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Reflections on the possibilities and limits of creating a framework for competitions in the field of contemporary arts

I Introduction

An ambiguous task: creating adequate competition frameworks which have potential to support contemporary artists and new developments in the arts field.

A challenging task and a part of our mutual discussion at this symposium is to discover how, if at all, the performing arts can be judged by a jury for the purpose of honoring or awarding a prize to a particular artist.

I will approach these questions about the future of performing arts and especially dance competitions by mentioning some aspects, at the core of the arts, which I think need to be considered and which we might discuss before we will be able to discover or create a solution to our most ambiguous task: creating competition frameworks with potential to support artists and new developments in the arts field.

Because of its specific qualities, art cannot, as we well know, easily be measured by inches, minutes, weights, etc. – as can sports — and, from my perspective, probably not adequately enough by general measures of technique, musicality, dramaturgy, choreographic skills, etc.

II General aspects of art creation

Thesis 1: Art is a quite specific type of human expression and is a formed representation of his/her soul with respect to a specific time and cultural context (cultural history, living conditions, actual art ideology, etc.)

Each new art form/style is an expression of a change of the inner attitude of a creative human being towards life and specific life conditions (i.e. in relation to: nature, social community, etc.). These inner and new attitudes towards life first produce a new psychological dynamic, which is conscious and functionally adapted by an artist's will to create a specific art form, through which his/her attitude towards life is expressed

Therefore: an adequate evaluation of an artist's self-expression would not only need to contemplate the key temporal and cultural elements of the creative context, but, even more importantly, such an evaluation must consider the individual artistic dynamic of the artist as well as his/her emerging new attitude towards life conditions.

Thesis 2: The most basic motivation to create an individual and new art style is to reach eternity individually (not collectively as in religion) through an unique artwork which is forever connected/with the artist name by being taken into the collective's cultural heritage.

Although art creation has a lot to do with playfulness, awareness and inspiration, Otto Rank showed that an artist does not only give life (- time) in order to create but even more sacrifices most of his life energy in order to create memorable and everlasting artworks.

Therefore: The evaluation of an artistic process from the beginning of creating, to the finishing of the work and final presenting it to the public must consider the specific

impact of ongoing and changing relationship of individuell, collective, spirituell und materiel elements of the creative process.

Thesis 3: Each artistic statement is a specific mixture of (a more or less) collective as well as individual elements, which are composed by the artist's (or group of artists) willpower.

Even a contemporary artist uses collective (for example the knowledge of materials, techniques of expressions, art ideologies, collective themes, etc.) as well as his very individual, hopefully new elements (ideas, styles of formations, etc.) in order to express him/herself in a common frame of reference but also in a new, aesthetic representation of his/her soul.

Therefore: an adequate approach to evaluation would need to include criteria and measures which consider the collective values as well as the individual unique elements of a particular creation.

Thesis 4: Art work embodies a harmonious unification of two opposing entities: form and content (both collective and individual)

Although art form and content may be united in art work, this unity is often a result of an arduous artistic process of reaching finally the unification of the two opposing entities: form and content, the collective and the individual.

In Europe, since the Renaissance until the modern and post- modern art forms emerged, the individual free will and the self- consciousness of the artist became more and more dominant.

His / She almost lost any re - connection with the, for any artwork, indispensable collective. The impulse to create and the choice of the content became almost an exclusive matter of the artist's individual consciousness and decision, which may be sometimes far apart from the collective's taste and state of consciousness.

Therefore: Any attempt to evaluate the "the beyond" of the individual new artistic statement must include and accept the possibility of not being able to evaluate the offered artistic work. The jury should express its own limitation.

Thesis 5: A contemporary artist searches for a new individual expression within or in opposition to the current ideology of art with which he/she is connected.

An artist makes use, in a greater or lesser degree, of the collective reservoir in terms of art form, style and content. With this collective background he/she searches for a, more or less, unique expression, which opposes or adds a new interpretation to the current ideology of art.

Therefore: art work at the extremities and beyond the common aesthetic values systems may have the most innovative potential, but may have the least developed evaluation criteria. The jury should take a risk to formulate new criteria of evaluation and thus contribute also to the development of the " ethics" of evaluation.

Thesis 6: There are limits of subjectivity, which even the most individual of artist cannot overcome.

First, because the creative impulse of an artist implies the repetition of a similar principle to the form; secondly, if the artist's work is to have some general influence, it must use some collective content of general human significance.

Therefore: in order to develop and invent new evaluation criteria in the arts field, one has to consider philosophical, psychological, sociological and technological aspects with respect to our present time and future.

III Categories of Art Forms

Thesis 1: The peculiarities of art forms and styles at various regions and epochs are not to be explained by more or less abilities, but are only intelligible as the expression of a particular will to form.

The various art styles differ as to the manner in which an artist achieves both the unity of a harmonious combination of the current ideology of art with his personal one.

Thesis 2: This will to form (the style) can change within the lifetime of an artist or even within an artwork.

An artist repeats different aesthetic styles of art history and may interpret this cultural heritage in an individual and contemporary way. He or She may experiment with and mix different aesthetic styles and he may finally find his/her preferred aesthetic style in she may become a master interpreter of an earlier or finder of new art forms and styles.

Thesis 3: Although each Person and each of his or her (artistic) expression is a unique formation of physical, spiritual, dynamic elements, the variation in quantity and the typical formation of these elements of art creations may justify to categorise an Artist and his or her work.

Each art form is a specific set of spiritual, aesthetic psychological, physical elements. Not a certain cultural époque determines whether a set of artworks can be put for good reason in a certain aesthetic category.

The question is: how is it that quite specific artwork from very different cultural backgrounds can, with good justification, be categorised as folklore, classical, modern, post-modern, contemporary art? Or: What are specific elements of a creation process and final work that suggests to put this in a certain aesthetic category which makes it profoundly different from an others set of artworks?

The different aesthetic categories are determined by:

- The character of the collective ideology and its relation to the collective art ideology.
- The position of the individual art ideology in relation to the collective ideology. The kind the symbols of eternity are used within the particular culture and time. (God, rituals; dogmas; absolute formulas; the absolute aesthetic form, created by the individual artist; the full "NOV" Experience as symbol of eternity; and others) The specific relation of the We (collective) and the I (individual). Folklore and classical Dance are "We"-centred. Modern / post-modern are more "I-centred". The prime state of consciousness. This are: pre-self-consciousness, controlled self behaviour, self-consciousness, hyper-self-aware.
- The dominant Consciousness of time and space. 1-2 dimensional (folklore) 3-4 dimensional (classical) 4 and more: (post-modern, contemporary)

- Preferred media of expression: rituals of celebration, public performances to show everlasting examples of beauty, celebration of the genius and his new concept, multimass- media ect.

Therefore: The evaluation within certain categories one need to clarify the main ingredients which specific for each categories as the frame of reference of the evaluative criteria.

IV General Criteria for Evaluation

Thesis 1: What is a great artist? A definition.

The highest acknowledgement for an artist should be awarded to an individual capable of using the typical conflict of humanity within him- or herself in order to produce collective values, which, though akin to the traditional in form and content, are yet individual and new creation of these general collective values in that they show the personal unique ideology of the artist and who is at the same me representing the general attitude towards life for his/her generation.

Thesis 2: The acknowledgement of an artist is dependent on the collective art ideology

If the art ideology in a particular culture is mostly collective, these collective kind of artists will be regarded as the greatest of their time who have expressed the collective elements (beliefs, etc.) in their purest and most vigorous form.

If, on the other hand, the general ideology supports individuality, the greatest artist will be he/she who embodies this collective ideology of individuality in the purest (most individualistic) form. This means: for the one artist who has most definitely impressed his unique-personality-stamp on traditional forms, his individualism will be seen as "the greatest"

Thesis 3: The aesthetic pleasure from experiencing a work of art

The aesthetic pleasure from experiencing a work of art evolves through a feeling of unity with the soul-content expressed by that piece of art as well as through an experience of (undeserved) personal gain due to this experience.

Aesthetic pleasure does not depend on the individual, culturally specific contents of art, rather on the constitution of the viewer's soul. The one spectator or critic may long for precession, the other for courage and uniqueness of an individual arüst personality. Our neighbor next to us might be further apart from our esthetic values than a Citycian of another continent.

V The dilemma of evaluating contemporary art

Thesis 1: Art creation precedes the creation of criteria for art evaluation.

The bipolar of collective/ individual and multidimensional nature of art makes any evaluation - and especially ratingofart - difficult or even ridiculous As mentioned above, each art creation must contain collective as well as quite unique and individual elements. Collective elements can be evaluated in terms of already established criteria. However, the individual elements are difficult to evaluate due to their very uniqueness.

In turn, this uniqueness is the very element which situates the art piece at the very edge of new artistic dimensions, which might lead to the development of new criteria for evaluation.

Therefore: art creation precedes the creation of adequate criteria for art evaluation.

Thesis 2: Every new artistic statement needs the creation of a new set of criteria.

In addition to some basic rules of communication (openness, respecting diversity opinions, etc.) the evaluating process needs only a few pre — fixed criteria, which should however be as informed of and sensitive to new forms of creative expressions, so that a language can be found or created, which verbally expresses the new emerging qualities and skills of an given art piece. This would permit abstractions of the verbalized experience to be drawn, which could result in building new frames of reference and evaluative categories.

Therefore: The adequate criteria for evaluation must be discovered with each new work of art.

Thesis 3: The act of evaluating is as much a creative act of a critic or a group of free willed individuals as the act of creation of an individual or a group of artist.

Formal criteria, and other procedures of legitimizing, for judging other peoples work are, more or less, obvious actions of justification of most individually motivated decisions. Whether a jury member is qualified to do evaluate other artists' work is basically not a question of his/her formal qualification in the arts field, but a question of power and/or a question of the artist's ability to put his trust in the jury members and/or if he/she is willing to surrender him/herself to the judgment of the jury members.

Therefore: the participating artist must know the jury members in advance and must agree to being evaluated by this jury board.

Thesis 4: An artist, by nature of the specific dynamic of the artistic personality, must also oppose the collective acknowledgement.

Especially the contemporary, extreme individualistic artist defines him/herself largely in strong opposition to any collective aesthetic value system. His/her opposition to these aesthetic values - and its institution — may be one of the strongest indications of his/her extraordinary potential to create new aesthetic forms.

Therefore: all actions and artistic statements in opposition to existing aesthetic norms and the structure of art evaluation both deserve careful attention and must be handled with respect and openness.

Thesis 5: Artists also need collective approval to fulfill their deepest longing for eternity of their individual soul.

Even the most individualistic artist has needs or longs, more or less, for external approval, not only so that he/she can reconnect with reality (society) or balance his/her psyche life, but also to gain the deepest meaning and benefit from his/her impulse for individual creation: the eternity of the soul, which he/she can only reach through the acknowledgement of the collective - by integrating and assimilating the individually new created art form/style into the collective accepted and preserved aesthetic value system.

Therefore: new forms of publicity and documentation of the artist's individual unique contribution to the collective needs to be developed as well as adequate rituals for

presenting the acknowledgements of the new contribution to the collective through the artist's work.

VI Thesis to the Jury selection process

Thesis 1: Jury rules for the pre- and final selection process.

1. Evaluation categories must be differentiated according to the different art form (folklore; classical, modern, contemporary, new work to emerge.)
2. The evaluation should be differentiated, whether the acknowledgement for a piece of art will be given for a
 - likely high collective approval (popular) or
 - highly innovative potential creation.
3. Each participating artist (company) should receive a positive acknowledgement of their presented work in a verbal or written form.
4. Externally submitted work (outside the field power defining art aesthetics) should be given careful attention.
5. Criteria of the evaluating process, external to the artistic context (political, ethnical) need not to be excluded from the decision making process, but must be made transparent to all concerned.

Thesis 2: Criteria for the selection of the jury members.

1. Jury members should be able to understand and speak the language of the proceedings well enough to follow the discussion
2. Members should have human skills such as: curiosity, respect for differences, Profound knowledge of the areas of art, which they are representing, knowledge of artistic processes, as well as knowledge of the specific psychological dynamic of an artistic personality
3. The jury members should be able to listen to others and be able to work towards creative solution within a group.
4. Some of the jury members in each art category should represent the aesthetic category in question through his/her own artistic work
5. At least one member should be in the age group and/or culturally and artistic background of the artist to be evaluated.
6. One member should be from a different area of human sciences: philosophy, anthropology, new technology.
7. others

Thesis 3: Criteria for the selection of the chair of the jury

In addition to the above qualifications, the chair (moderator) of the evaluation process must be able:

1. to apply given criteria to presented thesis
2. to create new criteria which can meet the specific quality of controversial art pieces
3. support different options among jury members by pointing out their value for the mutual decision task
4. be able to contain (not repress) his/her own preferences
5. others