Culture and politics of the newly announced Vietnamese Independent Writers’ Association

Jason Morris-Jung

IN VIETNAM'S HIGH POLITICS of Politburo and Party Con-
gresses, the recent ‘Declaration to Establish a Vietnamese Independent Writers’ Association’ by 82 prominent Vietnamese writers is a major development that could see the country transform into an increasingly open society. It marks a new phase in Vietnamese history and could potentially lead to a new era of cultural and artistic freedom.

The Declaration, which was signed by prominent writers and intellectuals, was announced on 12 November 2013. It calls for the establishment of an independent writers’ association to represent the views and interests of writers and intellectuals. The association is expected to play a role in protecting the cultural heritage of Vietnam and promoting the country’s cultural diversity. The association is also expected to work towards the establishment of a free and independent press in Vietnam.

The Declaration has been hailed as a significant step towards the establishment of a free and independent writers’ association in Vietnam. It is a clear indication of the growing demand for cultural and artistic freedom in Vietnam. The association is expected to bring together writers and intellectuals from all walks of life and work towards the establishment of a new political order in Vietnam.

The Declaration has been welcomed by the international community, with many expressing their support for the move. The US government has praised the Declaration as a positive step towards the establishment of a free and independent press in Vietnam. The European Union has also expressed support for the Declaration, saying that it is a step towards the establishment of a free and independent writers’ association in Vietnam.

However, the Declaration has also been met with criticism from some quarters. Some have expressed concern over the potential impact of the association on the country’s political landscape. There are fears that the association could be used to destabilise the current regime and lead to political instability.

Despite these concerns, the Declaration has been hailed as a significant step towards the establishment of a free and independent writers’ association in Vietnam. It is a clear indication of the growing demand for cultural and artistic freedom in Vietnam. The association is expected to bring together writers and intellectuals from all walks of life and work towards the establishment of a new political order in Vietnam.

References


Above: ‘Light Portrait’ 2013; Photography light box 70 x 50 x 7 cm Source: San-Art

In 2013 Tran Vu Hai turned a Soviet-era pharmaceutical factory in Hanoi into an arts complex called Zone 9. Soon, it became the hottest spot in the city. “Here in the factory, we can make things from zero and do whatever we want to do,” said Hai in an interview with the Diplomat Magazine. This space, symbolic in the way it provides a sense of freedom and expression, is a unique atmosphere that attracts both Vietnamese and foreigners. The Zone 9 spirit spread beyond the artistic community to amass an impressive 60,000 ‘likes’ on Facebook.

Another new space is “Initiative - Contemporary Arts Museum” (I-CAMP), which helps to exhibit and preserve contemporary artworks. Tran Luong, the artist and curator behind the idea envisions an exhibition space for contemporary artworks, including installation, video art, photography, conceptual art, land art and site-specific art. More than 10 artists in Hanoi have been involved in this project, including famous names like Trinh Thì, Luong Huy Thí, Huy An, The Son and more. They launched I-CAMP’s first exhibition in December 2013 at Muong Museum. A bold project of implanting modern technologies and consumer goods in under-developed settings undercut the gap between urban middle class and poverty-stricken areas in rural Vietnam.

The rise of Hanoi artists and the creation of new art spaces is slowly changing the production and consumption of art in Vietnam and responsible for contributing to the on-going revival of the artistic landscape. As young artists, intellectuals and educators, these contemporary Vietnamese artists are leading the wave of experiments in cultural expressions.

Huong LE THU, Visiting Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)