, using different hashtags related to the topic and aims of the assignment, adjusting the topic and deadlines, etc. The pedagogical core of this assignment is that it allows the students to think of the problem, apply theoretical knowledge from the course, think critically and creatively in order to express their ideas and have fun sharing their creative works through social networks and subscribing to each other's accounts to see how these works are accepted by a wider audience.

EHU Announces OSUN-wide Student Visual Contest: until May 14

14-05-2020

[Retrieved from https://en.ehu.lt/events/osun-student-visual-contest/]

European Humanities University (EHU), in cooperation with the Open Society University Network (OSUN), invites all students across OSUN member and partner colleges and universities to take part in the open visual contest dedicated to the topic "Civic consciousness or dystopia? What are the limits of freedom of expression during the Covid-19 pandemic?". Winning works will be selected for the online exhibition and special prizes sponsored by OSUN.

Students, faculty, and staff are also encouraged to raise awareness about the freedom of expression in the age of the Covid-19 pandemic using hashtag #PandemicFreedom.

During the struggle against the Covid-19 pandemic, we are facing not only a threat to our lives. Many of us are now living in isolation, which has broken our professional and life plans. Conferences, summer schools and creative laboratories are either postponed or canceled and despite wide access to online resources, psychological pressure makes it much

more difficult to create something new and express one's ideas and feelings. Moreover, we are now smothered by the uncontrolled information flow, where truth and deceit coexist. There are fights in the media between official authorities and private voices, quite a few anonymous statements among the latter. This raises questions concerning the possibility of jeopardizing the source, as well as the reliability of it. In this situation, it is important to think about the limits of freedom of expression. According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers"*. Within the contest, we propose considering what happens to freedom of expression in pandemic circumstances in your social, academic and creative life. We propose finding expressive visual images, making it possible to reveal what is so problematic to articulate in the situation when words are not enough.

All students from OSUN are invited to take part in the contest, regardless of the cycle, program, year or form of their studies.

From April 14 to May 14 (inclusive), the participants of the contest can submit their works in the nominations as follows:

- Comics

- Poster series

- Animated video

- Photo Essay

- Video / Video Clips

In each nomination, 5 winners and grand-prix are to be selected. One participant can submit only one nomination. The winning works and grand-prizes will be included in the online exhibition to be published on the OSUN and EHU web-sites. All authors of the works selected for the online exhibition will be awarded certificates, and the authors of the grand-prizes will be also awarded special presents from EHU. EHU students might include their works selected for the online exhibition in their portfolios to apply for grants and scholarships at EHU.

To submit a nomination for the contest, you need to post your work on social networks Instagram, Facebook or VK with hashtags #PandemicFreedom and #OSUNVisualContest, indicating in your post the title of your work in the original language and in English. In addition, please send an email with your contest application to Kseniya Shtalenkova via kseniya.shtalenkova@ehu.lt, indicating the following information:

- Your name and surname

- Your university, cycle/degree program, academic program/major, year, and country/state of residence

- The title of your work in the original language and in English

- The link to the post with your work on social networks

In the subject of your email, please indicate "Visual Contest 2020". Please note that without the application works cannot be accepted for the contest.

To equalize the participants in the selection conditions, but in no way limiting the range of artistic means, we suggest the following technical requirements for the works submitted for the contest:

- For the nomination "Comics" — 4 A4 strips, .jpeg format, sRGB color mode, resolution of 72 ppi.

- For the nomination "Poster Series" — 4 60x90 cm posters, .jpeg format, sRGB color mode, resolution of 72 ppi.

- For the nominations "Animated Video" and "Video / Video-clips" — 20–30 sec video, .mp4 format, H.264 codec, AAC audio, 128–3500 kbps, 30 fps, 1080 px maximum width.

- For the nomination "Photo Essay" — 6–10 photographs, .jpeg format, sRGB color mode, resolution of no less than 2 MP.

Just in case, please save your working files (those for printing with a resolution of at least 150 dpi, CMYK color mode), for we believe in the perspective that our online exhibition might go offline after the pandemic is over!

The results of the contest will be announced on the OSUN and EHU websites and on social networks *no later than on May 25*. The jury of experts will be represented by Associate Dean of Center for Civic Engagement at Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, New York) Camilia Jones, the faculty members of the EHU undergraduate program "Visual Design" and graduate program "Visual Plastic Art" Prof. Žydrė Ridulytė, Dr. Konstantin Gaitanži, Assoc. Prof. Irina Kodiukova, Julia Titowa, Assoc. Prof. Uladzimir Dowgialo, Maksim Zhuk and Marius Dirgėla, as well as the faculty of Bard International Network "Freedom of Expression" course Kseniya Shtalenkova (EHU), Maria Laktionkina (EHU), Prof. Michael Weinman (Bard College Berlin), Dragan Kuljanin (Al Quds Bard College for Arts & Sciences), Assoc. Prof. Denis Skopin (Smolny College), Hannepes Taychayev and Azim Zheenbaev (American University of Central Asia).

We also invite OSUN faculty and staff members to join the online challenge, dedicated to freedom of expression and Covid-19 pandemic. Please post your videos on social networks

Instagram, Facebook and VK using hashtag #PandemicFreedom from April 14 to May 14 and invite your friends to share their experience of the limitations of freedom of expression that they are facing during the isolation period.

In case you have questions concerning the contest or challenge, please contact Kseniya Shtalenkova via kseniya.shtalenkova@ehu.lt.

Looking forward to seeing your works and videos! Take care and keep in touch!