

Article 5 (working title)

[Art. 5 GG / Article 5 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany]

Freedom of Opinion, Art, and Science

The OSTRALE Biennale 2027's discourse centers on humanity—as individuals and as a driving force: What does it mean to be human—in today's world? How do we experience this world and how do we shape it?

Since the end of World War II, much of Europe seemed to live for a long time under a promise of stabilized peace. As recently as 2011, Steven Pinker formulated the thesis: “[...] *from our current vantage point on the timeline, most trends point toward peace.*”¹ Today, however, the reality of war has become palpable once again. Threat is no longer perceived as a distant possibility but is ever-present. Social upheavals reach into the innermost being of the individual: into their emotions, into their fears.

In this context, the human condition comes into focus—that “human condition” which constantly oscillates between good and evil, destruction and creative power, between violence and tolerance, hatred and love. We therefore do not view the questions of the OSTRALE Biennale 2027 as rhetorical, but as an urgent and critical examination of human self-understanding.

What drives people to destructive behavior? Why does war return, even though the archives of history are filled with testimonies of suffering and violence? Why does humanity seem unable to learn from the past? Time and again, the same driving forces emerge: possession, power, wealth—growth, the “always more” as an anthropological constant. In this dynamic, the dark side of the human condition is revealed.²

We want to counter this destructive dynamic with freedom and lived diversity—diversity of artistic expression, diversity of human emotions. It is precisely in its heterogeneity that art opens up spaces where difference becomes not a threat but a productive tension. A world characterized by pluralism, openness, reflection, and processes of negotiation. Not as a utopia in the sense of an unattainable ideal, but as concrete practice.

The freedom of art, the freedom to express an opinion, and the freedom of science form the foundation of an open society.³ They are not merely legal guarantees, but an expression of a

¹ Steven Pinker, *Violence: A New History of Humanity*, Frankfurt am Main 2013, p. 998.

² *Conditio humana* (Latin for “human condition”) refers to the fundamental prerequisites, characteristics, and limitations of being human that shape life from birth to death.

³ ***Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, Art. 5***

(1) Everyone has the right to freely express and disseminate their opinions in speech, writing, and images, and to obtain information from generally accessible sources without hindrance. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by radio and film are guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.

Curatorial Concept for the OSTRALE Biennale 2027

humanistic self-understanding. Especially in times of political uncertainty, this freedom becomes an existential resource. Where it is restricted, not only does public discourse narrow, but so does the inner space of potentiality.

Learning from the past means understanding memory not as a burden, but as a resource.

The art historian and cultural scholar Aby Warburg formulated—later taken up by Martin Warnke—the central idea: “Humanity’s treasure of suffering becomes a human possession.” This phrase encapsulates a program. The painful and traumatic experiences captured in works of art can be transformed into reflective knowledge through contemplation and understanding. Works of art do not merely preserve traumatic experiences; they enable their reflection. The “treasure of suffering” becomes conscious, shared knowledge—a human possession. The OSTRALE Biennale 2027 sees this transformation as its mission.

The artistic works question narratives such as power, possession, and identity, and address existential themes. They open up spaces of experience in which fear becomes visible but also manageable. For art can help us cope with difficult situations, so that through this reflection we ourselves can bring about change. We see the questions we ask as an invitation to self-reflection. What responsibility arises from my actions—or my silence?

Art cannot prevent war. But it can sharpen perception, activate memory, and foster empathy. Moreover, engaging with it can bring relief. The search for beauty and the awareness of where one can find direction and continue to develop are thoroughly fulfilled by art.

In this realization lies the hope of the OSTRALE Biennale 2027: that humanity, confronted with its own human condition, recognizes not only its abysses but also its capacity for freedom and responsibility.

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(2) These rights are limited by the provisions of general laws, the statutory provisions for the protection of minors, and the right to personal honor.

(3) Art and science, research and teaching are free. Freedom of teaching does not exempt one from loyalty to the Constitution.