ResiliArt is a global movement consisting of a series of virtual debates with key industry professionals and artists – both renowned and unknown – that raises awareness of the far-reaching impact of the current confinement measures on the culture sector. It aims to support Member States in the development of policies and financial mechanisms that can help creative individuals and communities overcome the current crisis.

UNESCO is launching the ResiliArt movement to:

- Raise awareness about the impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector and the livelihoods of culture professionals
- Give visibility to artists worldwide – established and emerging – and ensure their voices are heard at the policy level to address existing gaps and needs
- Contribute to decision-making processes of Member States during the development of policies and financial mechanisms aimed at empowering artists

The pandemic has impacted the entire creative value chain – creation, production, distribution and access – and considerably weakened the professional, social and economic status of artists and cultural professionals. Entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises, which often lack the necessary resources to respond to an emergency of this magnitude, are especially vulnerable. Freelancers, part-timers and show workers, who make up a large segment of the sector’s labour force, are left with limited to no access to conventional social protection mechanisms.

Lockdown measures around the world also directly impact the sector’s capacity to create and distribute new artistic expressions and cultural content outside of the digital spectrum, reducing the diversity of cultural expressions worldwide. At the same time, they severely limit opportunities for the public to access and enjoy cultural goods and services. For vulnerable groups that already suffer from unequal access to technology, including women and indigenous peoples, the
existing “digital gap” further exacerbates their lack of access to culture. The current crisis carries the risk of deepening unequal access to culture and limiting the diversity of cultural expressions.

Taking this initiative into consideration, we are going to hold a discussion about the situation of art and artists in Ethiopia.

The debate on the topics will be made after presentations including through questions and answers. The debate will come up with recommendations in supporting the creative sector due to challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Panellists invited as a speaker for the debate:

Ato Henok Ayele: *Impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector and the livelihoods of culture professionals*

Henok Ayele is one of the most successful film directors in Ethiopia, and he has served “Alatinos Film Makers Association” as Vice President for several years. As a versatile professional, he has also directed TV dramas, and served as a member of a Jury for a short film competition.

Dr. Bedilu Waqjira: *Measures that government, international organizations and the private sector, among other actors, can put in place to support artists during and following this crisis.*

Dr. Bedilu Waqjira studied literature, language and linguistics and is now Assistant Professor at the Addis Ababa University, College of Humanities, Language Studies & Communication and Journalism. Bedilu is a renowned public speaker, and has published several books of poetry, memoire and fiction. In his academic book on the use of language, he makes one of the most valuable suggestions in a multi-lingual country where language is an extremely sensitive issue.

Dr. Elizabeth W/Giorgis: *Covid 19 and the condition of the human; how our educational system should re-think the importance of the humanities.*
Dr. Elizabeth W. Giorgis is Associate Professor of Art History, Criticism and Theory in the College of Performing and Visual Art and the Center for African Studies at Addis Ababa University. She served as the Dean of the College of Performing and Visual Art and as Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University. Her book, *Modernist Art in Ethiopia*, that published by Ohio University Press was released in February 2019. It is the first comprehensive monographic study of Ethiopian visual modernism within a broader social and intellectual history.

Prof. Bekele Mekonnen: *The role of independent art institutes in the fighting the pandemic and to build a strong and sustainable cultural industry.*

Professor Bekele Mekonnen is one of the most renowned visual artist and teaches fine arts at the school of fine arts and design, and is a fellow of Ethiopian Academy of Sciences. Bekele enjoyed several residency programs around the world, and had a one-man exhibition in Ethiopia, Africa, Europe and the USA.

Ato Manyazewal Endeshaw: *Redesigning cultural spaces and the challenges and opportunities of digital platform during the confinement of the pandemic and after.*

Manyazewal Endeshaw, who is the Director General of the Ethiopian National Theatre, directed several stage plays like “The Visit” by Durrenmatt and “Hamlet” by Shakespeare. “The Father”, his screenplay for a short movie, has been produced by M-Net, and his play “The Guest” is published in the UK in the collection, “African Theatre, Six Plays from East & West Africa”.