

Elisa Rusca
rue de la Baillive 5
1205 Genève
elisa.rusca@gmail.com

AICA International Office
32, rue Yves Toudic
FR-75010 Paris

APPLICATION – AICA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Geneva, August 25, 2023

Dear International President Ms Lisbeth Rebollo-Gonçalves,
Dear Secretary General Mr Marc Partouche,
Dear Chair of the EMC Mr Anselmo Villata,

I've been a member of AICA Switzerland for 13 years and of AICA's International Board for 9 years, first as an International Board Member and then as Chair of the Digital Strategies Committee. This experience has enabled me to meet many members and to enrich my understanding of the international scene, for which I am very grateful. I acquired my expertise as an independent art critic for almost twenty years, as well as managing online platforms with global reach. Although I represent a younger generation of AICA members, my years on the Board have helped me to identify the needs of each and every one of us.

MY PROGRAMME AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF AICA

AICA is a vast association, in which internal communication is all the more important. I'm fluent in French, English and Spanish, which are our three official languages: this is an asset for the smooth flow of information between the Secretariat and members in our various national sections, as well as for exchanges during social events on the bangs of official meetings.

For an agile management of the international board, which acknowledges and respects the history of our association while being representative of active art critics, **my presidency will be based on principles of listening, inclusion and accessibility**. In practical terms: aiming for correct and precise organization of our meeting schedule, ensuring proper time management, taking care of communication between the international office, the international board and the national sections; reflecting on strategies that allow the participation of a majority of sections. This is based on the implementation of current hybrid systems offering the possibility of participating in person or online, and scheduling Board and General Assembly meetings taking into account time differences to make participation convenient for everyone.

In order to consolidate existing links, we need to **make the most of our association's human resources**. With this in mind, I intend to develop projects such as the creation of an AICA sound archive, as well as strengthening initiatives carried out by the AICA Publications Committee such as the *Art Critics of the World* series.

Based in Geneva, where I head the Collections and Exhibitions Department of the International Museum of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, I'm geographically close to the AICA Office in Paris. I intend to take advantage of this proximity to maintain an **active presence** and **frequent exchanges** with the Secretariat and our administrative assistant. What's more, my position at the Museum would be an opportunity to give **visibility** to AICA, as well as giving our Association privileged access to a wide network of potential supporters. We need to strengthen our presence and credibility in order to **develop support and funding** for our activities. A more structured fund-raising would support our publications, and could help, at least in part, not only with the organization of events such as the annual congress, but also with all activities designed to unite us, such as organizing awards, coordinating exchange days between sections, and visiting exhibitions or meetups at international events.

This is linked to my intention to **consolidate** and **develop our network**. We are all aware of the importance of exchanging with other art critics, as well as visiting artists in their studios and going to exhibitions. Initiatives like webinars are very important and should be continued. Since 2015, AICA Switzerland has been organising writing workshops aimed at countering, from a practical point of view, the so-called "art criticism crisis". For an afternoon, we look together at recently published reviews and discuss various aspects - the author's attitude, the relationship between context and subtext, possible and impossible formulations or stylistic issues. In small groups and plenary sessions, we discuss these and other points. The aim is to refine our own writing in this way. Initiatives of this kind could also be beneficial to our association on an international scale.

Criticism, writing and exchanges with contemporary art must remain at the heart of AICA. This is our mission as an official UNESCO non-governmental organisation (NGO). We must energetically develop our collaboration with this institution, which has great legitimacy in our field. Nor should we forget that the *Archives de la Critique d'Art* in Rennes are in danger: a challenge for the new presidency would be to imagine possible and concrete ways of supporting them. The history of the international AICA is closely linked to that of the Archives. Thanks to its international network, AICA could promote the importance of the work carried out in Rennes in order to have it recognised internationally, which could be a first step towards establishing a support plan.

This won't be the only challenge. We live in an extremely difficult and complex historical context, where freedom of expression and fundamental rights are increasingly under threat. We need to protect our sections in Taiwan and Hong Kong, renew links with our sections in Africa and Latin and Centre America, and imagine new territories for art criticism: India and the Philippines, for example, are countries where the contemporary art scene is extremely rich, where new, vibrant generations of art critics are active and confronted with sometimes hostile realities. AICA's presence in these regions could help not only to federate two major writers' diasporas, but also to amplify our association's presence in Southeast Asia. What's more, initiatives such as the symposium in Rabat on Women active in the field of art in the Maghreb, which brought together critics from the three countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), was a first step that AICA would have every reason to follow.

Under my presidency, with **energy, organization and openness**, I intend to help lay the foundations for AICA to continue to shine in the years to come.

MY PAST AICA ACTIVITIES

I have been a member of AICA Switzerland since 2010. Since 2014 I have been a member of the AICA Board of Directors, first as an international board member and then as Chair of the Digital Strategies Committee from 2015 to 2022. Under my chairmanship of this committee, in 2017 AICA international was able to inaugurate its new website and launch its presence on social networks. Thanks to my expertise in IT and in collaboration with the President and the Secretariat, during the pandemic crisis AICA was able to react quickly to continue operating despite the lockdowns and disruptions affecting travel: since 2020, we have been using Zoom and voting on online platforms such as SurveyLegend and eBallot. This has also enabled numerous initiatives for meetings between members and between different work cells to develop, as well as Webinars to flourish. The use of our website to publish texts, an idea that has been close to my heart since 2014, has also come to fruition, and today takes the form of an online magazine with a real editorial board.

These 9 years on the International Board have been very enriching and have familiarized me with the workings of our association, enabling me to put my energy and knowledge at the service of AICA International not only on the Digital Strategies Committee, but also on the Electoral and Membership, Publications and Congress Committees. For the latter, I was actively involved in organizing the two-day post-congress event in Berlin in 2019.

I'd like to be able to continue to be useful to our association in the future, and that's why I'm applying as AICA International president.

Very Best Regards,

Elisa Rusca
AICA Switzerland

