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## Statement by Robert Wilson

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 18 SEP 2021, 07:00 CET**

"I am very proud to have shown my theater production of OEDIPUS (Pompeii, 2018) in Budapest and shared this experience with the people of this beautiful city. In the spirit of ancient Greek theater, and its early roots in the agora, the center of social, political and also artistic life in the city, I cannot ignore the overall context in which these tours have taken place.

It is with much regret and sorrow that I have been watching the freedom of artistic expression and education be restricted by the current national government of Hungary. The so-called "model change" at the SZFE University, which was carried out last year, was an undemocratic attack on the University's autonomy. The new board of trustees that was implemented there by the government was led by Attila Vidnyánszky, who is also the director of the MITEM Festival and many other cultural institutions in the country.

While I am happy that my work could be seen by the people of Budapest, I consider it my civic duty to state that I do not agree to the gutting of educational and artistic independence and freedom, nor to the unhealthy concentration of too much power and influence in the hands of a few. I will therefore donate half of my artist fee, received from the National MITEM Festival to the FreeSZFE initiative, which is continuing their independent educational work without support or even acknowledgment from the current government. Moreover, I will join a conversation with FreeSZFE students in the coming weeks. I sincerely hope that FreeSZFE will keep receiving support from all over the world, and most importantly, soon be reinstated as a public university by the Hungarian government."

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a long horizontal line.

Robert Wilson  
Paris, September 17, 2021