

August 20, 2019

Dear Aichi Triennale artists:

As the Chairperson of the Aichi Triennale Organizing Committee, I sincerely apologize for all of the concern we caused with the closure of “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’” and all of the confusion in its aftermath. We are responding seriously to all complaints and opinions about the closure of the exhibition, and deeply regret to hear of the cancelled exhibition of other works not included in “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’”.

We were forced to close the exhibition for safety reasons, but there are people in Japan who think it should have been closed regardless, and many others who believe that it should be reopened. Aichi residents are also split on this issue. The Organizing Committee has recognized the need for the new rules to deal with this issue. Freedom of Expression must be secured, however.

As a step toward creating these new rules, in September we will hold the “Public Forum on Freedom of Expression (tentative).” At this forum, we will explore banned exhibitions in various parts of Japan, such as the ones featured in “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’”, and the background behind their rejection. We will also invite artists and curators. We will create a space where curators, artists, and viewers can have open discussions.

Then, in October, we will hold the “International Forum on Freedom of Expression (tentative).” To this forum we would like to invite artists who cancelled their exhibition at the Aichi Triennale. We will globally invite journalists knowledgeable about these issues. We hope to discuss the serious realities that various parts of the world face, and prove what art can do to push freedom of expression in the society. We also plan to craft an “Aichi Protocol,” an appeal to governments and people all over the world for freedom of expression.

We recognize that we should have done these works before holding “After ‘Freedom of Expression?’”. If we had, we might have been able to avoid much of the misunderstanding and confusion that arose. However, we believe that even now, it is not too late.

We would like to use this incident at the Aichi Triennale as an opportunity to deliver our message on freedom of expression to the world. We are counting on the support of all of you, the artists and curators, as we do this work.

Yours sincerely,



Hideaki Ohmura  
Governor  
Aichi Prefecture