

## ART GIVES WAYS TO SOCIALPOETRY IN OUR CITIES

*The function of art in public spaces*

Historically one has from the earliest time been creating ornaments, decorations, paintings, sculptures, in rituals, in ceremonies, to form the identity of the tribe, the communities, to adore and glorify the Gods and celebrate kings and emperors.

Some of the biggest ancient constructions like the pyramids in Egypt and the Ming tombs in China was done to keep contact to the gods a the other side of death.

In those early days art and artists were an integrated part of society, the question of »what is art?« and why belongs to modern times, where exact materialistic values have repressed spiritual values. When you make decisions in society and in business, in the end of the day you may pray to somebody, but you have to ask the Bank.

In European art history in the Renaissance an artist like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci stepped out of the craftsmen's medical community and became independent artists, and we call them geniuses today. In the royal academies, starting in the 17th century, European time, the visual art became an independent method of realising the world through our senses.

The enlightenment in Europe where we had the French revolution, all values including the God and the King, were turned upside down, and new values were discussed. In the academies art was not only an independent method to recognise the world, but through aesthetic values also had a critical potential to the world as such.

But if you are critical against other values, others are critical against you too. All values are up for discussion.

So when we talk about public art today, we have to face the people, the constructors, the politicians, the investors and foremost ourselves.

Even that we today live in a so-called global village, luckily we are at the same time living in different cultures. The origin of the future, the past and the future have to meet in the present, sometimes we have to learn from history to develop the future.

So, when we talk about Urban public art in international perspective, we must include our different cultural conditions.

But at the same time, we have a lot in common; urbanisation, environmental problems, climate changes, growing populations and so on.

All these presuppositions we as artist must include in our consideration when we work with art in the public urban space.

The people, the place, the function, the environment, the tradition, the character of the construction...

The negotiations, especially with the actual users, school, hospital, offices, apartments ...

An aesthetic and a poetic value can be transformed into the urban space in different forms.

1. Temporary, for a special event, celebration, local history ...
2. A single sculpture either abstract that through its aesthetic appearance will give a space an identity, which people can relate to their daily life. It becomes a landmark.
3. A sculpture that tells a story visually either an adventure, a universal idea or a local story is special for the certain area.
4. A sculpture with a function so people can relate to the art physically, you can climb on it, sit, inside outside space, or other functions that relates to this particular area and the people.
5. Integrated art, that cooperates with architecture, or even becomes the architecture itself, so you transform the aesthetic and the poetic qualities in art to the architectural construction of the space – the building.

And there are of course many combinations of these 5 possibilities, especially because architecture is an art form in its own right.

Those considerations we just have discussed mainly came out of the 60's and the 70's. How to involve people in art, and how to involve art in society, many dif-

ferent experiments was done, some more succesful than others, but all contributes to how art in a more and more international world, where we all share a common future or a common disaster, and can contribute with an aesthetic dialogue, locally and internationally. Especially in the 70's the discussion how art in urban spaces could contribute constructive to the global reality.

Two new agendas developed in the 80's and 90's, first the neo liberal market system, also in the art world, today Art Basel in Switzerland is the main control with buy and sell internationally in the art world. I don't like it, but that is a fact. In the same period more and more art centers in and outside Europe and US appears. Artists from South America, Africa, Middle East and Asia become significant new inspirations in international art, and the European entered art concept becomes an international multi centered art form.

But in the art world today it goes quick.

Today we talk about conceptual art, contextual art, identity art, social art and probably when I am writing this new art concepts are developed.

I am 72 years old, since 1964 I have been a part of the international art scene, in 55 years, and of course young artist shall develop new concepts and new visions for art, but in the 90's I told my students when concept goes in your brain, and the heart goes out, we liberated art in the 17th century from representative obligations to Kings and Gods. Don't tie us to new obligations, lets transform aesthetic and poetic values into the Urban space without any other obligations. Then we might inspire people, politicians, constructors in whatever duties they may have.

If we don't believe in art, how can we demand others to do it.

