

## Art is Dead, Long Live Art!

The French author André Malraux granted death a quantitative importance in relation to its capacity to make us reflect on life itself; the death sentences for art have been as many as its later resurrections. If we consider his reflection it should have made us immune to that increasingly futile imitation of summary execution, of definitively ending art in the terms in which the institution legitimizes it as such.

The current situation has moved towards different forms of detachment between some of the authors and the space where their works take place. The relationship with this perimeter is indeed on one hand a flight from the literality imposed as an official discourse<sup>1</sup> and on the other hand an act of militancy. Although we have wished to come close to these other points of view, being proud of renewed innocence and naiveté, our capacity to relate to artistic objects within this process is limited. This limitation depends on the clash or silencing of these elements in the process of homologation of the art circle<sup>1</sup>.

This framework allows us an overall view that it almost always biased, ideological and based on conjuncture. We are going headlong into our function being reduced to that of being the reproducers of the hammer that Bertold Brecht claimed to be the tool for transforming reality<sup>1</sup>, a reality that in this case is previously dictated.

## Tangential Nature of the Product and Disappearance of the Producer

This relationship, this modality of understanding and at the same time disencounter has provoked a whole series of forms of approaching or straying away from the institution. In the majority of cases, bringing the same blurring that smoke provokes when it gets in front of our eyes like a censoring curtain. Ahead of this occultation we have not been able to find anything other than calculated literality in the approach, or ingenuity in the best of cases. The opening of a field of activity and reciprocity to the spectator has been reduced to the minimal activity; now our role in the contemplation is an act of supervision, reading and childish learning.

The new modes based on the monopolising of residue, excrescence or the archive, all of which finally turned into relics, far from setting up a new scope of event, as happened in the nineteen sixties with the more conceptual postulates, take us back to a late-modern view. This model turns the work into an illustrative device in a tangential manner to a higher discourse, which is alien and unknown to it, given that although they are contemporary in their exhibiting, they have both been produced in an autonomous manner. At the time of establishing the scrutiny and therefore the final visibility, the container that the model provides as being inalienable and non-negotiable becomes an ecosystem; life is not possible outside of itself.

This controlled demolition of the possibility of interrelation between author and spectator in terms of collaboration has provoked a split between the two, and this split has led to the set of authors seeming to be soldiers missing in combat, or, to take it to a closer geographical context, to be the supposed ghost of the MNCARS<sup>1</sup> wandering around the museum halls without any known intention. For this new scope arguments are no longer needed, only slogans, and only bureaucrats are

needed to build them. In this new construction not all of the guilt falls upon the legitimising framework, as part of the culpability lies with many authors committed to generating their own dematerialisation, postponing their authority, remaining silent and delegating the role of broadening their narrow range of commonplaces and usual babblings to third parties. Withdrawing faced with the new formal and thematic dictates, limiting themselves to interpreting an easily executed score, has been the next step towards the most absolute ignominy.

Abuse in the use of mechanisms of disputable removal from the “art” situation itself, but which claim themselves to be so, has generated a discourse that albeit being present and contemporary still recalls past times in its most fundamental aspects. The precariousness and the austerity resulting from the shortage of resources in other times is now a meditated aesthetic decision, reconstructed with extreme care, using the most advanced software in order to obtain the best results. This narrative aspect fought on a neutral battlefield (at least apparently so) and in silence has condemned the author to death, degrading his function within the productive process, underestimating and hiding the possibility of his proposal itself as a device for autonomous signification.

### Censorship, Self-censorship and Moral

The current denaturalised version of the relationship between the author-work-spectator trinomial, accommodated beneath the speculative model of the cultural event, the biennial of the simple thematic exhibition with a multiplicity of authors, has given way to a whole tsunami of social sectarianism and constructivism, of literalness in the political and of obsession for the profitability of the discourse on a level of social redemption. On the other hand there is the ruling out of any ambiguity, personal trace or dissidence from the model dictated due to these being clearly dissonant within the enclosed perimeter.

This conscious and ideological renouncing starts from the clinging to old conceptions on productivity, on what is useful for society from a point of view that, although it intends to be of renewal, is more befitting of dictatorships than of advanced societies. One often observes in the propaganda of authoritarian regimes that the representations of the productive, and of work in general, negating or hiding individual and intellectual work as an element of productivity and the avant-garde. This constant denial of the motivating power of the different cultural manifestations in themselves has led to some institutions becoming overnight into entities that are in constant self-denomination, with no more contribution than that of having cast a question into the wind with a clear answer, but the fact of which they refuse to accept to read for themselves, given that such a response would advise them to close in a preemptory manner.

The author is disfigured under this model of new relationship, becoming a shapeless, unrecognisable mass guided by the institution itself, transforming into the figure of the curator as the only visible member at the end of the productive process. This clear vindication, which is often unconscious, of a discourse and a Marxist-wilful praxis pastiche<sup>1</sup> craves the figure of the revolutionary avant-garde and its relationship with the rest of the working class; this is not a joke: establishing the dissolution of other models and behavior patterns towards formulas of calculated social ordering. We come back to Brecht’s famous hammer.

What is really curious is that a part of the artistic behaviors surviving this defeat of the model have become committed to and specialised in reproducing this same structure of compilation of objects and documents, which some museums have dismissed as obsolete, thus dealing with it among different attitudes with more pity than glory.

This is a *modus operandi* that has been learnt and repeated until the most enthusiastic paroxysm, laden with all the phraseology necessary to avoid touching upon the delimitation of the perimeter, in the style of the Paris Salons during the XIX century, striking for both the inside and outside.

### Sans jury ni récompense

The impossibility of existing with a minimum solvency within the context and the framework of denominating eliminates any possibility of escape, dissidence or contradiction generating an ad hoc setting that is consequently recreated, without fissures, in which everything is tied up and really tied up. In this eco-system of given norms the setting up of alternatives to this becomes a desperate act or a mere childish tantrum. The structure of the artistic is established in a relationship of power and dependence through the institution as the high point towards the spectator, going through all of the agents that interact on the different levels. The model creates curious paradoxes; one of the most critical artists of the commercial system of art, and thus the capitalist system, may go on collating this yet at the same time exhibiting his works in the best galleries and thus being present in the most prestigious international fair. Within our circle all of this and more is always possible.

The productivity of the cultural event has brought into consideration an ideological setting in which the proposals of neutrality, in which the works of different authors have the appreciable virtue of fitting into diametrically different discourses without getting messed up; one does not go from a principle of individual reasoning with each author and work as an autonomous element, other than as a previously dictated discourse in which the work becomes a mere eccentric and illustrating element. In order to do this they would come away from the necessary scrutiny, adjusting the possible differences within a common framework: that of a pre-stated and obviously clear slogan. This illustrating that denies the merely decorative function of art in the past has gone on to spatially or physically decorate the thematic and ideological approaches prefixed by the given framework. Both actions share a very similar action to that which is the substantive over which the action takes place, although this continues to be decorated in both cases.

Beyond this space of legitimisation, the strictness of movement prevents a clear development of any doubt or question in relation to the model given. This type of actions will come from the outskirts of the ecosystem itself and its repercussion as such will be limited. Any other alternative is in itself a leap into the dark, finally turned into a mere fret with no productive outcome. What follows is its inclusion into a situation in which some of those who dissent become merely resentful, which finally closes the door to any speculation or doubt.