The role of Art in History
This is the third number of the Universal Colours, it is the continuation of this year’s issues that we promise to do because we do not pretend that we have done the best to our readers, audiences and our dear members, but it is fulfilling the promises as the feedback we get from all. We do feel well and even better when we receive some feedback because it makes us vivid and useful.

To the near future that we live we should say that our plans in the EU-MAN is going better that the expectations, before we get a long with some Finnish organisation called VISIO FORUM which is a part of bigger organisation working for the integration and adaptation of the society, this organisation will hold a cultural forum for the religion integration in the city of Turku for three days first, second and the third of October, EU-MAN invited to take part as partner to this forum and will use this opportunity to set some exhibition to the SALON of the forum.

The attendances to this forum expected to be some 2000 people, and that is by itself a good opportunity to show and market ourselves as professional artists living and working in the EU region, yes we need all the time to highlight ourselves and since there are a lot of artists and other people who do not know about our organisation, we accepted this invitation and we put ourselves as partner not as guest because they have two dimensions as we all know.

As well the EU-MAN will make a good Autumn Salon in London this year, its tradition EU-MAN made some 7 Autumn Salon since its establishments, it should be every year but of course we should be frank to ourselves and say that we cannot afford it all the time, but we are very satisfy with our work, our progress and the all that we achieved up to now.

Autumn Salon this year will be for some 24 artists 9 from Russia and the rest from our group they will present their works in the venue of Red Gate Gallery which is in the centre of London, and will be one of our qualitative exhibition that we do so some little catalogue will be designed by Thanos Kalamidas will be appear for the occasion and that will be very remarkable because we will have the honor of this design, as we know that Mr. Kalamidas is the designer of our magazine and the person who developed the magazine and who was working for many well known media companies in the world, and he was working to Nokia as designer as well.

So we are in better condition as said because we are moving in the right direction, but still we need all support that every one can give even some little advice can be a great support.

Amir Khatib
in focus

10-13 Visiting Arts Strengthening

artist of the issue

14-17 Rasul Al-Murshidy

theme: the role of Art in History

18-25 Art and Human History
26-29 Fashion designer talks role of art history in collection
30-31 The Role of Art in Decolonization and Healing from History
32-35 The Role of the artists in the history
32-33 Personally, I would rather not do political art

in every issue

3 Editorial
4-5 Editorial Board - Contents
6-9 Art News
54-56 Last Drop
58 Feedback
Pitzer Art Galleries Present
WRIT LARGE
featuring: Marcus Civin, Hervé Constant, Patrick Hebert, Jane Mi
Curated by: Ciara Ennis
Dates: July 29 – September 10, 2010
Location: Pitzer Art Galleries, Nichols Gallery
1050 North Mills Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711
Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Friday, noon-4:30
and by appointment

Pitzer Art Galleries launches its first iteration of site-specific, text-based project Writ Large, with artists Marcus Civin, Hervé Constant, Patrick Hebert, and Jane Mi. Commissioned as an annual summer project, Writ Large makes use of the 23 feet high ceiling of the Nichols Gallery. Monochromatic and thematically open-ended, Writ Large features four artists for whom language, ciphers, and symbols is a driving force. Stripped bare of artistic artifact, the works are stark and dramatic—opening vistas of meaning limited only by the viewer’s imagination.


London-based French artist Hervé Constant’s For Heaven’s Sake echoes a desperate cry for deliverance. Inspired by French poet Arthur Rimbaud, Constant’s work focuses on themes related to communication and the individual’s journey toward self-discovery.

Los Angeles-based Patrick Hebert’s 39 Synonyms for Search takes the form of a monumental word search puzzle, a tease for word game aficionados.

Los Angeles and Boston-based Jane Mi’s RORSCHACH 0-9 are based on the symmetry of Rorschach’s inkblot tests. The font considers symbol and perception. Familiar numbers have been bifurcated and mirrored to produce a character. Numbers were used in consideration of their universality across cultures.

Pitzer Art Galleries takes great pleasure in bringing the diverse perspectives of these accomplished artists in its new text art project. Writ Large is scheduled to take place each summer at Pitzer Art Galleries.

About Pitzer College
Pitzer College is a nationally top-ranked undergraduate college of the liberal arts and sciences. A member of The Claremont Colleges, Pitzer offers a distinctive approach to a liberal education by linking intellectual inquiry with interdisciplinary studies, cultural immersion, social responsibility and community involvement.

About Pitzer Art Galleries
Pitzer Art Galleries exists to provide visually arresting exhibitions that promote the value and understanding of contemporary art within a local, national and international context. The Galleries, located on the Pitzer College campus, are comprised of two sites, the Nichols Gallery—committed to solo and group exhibitions by national and international artists both emerging and established—and the Lenzner Family Art Gallery—a space for risk and experimentation dedicated to emerging artists working in all media. Through curatorial creativity and visionary programming Pitzer Art Galleries seeks to provide context, support and a critical framework for artists and curators working today and by doing so inspire meaningful dialogue that fascinates, inspires and invigorates.

Changing times - New worlds
24 June 2010 - 14 November 2010

After the success of the exhibitions Kandinsky & Der Blaue Reiter and Haute Couture it is the turn of gems from the collection to dazzle, amaze and open the eyes of the visitor. Famous names jostle for attention: Egon Schiele, Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Piet Mondrian, Paul Cézanne, Wassily Kandinsky, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Jan and Charlie Toorop, Constant, Jan Schoonhoven, Louise Bourgeois, Francis Bacon and Marlene Dumas. It is rare to see so many art treasures displayed at once. These highlights – both familiar pieces and new discoveries – have now been brought together in the exhibition Changing times – New worlds. Perhaps the truest thing that can be said about art is that it is above all the child of its time. As times change, new worlds are created. That has been true for centuries and it still holds true today. In the exhibition Changing times – New worlds, the Gemeentemuseum showcases the very best it has to offer. Each exhibition room presents a different world in images, from the wild Expressionism of Kandinsky to the soft, sweet hues of Monet’s Wisteria and open the eyes of the visitor. Famous names jostle for attention: Egon Schiele, Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Piet Mondrian, Paul Cézanne, Wassily Kandinsky, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Jan and Charlie Toorop, Constant, Jan Schoonhoven, Louise Bourgeois, Francis Bacon and Marlene Dumas. It is rare to see so many art treasures displayed at once. These highlights – both familiar pieces and new discoveries – have now been brought together in the exhibition Changing times – New worlds.

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The exhibition consists of two parts, the first of which can be viewed through 19 August and the second from 31 July through 14 November.

The Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Stadhouderslaan 41 2517 HV Den Haag Postbus 72

Turner and the Masters
Having already been seen in London and Paris, Turner and the Masters will now be shown at the Museo del Prado in Madrid. Its aim is to reveal to visitors the extent of Turner’s links with other historically important artists and the profoundly original way in which he assimilated their influence. This comparison will assist in an understanding of how Turner’s approach to and assimilation of other artists was intended not just as an homage to them but also involved a subtle and highly original type of transformation of their teachings.

Among the differences between this version of the exhibition and those already seen are the presence of a number of paintings not shown in London or Paris, including Shipwreck of a Cargo Boat, Snowstorm: Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps, Peace, Burial at Sea, Shade and Darkness: evening of the Deluge, and Light and Colour (Goethe’s Theory): the morning after the Deluge, all absolute masterpieces by Turner.

The works by other painters to be seen in the exhibition include some particularly outstanding masterpieces that have never previously been exhibited in Spain, such as Girl at the Window by Rembrandt, Les Plaisirs du Bal by Watteau, both loaned from Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, and the latter only shown at the Prado, as are the major canvases by Claude Lorraire and Rubens, Port Scene with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula (London, National Gallery), and Landscapes with a Cart at Dusk (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen). Also on display solely in the version of the exhibition at the Prado is An English Ship in a north-west Gale trying to beat windward (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London) by the 17th-century, English-based Dutch painter Willem van de Velde the Younger.
The Turku 2011 Capital of Culture year programme intertwines contemporary art, landscape architecture and urban city planning together in an interesting way in the Urban Nature seminar 8-9 September 2011. Martha Schwartz, a renowned contemporary artist from the USA, is the keynote speaker for the seminar on urban nature and contemporary art that is organised by the Summer University of Turku.

Gardens, parks and other urban nature locations are currently seen as elements improving the well-being of people and the cosiness of the environment. In addition, they are forums for art. While expanding to areas that are more versatile, contemporary art is increasingly moving closer to environmental and urban city planning.

The goal of the seminar is to diversely examine the planning and research of parks, recreation areas and urban nature and their effects on the human psyche and wellbeing. The seminar also discusses current topics along with the future possibilities and challenges regarding the industry.

The Urban Nature 2011 seminar is targeted at professionals from various domains, artists, planners, gardening professionals, city officials and city residents. The seminar speakers include environmental artists, landscape architects, environmental psychology researchers, nature philosophers and gardening professionals from Finland, the UK, Denmark, Sweden and the USA. The keynote speaker for the seminar is Martha Schwartz, a well-known contemporary artist and landscape architect from the USA.

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**The Young Vermeer**

For this presentation (until 22 August), the Mauritshuis has brought together Vermeer’s early work: one painting from Edinburgh, one from Dresden and one from the Mauritshuis itself. These early works are quite different from the richly decorated interiors with attractive women you might expect from Vermeer. Instead they depict a mythological subject, a story from the Bible and a brothel scene, and they are all surprisingly large. Nonetheless, they all reveal the master’s hand and the seeds of his later style. They also show a young Vermeer already captivated by tranquility and light, qualities that would later make him world-famous.

The presentation has been organised in close collaboration with The National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh and the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, in Dresden, where the paintings will later be exhibited.

**Vermeer’s Early Years**

Vermeer was born in Delft in 1632. His father ran the Mechelem Inn on the Grote Markt and supplemented his income dealing in art. It is not known with whom Vermeer studied painting. No documents on the matter have yet come to light and Vermeer’s early work does not bear the hallmarks of any one artist in particular.

In 1653 the young Vermeer registered as a master-painter at the local guild. He began his career producing history paintings: scenes from the Bible and classical mythology. According to 17th-century academic theory, this was the highest form of painting. A history painter had to first absorb a story and then use his imagination, while a painter of still-lifes, for example, ‘only’ had to imitate the real world.

The elevated status was likely to be another reason Vermeer chose to become a history painter. It seems, however, that other subjects held more appeal for him: he eventually switched to scenes of everyday life, which were probably also in greater demand.

After his death in 1675, Vermeer fell into obscurity, his paintings only beginning to resurface in the 19th century. The rediscovery of his three early works began with The Procuress in 1859. Thore-Bürger, an art critic and Vermeer enthusiast, saw the painting hanging high on a wall in a Dresden museum and - standing on a ladder - recognised the signature.

The Mauritshuis’s Diana and Her Nymphs followed 25 years later, when Vermeer’s signature - today barely visible to the naked eye - was discovered under a layer of paint.

Any doubts about this atypical Vermeer fell away when in 1901 another signed early work with an unusual subject appeared at a London auction: Christ in the House of Martha and Mary. The young Vermeer had arrived.

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**TURKU – EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2011**

Urban Nature 2011 to include nature in the Turku Capital of Culture programme

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Visiting Arts
Strengthening
Intercultural Understanding Through the Arts
www.visitingarts.org.uk

Visiting Arts’ purpose is to strengthen intercultural understanding through the arts.

What do we do?
* Provide information and intelligence to help people engage in intercultural activity
* Create opportunities for artists and cultural professionals to explore new connections
* Expand the skills and knowledge of artists and cultural players

How we do this
Among other things we:
* Produce and distribute our free monthly e-newsletter, help-sheets, targeted briefings and the latest advice through print, web and face to face meetings
* Establish and foster opportunities for ground-breaking artist exchanges, and contribute to some of the world’s biggest and most innovative festivals
* Organise and run training programmes, in-country
workshops, overseas country-visits, networking events, work placements, residencies and collaborations

From Afghanistan to Zanzibar, we work with the most exciting next generation of artists and cultural players, inviting them to the UK, linking them with UK artists and organisations expanding knowledge and horizons and championing intercultural working.

Our recent consultation with the sector showed us that, on average, arts professionals and artists need: international intelligence, particularly on funding sources and visa information, opportunities for travel and research, and networking opportunities in order to enable their international working. These are areas of development core to our work.

With increasing migration across the world, globalised trade and issues related to cross-cultural, religious and national conflict entering into our consciousness on a daily basis, it is clear that society needs more intercultural dialogue, not less. We are acutely aware that our work needs to reflect the issues facing us in the 21st century while building on the good practice that VA has evolved over the last 30 years.

We test all of our programmes against these principles and we are constantly devising new ways of delivering high quality, effective programmes, and to challenge traditional models of international working.

Who we are

Visiting Arts is an independent registered charity set up in 1977, which is funded, by Arts Council England, the Scottish Arts Council, the Arts Council of Wales, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and works with a range of partners including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, British Council, Gulbenkian Foundation and Ministries of Culture across the globe. The Board is chaired by Robert Palmer. Other Board Members include Ajay Chhabra, Romesh Gunesekera, Sue Cambridge, Ann Harrison, Guto Harri and Nero Ughwujabo. We have a wide and growing group of associates with whom we work on one-off contracts. These associates represent some of the most experienced and diverse cultural operators in the UK (and beyond).

Visiting Arts was established in 1977 as a department of the British Council, working to bring international and culturally diverse work from overseas to UK audiences. Visiting Arts became an independent charitable organisation in 2001 and since then the organisation’s role has developed into being a facilitator for high quality international relationships between artists and cultural professionals. We do this through three main strands of work: Information and knowledge sharing, Arts Project and Training.
Rasul Al-Murshidy

Colours movement and its inspiration in the artworks of Rasul Al Murshidy

By Mohammad Al-Bustanyi

Artist AL-Murshidy takes art as profession very early in his life compared to his generation, he also taught art when he was 16 years-old, set up many exhibitions in Iraq until he left his home-land at the early nineties. Then he made a series of exhibitions in San Francisco and N.Y. particularly in the memorable place of the United Nations. Followed with two more exhibitions at the Jurdanian-Amieran association and the cultural centre of the city.

Rasul continues his experience or better his "research" the same way he had started in his early years in Iraq, but when he settled down in the South Virginia he finally could get reed of the boring stylish goats of his past. However his works took an experimental dimension, and he could found a unique visual language to communicate with others through colours and mainly communicate long time personal experiences.

His art became deeper, more challenging and discovery... a language that colour become moveable, nothing limits its movement, unite shorthand to many clear meanings which he wanted it to be a bring and continue between him, his work and his viewers, to exchange the inspirations and its astonishment.

A strict language that he can reveal through his artworks, although it has a high transparent which hide between the stocks of the brush and the studded carefully techniques that need the spaces, viewer can see that figures communicate in an intense language includes all questions... depth is the ready dimension to his subjects so he takes out his extensions from that depth which is full of enigmas, inspirations and all riddles that we think of as if he wants to tell us that present time is inevitable result to far past ,or he tried to remind us of what we see is coming from many thick backgrounds flirting with our culture disturbing its resources but it give us a feeling of fullness.
Rasul trust his colours as an eternally expression of our different impressions, one of his characteristics that he loves colours and very early in his life as said, and he trusts deeply that colours have manifestations, he dare to dive in its depth as experiment discovering and as rebel I know him as academician as well imitating reality by a transparency at the early stage of his life, but when he moved to the USA, gradually he belongs to the new discoveries and try his best to get knowledge about the American pop art and other art experiences without leaving his tools and his culture that came already full of its details... but seems that he responded to the new reality spreading in his artworks the depth of his own experience. So he get rid of the traditional shapes immediately to fill some gap in the artwork.

Rasul let the spontaneity play the role, he behaved as an adult child with his colours with the destiny of the artwork consciously he led his child to be creative and attractive he get advantages from many art worlds, the old Iraqi art world, the modern European world, the American world, which any viewer can notice carefully the mixture of the different cultures, ethnics and nations.

AL-Murshidy worked heard to achieve this point because he turns the colours to be tools, the lines to be tools, the light and shadow to be tools as well so we can see the all tools work together towards expressing the ideology of him. Colours are full of movements continues movements and spaces which some viewers see as empty but they have a deep relationship to the depth of the picture, there are always a hidden dimension to the figures which basically they made of colour areas.

Meaning that all those colour movements as I said coming from the depth of the picture not the contrary and we have to understand through our reading to the work and trough conditions of the colour and its movement according to an old and new memory, so we have to imagine the area as the Virginian land before that colour penetrate the whole scenery.

I can say that colour and its movement frames the experience of Rasul AL-Murshidy at least now, and he is a successful in this field but can this colour revolution continue to express his obsessions and his feelings in the future time. Perhaps but I know that he cannot do it because of our deep rooted friendship and my following to his process that he cannot stay on one style considering it as his unique ideology because he believes that one ideology impressing him as an artist.

I think that he is right.
Editors’ Note:
In the early 1980s, a line was put forward within the RCP that the social role of art should be simply characterized this way: “art is entertainment.” This led to discussion and debate within the Party, and through this process the “art is entertainment” line was criticized and rejected. Since that time, there has been ongoing discussion among people, both inside and outside the Party, about the social role of art. The following comments, written a number of years ago by Ardea Skybreak, author of the book Of Primeval Steps and Future Leaps, were a contribution to this process.

In these comments Skybreak speaks to what is wrong with the notion of “art is entertainment” and raises a number of important questions related to this and, more generally, to the social role of art. These comments were not written for publication, and in fact were more in the nature of some initial and somewhat informal thoughts, musings, etc. But we feel that, in the context of the widespread distribution and discussion of the RCP’s new Draft Programme, as well as in an overall and ongoing sense, the points raised in these comments remain very relevant and can help stimulate further wrangling, within the Party and among others, around these and other important questions. For this reason and with this objective in mind, we requested and received the permission to circulate within the Party as part of the Party and among others, around these and other important questions. For this reason and with this objective in mind, we requested and received the permission to circulate within the Party as part of this process, I wanted to write up some of my own initial thoughts on this, in the hopes of contributing to further discussion and debate of the important questions involved.

One view put forward within the Party—which was ultimately rejected—is the formulation that “the role of culture in society under the present and foreseeable conditions, including well into the transition to communism, can be summed up in one word. It is entertainment.”

This characterization of the social function of art—“art is entertainment”—was presented as being essentially in keeping with Mao’s view of art, and merely a further expression and development of our understanding of the social role of art, along the same lines. For instance, in defending the “art is entertainment” formulation, it was said that the very quote by Mao (cited above) “implies that people wish to escape everyday life (even sometimes when everyday life is a revolutionary upsurge, a ‘festival of the oppressed’) and that art is a means of doing so. This is the bottom line.”

This was the basis for an attempt to reconcile Mao’s formulation with the “art is entertainment” formulation. But in criticizing this “art is entertainment” formulation, it was correctly pointed out that “to arrive at a correct understanding of the relation of art to politics it is necessary to have a correct understanding of the social function of art,” and that the term “entertainment,” even very broadly defined, “does not express the entire social function of art: it is not sufficient as an explanation of that social function, and if that is all we say about art’s social function—”

This formulation “art is entertainment” is really quite wrong, and that in fact this formulation stands in very real opposition to the largeness of mind and sweeping view of art concentrated in Mao’s formulation cited above.

It is useful to step back for a minute and think of history. What role has art played in different societies throughout the ages?

Art has always been a social activity, engaged in by social beings, in a social context. It has therefore been imbued with social meaning throughout our history. But social contexts (predominant modes of production and corresponding forms of social organization) have undergone profound changes in the course of human history, and these have no doubt been reflected in (and affected by) changes in the social role, the social meaning, of art as social activity. A study of these changes, and of the aspects of the artistic process which have not
changed, would greatly enrich any attempt to get a handle on the social role of art in today’s world. While an extensive exploration of this subject is obviously out of the question here, a few things can be suggested from even a superficial look back in time.

Have human beings always engaged in art? I believe we have. I believe professional artists—occupying highly specialized social roles—appeared only with the emergence of strict hierarchies and class divisions in societies, but that art—as a social activity—goes back to a much earlier time. Interestingly, the Russian socialist Plekhanov criticized Bucher for suggesting that “play is older than labour” and “art is older than the production of useful objects.” Plekhanov countered that one must recognize the ultimate “dependence of art on economics,” rather than the “dependence of economics on art.” While it is indeed correct to point out that all human activities in the superstructural arena ultimately rest on society’s base of human productive activity, and would not even be possible in the absence of such activity, the response given to Bucher seems marked by more than a little mechanical materialism. This actually obscures our understanding of the social role of art since its inception as human social activity.

I suspect human beings engaged in some forms of art from the beginning of human society, again, long before classes, or even the earliest hierarchical stratification of society, appeared. I base this belief on the fact that, as soon as the basis emerged for human beings to accumulate some kind of material surplus (perhaps simply through the storage of gathered food resources), the material basis would have existed for the emergence of human activities not directly tied, in the most immediate sense, to activities aimed at procuring the basic requirements for the sustenance and reproduction of life. The accumulation of the slightest material surplus above and beyond what was needed for immediate consumption would have provided at least the basis for the earliest experimentations with a division of labor among human beings, and provided a qualitatively new basis for exploration and transformation of the external world.

This had to have a phenomenal impact on the development of social organization and consciousness as well! The material basis would now exist for human beings to engage in productive activities not related to survival in the most immediate sense—a wide variety of experimental forays and investigations which were not guaranteed to produce palpable results could be engaged in (such as perhaps going off on long hunting treks that might or might not produce a return in game animals, or experimenting with the fashioning of some tool, etc.).

As our ancestors increasingly moved away from the confines of a hand-to-mouth existence, the basis would also have existed for them to experiment with new ways of interpreting and analyzing the increasingly complex information provided by the external world (and human society itself) by engaging in forms of manipulation of the external world, again not so closely tied to immediate survival. There was therefore a basis for art in one form or another.

We can’t say for sure that art as a social activity emerged as soon as the basis for such activity presented itself, but does anyone seriously believe that there could long have been speech and language before there were stories and songs, for instance? Social life does not directly fossilize (at least not in the conventional archaeological sense!), so it will never be possible to exactly re-create the earliest artistic endeavors of our ancestors, especially given the fact that many of the products of such activity (made of perishable materials) would not generally be preserved much into the future.

We can however gain a few insights into artistic activity and its social function in pre-class-based societies by examining such activities in modern peoples living in societies characterized by very minimal development of productive forces and the absence of strict social hierarchies or class divisions, such as the few remaining foraging societies (gatherer-hunters) living in various parts of the world. Typically such societies don’t have any specialized “artists,” any more than they have specialized political or military “chiefs” or religious “priests,” etc. Such specialized social functions historically have emerged when the further development and increased complexity of productive activities have demanded a more complex and formalized division of labor, as is evident in allpastoral, agricultural and industrial societies. But I don’t think this means there is no “art” in foraging societies.

Some will protest that one really can’t speak of “art” in such societies, as evidenced by the fact that it is quite common for such societies not to even have a word for art in their vocabularies. So what? The Inuit peoples, of Alaska and elsewhere, have no single word for “snow,” as far as I know, but no one would suggest they are not familiar with the stuff! In fact they have many different words in their language which refer to the many different kinds of snow which they distinguish, and which have very different social implications in relation to their various activities. Perhaps the analogy is a bit stretched, but I suspect that, in many cases, foraging societies don’t have a single word for “art” (as a highly specialized and highly circumscribed social activity) and certainly no word for “artist” (as a person primarily engaged in art), and yet may routinely engage in many artistic activities and have many and sundry words for the results of such activities. In following up this hunch (and perhaps all this is well known and understood by many people, but it was for me a new exploration), I turned to reports about the lives of the !Kung San people, whose traditional (although now fast disappearing) foraging societies have been extensively studied and described.

The Stories of the !Kung San People

The worldly possessions of the !Kung gatherer-hunters go little beyond such things as digging sticks for the collection of roots, etc., and they have no strict hierarchies or chiefs, living as they do in small mobile groupings in which social decisions can be arrived at through relatively informal struggle and consensus. They do, however, have a rich oral history—collections of tales and myths passed on from generation to generation and which clearly perform an important social function. In a way all !Kung are storytellers, since all will, on occasion, engage in the telling of stories. But on the other hand, their language has different words for different kinds of stories, of seemingly different social importance. For instance, the term n=wasi refers to “ordinary stories” (such as those about productive implements of the traditional !Kung gatherer-hunters go little beyond such things as digging sticks for the collection of roots, etc., and they have no strict hierarchies or chiefs, living as they do in small mobile groupings in which social decisions can be arrived at through relatively informal struggle and consensus. They do, however, have a rich oral history—collections of tales and myths passed on from generation to generation and which clearly perform an important social function. In a way all !Kung are storytellers, since all will, on occasion, engage in the telling of stories. But on the other hand, their language has different words for different kinds of stories, of seemingly different social importance. For instance, the term n=wasi refers to “ordinary stories” (such as those about
hunting, general historical stories, etc.) and these stories are told by many different people. But the term n-wasi o n’lo’o ma’o refers to the "stories of old people," a collection of more important tales and myths which are passed on from generation to generation and which, while widely known, are told and retold almost exclusively by the older people. The younger people (other than in rare instances) do not pass on these stories; hence, these stories are not "known" in the sense that everyone knows them. However, there is no special priestly or other wise traditional authority that retold these stories. (Source: Megan Biesele, "Aspects of the audience, often especially in times of social disturbances, as a means of capturing, concentrating and communicating some crucial aspects of social experience, including such things as the doings of the people of long ago and anyone who doesn't know them doesn't have their head on straight. And everyone whose head is on straight knows them!"

"All Work and No Play Makes Jack a Dull Boy"

All this suggests that while artistic expression has always been not only a means of entertainment (and yes, the traditional !Kung stories are apparently very entertaining and told and retold with a great deal of relish!), but a means of capturing, concentrating and communicating some crucial aspects of social experience, including such things as wonder at the unknown, preservation of what is known, and anticipation of the future. And it is not just in the stories. Think of all the songs, music, body painting and decoration, decoration of containers, tools, shelters, etc. Think of all the dances produced in all the societies which are not reducible to "entertainment"? is all this really reducible to "entertainment"?

Again, even if one seeks to "reclaim" the word entertainment and rid it of its common connotations of mind-numbing distraction and frivolous amusement (the one-sided emphasis favored by pragmatic philosophers everywhere) and, particularly cultivated and promoted by the U.S. bourgeoisie), the problem with the formulation "art is entertainment" remains. The word itself does carry a double connotation of amusement or pleasure, and of being distracted or diverted (e.g. as in the French word for entertainment, "divertissement") from usual concerns.

But even this latter aspect has tended historically to have a connotation of diverting people's attention not only from everyday concerns (perhaps the better to break the pull of spontaneity and drudgery and lift their spirits?) but also from essential (cardinal) questions, which they should be concerned with! The 17th-century philosopher Pascal was said to have remarked that "le divertissement nous amuse et nous fait autrement penser la mort" (entertainment amuses us and leads us ever so gradually and painlessly to our deaths). While it would certainly be wrong to adopt a dogmatic and ascetic stance towards entertainment (which does in fact fulfill a very important social function), we cannot simply discount the aspect of the term which connotes distraction away from the more essential questions of life.

Just to be clear, the point is not that there is anything wrong with entertainment. People need entertainment, which means that we need to be periodicaliy, momentarily, distracted from daily concerns, be they petty or lofty in character. We all need to play, to relax, to engage in many different forms of recreation, precisely in order to be able to re-create, to return to whatever it is that we need to be doing more rested, and perhaps with fresh perspectives. The old quip "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is certainly true, and is something which even revolutionaries with seemingly boundless and limitless energy and determination have to take into account, often especially in times of the most intense struggle and activity.

Contrary to the viewpoints of dogmatists, the need for entertainment is not an inherent indication of social decadence or weakening resolve to carry on with social responsibilities! As with any other social activity, any particular form of entertainment occurs in a social context and has a social impact. Therefore both the content and the form of any particular instance of entertainment at a given time are imbued with social meaning, which can be evaluated as relatively positive or negative (or perhaps even relatively insignificant) in relation to particular social interests and objectives. And the same evaluation can be made of any particular work of art.

But while art can be a very important form of entertainment (both for the artist and for the "audience" in the broadest sense), art and entertainment are not one and the same. The creation, and hence the reception, of art can certainly be a welcome form of "entertainment" away from everyday thoughts and activities, even when the subject matter or theme is not particularly "amusing" or "amusing." Art of work which succeeds in being moving, challenging, provocative, etc., should certainly be deemed to be "entertainment" in the broadest sense, precisely as a result of these very qualities. In the final analysis, whether a particular work of art is deemed entertaining or not (in the broadest sense) is a measure of its "success" and is primarily a question of standards--both of the artist and of the "audience" in interpretation with each other. A work of art will have little value as entertainment if the artist(s) has not met the essential criteria for art outlined in the quote by Mao cited earlier (criteria re concentration, typifying, raising to a higher level aspects of life, etc.), and a work of art will also not be deemed entertaining (no matter how well it has objectively met these criteria) if the level of the audience is out of step with the level of the work (or vice versa) and no means have been found to bring the two into correspondence with each other.

In any case, the "entertainment value" of a work of art (or of the creative process) is far from encompassing its essential characteristics as art, and in particular in terms of social function. I cannot think of a single society at any time in history where the formulation "art is entertainment" would have applied in any kind of essential sense. The social function of different artistic expressions has often been complex, art having been used as a direct aid in production; as a way to represent the external world, as a means of recording and transmitting social history, as a means to anticipate--and often to "prepare"--the future (as just one example, think of all the dances "for the renewal of life" common to so many cultures). The social function of divertissement nous amuse et nous fait autrement penser la mort! This explains the frequent intimate connection of art to ritual, and religion in one form or another. Songs, dances, recitations, etc., have commonly been used to call forth, unleash, appease, or seek insight from the unseen powers. Art is also used to propitiate or protect people and animals or bearded old men and fat cherubs! Much of the great art surviving over the ages is testimony to people's attempts to "confront" the forces against, or seek to influence, some of these supposed spiritual forces, in much the same way that art is also used to grapple with, and influence, real material forces, including social relations.

Art as an Expression of Worldview Not every work of art stemmed (or stems) from a fully developed world outlook or seeks to promote such an outlook. But every work of art has contributed to doing just that. This is true even where the connection of the art to the sphere of production is very tight, as in, say,
the decoration of a pot used to hold grain. How else could one explain
the beautiful intricate designs of the painted clay pots of the Anasazi
(ancient Pueblo) peoples and of their modern-day descendants? Or of the
Pomo Indian woven baskets which involve much elaborate beadwork,
the weaving of rushes with other natural materials for color, and
intricate designs. One such basket I have admired through a photograph
incorporates many repetitions of a complex horizontal design, which
is interrupted in only one spot, “so that the maker wouldn’t be struck
blind”? Yet another comprises 10,000 individual stitches and a pattern of
stylized human figures. Its title: “We assemble to discuss the happy lives of
our ancestors.” Does “entertainment” even begin to get to the heart of all this?! What is being recorded,
concentrated, and transmitted, is part of a way of life; of a worldview.
Or consider the famous cave paintings of Lascaux. It has, on
occasion, been suggested that these cave paintings may have been basically bookkeeping devices:
records of animals killed, or to be killed, in the hunt. The implication
is this--both what is left of this effort, and what is forever lost--which moves us still.

The Role of Art in Human Society

But what about art today? This is in
fact what we need to grapple with
more deeply. But hopefully some
reputations about the part of art
(relatively brief and superficial ones
as have been presented here) can aid
us in this task by dislodging some of
the ossified ways of thinking about
art which are so commonplace and
so heavily promoted in bourgeois society.

Many modern artists (who unfortunately often seem to show little interest in history, even as pertains to
art!) have lost sight of the fact that art
is a social phenomenon occurring in a
social context, which the art is both conditioned by, and in turn influences.
Many artists express a quasi-mystical
and very individualized view of the
artistic process, tend to worship
spontaneity, and seek the justification
of their artistic activity only in the
resulting work itself, and in their
relation to it. This is in large part
due to a problem brought out by Engels.
In response to the stubborn resistance
of many of his contemporaries to the
theory that human labor “is the primary basic condition for all
human existence,” Engels argued
that many people had lost sight of the
intimate connection of art, science,
complex social organization, laws,
religion, etc., with their material
underpinnings in the realm of human productive activity. He further argued
that this was in large part because the increasing complexity of the social
division of labor itself often masked
this connection:

“In the face of all these creations, which
appeared in the first place to be products of the mind, and which
seemed to dominate human society, the more modest productions
of the working hand retreated into the background, the more so since the
mind that plans the labour process already at a very early stage of
development of society (e.g. already in the family), was able
to have the labour that had been
planned carried out by other hands
than its own. All merit for the swift
advance of civilization was ascribed
to the mind, to the development and
activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions
from their thoughts, instead of from
their needs--(which in any case are reflected and come to consciousness
in the mind)--and so there arose in the
course of time that idealistic outlook
on the world which, especially since the
decline of the ancient world, has
dominated men’s minds.” (Engels 1876, p. 289)

Unfortunately the history of the
international communist movement
has been plagued by a lot of
mechanical materialism, including
on the question of the relation of art
to other spheres of social activity.
This is evidenced in particular by
the frequent attempts to seek a one-
to-one correspondence between art
and production, or art and politics,
in both cases completely missing the
particularities of art as art, i.e.,
as a social activity with a distinct
social role in its own right. Perhaps
ironically, the formulation “art is
entertainment” has a lot in common
with this mechanical materialist
trend, because it seeks to understand
art as a social activity by stripping
it of all its richness and complexity,
and reducing it down to what might
be practically termed “the lowest
common denominator” of all
artistic expression--its potential for
entertainment.

Interestingly, while the proponents
of “art for art’s sake” overtly proclaim
the tremendous importance of art
(if sometimes only to themselves!),
and go on to put forward an idealist
notion that sees art and artists as
removed from society, and having little or no bearing on,
or responsibility towards, the rest
of the world--the “art as entertainment”
view does place art and artists very
much in a social context, but grossly
underestimates the social
import and influence of art as art--and
ultimately the social responsibility
of artists as artists--because of a
mechanical view of art’s social
function, here reduced primarily and
essentially to entertainment. This
ends up promoting the view that art
is very social--and, all in all, not very
important!

The position that “art is entertainment”
can even end up feeding the “art
for art’s sake” line. This is in part
because “art is entertainment” is so
far from appreciating the full scope
of the objective importance of art,
that it leaves the door wide open to
those who (correctly) feel that art is
a great deal more than entertainment,
but who at the same time are apt to
deny the social/political implications of
art as a social activity, and the
attending social responsibility of
artists as artists. Furthermore, the
“as entertainment” view promotes
the view that, well, if the social
meaning of art in fact so limited
(entertainment being its primary
purpose), then it’s alright to strike
a stance that “anything goes” in
the artistic sphere. This is bound to
fuel the petty bourgeois individualism of
many artists in bourgeois society,
while at the same time holding back
attempts to make real innovations
and really break new ground in the
realms of art.

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Again, what even a brief look at history
provides an understanding of the
fact that the essential function of art
is not to just provide some salutatory
“clearing of cobwebs” from one’s routine way of thinking
and really break new ground in the
realms of art.

Plekhanov should have gone on to
engaged in the reformist
international communist
movement, it was suggested that
“Plekhanov should have gone on to
in the camp of the reformist
historical and critical commentary
of Maynard Solomon, Wayne State
University Press 1979, p. 142.
First professional biographies of
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Fashion designer talks role of art history in collection

By Rebecca Saxon

Mary McFadden, an acclaimed fashion designer, found inspiration for modern fashion in ancient cultures, she told a crowd at the Warehouse Auditorium on Tuesday afternoon.

“My designs remain faithful to the classical,” said McFadden, who’s been lauded as an “archeological designer” for blurring the lines between fashion and history.

Her lecture, “Goddesses: Symbol of the Ancient World and the Mystery of the Creative Mind,” included a slideshow of her personal photographs taken all over the world juxtaposed with her modern reinterpretations. The presentation was followed by a Q-and-A session.

Throughout the slideshow, McFadden took audience members on a visual journey through Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Renaissance Europe, China and more historic cultures.

“I photograph peoples of the land, their feel for color and cloth,” she said. It’s these nuances in style that she has discovered all over the world that “removes man from the primordial.”

The lecture functioned as a history lesson and a lesson in McFadden’s artistic taste. She showed photos of horizontal bands elongating the body in Egyptian pharaohs’ tombs juxtaposed with her own contemporary interpretation, a draped white dress with elaborate ornamentation and banding.
McFadden went on to show how the fascination with the moon, the sun, the water and the land in ancient civilizations come into play in her collections. These abstract organic motifs present themselves in many of her evening coats and tunics. Another motif she examined was the pyramid, which exhibits itself in both her jewelry and clothing lines.

McFadden illustrated the inspirations for her different wedding gowns, which have a range of African, Roman and Celtic influences. She showed how nuances present in these ancient cultures manifest themselves in her silhouettes, fabrics and drapery.

McFadden was a self-taught fashion designer, and she said her study of anthropology enabled her to create her designs.

She majored in anthropology in college because the professor fell in love with her, she said.

“Current fashion design students have a much better chance than I had,” McFadden said. “You have teachers. That’s a running head start.”

At the end of her slideshow and lecture, McFadden opened the floor for questions, though some thought she gave mostly half or unfinished answers. Sara Armet, a senior fashion design student, said she wished she could have heard the full answers to her classmates’ questions.

McFadden’s quirky personality came out after someone in the audience asked her to describe herself. She revealed she’d been married 11 times and was once a “play girl.”

“I tried cabaret. It wasn’t good enough,” she said.

Another audience member brought up fashionista Lady Gaga, who McFadden said she admires for straying away from casual fashion. Lady Gaga is one of the reasons why the “tables are turning from people dressing in prison costumes,” McFadden said.

Some students who attended the lecture said they were disappointed that McFadden did not show more of her eccentric personality.

“It was definitely unlike any lecture I’ve been to in college,” said Armet, the senior fashion design student. “Here she is, presenting artifacts on slides and reading a report. It was right out of the 1950s. It was an outdated way of presenting it.”

But Armet said she was able to see the beneficial aspects of the lecture as well.

“She blurred the lines between fashion and artifact,” Armet said. “People are so stuck on being innovative these days, but she brings new life to fashion without having to be over the top. She pulled so directly from history. She recreated it.”

Laura Vientos, a senior fashion design major, said the lecture gave her a good idea of how McFadden would receive students’ work in the personal critiques that followed the lecture.

Vientos said she is also inspired by historical periods.

Both Vientos and Armet said they would have liked to get a little more personal background and details on McFadden’s process of getting into the industry and who she worked alongside to do so. Armet and Vientos said they thought the inclusion of these things would have benefited the seniors getting ready to try to break into the fashion world themselves.

Regardless, Armet said she enjoyed the presentation.

“I felt so privileged to be in the room with her,” she said. “You could feel the celebrity presence in the room.”
The Role of Art in Decolonization and Healing from History

By Deb Chansonneuve

On April 13th 2010 a dozen of Canada’s most accomplished Anishnabe artists, curators, art lovers and their friends gathered in Paris to celebrate the opening of Paris/Ojibwa at the Canadian Cultural Centre. This event of major cultural and historical significance was conceived by visionary artist, writer and curator Robert Houle.

The Paris/Ojibwa exhibit is an imposing suite of four simulated classic French wall panels against a floor of simulated marble. Each panel depicts a painted figure: a shaman, a warrior, a dancer and a healer. Facing toward the horizon of home, their Indigenous roots connect to the landscape in each painting. Beneath each panel is a depiction of the smallpox which took many of their lives, derived from paintings on an 18th century buffalo robe now in the collection of the Branly Museum in Paris. Even so, the figures in the painting remain standing, symbolic of a deeply-rooted resistance, resilience and will to survive. Across the top of the panels, the names of the 1845 Ojibwa are painted in gold. Adjacent to this structure is a video installation by French artist and animator Hervé Dagois, commissioned by Houle as a visual celebration of the healing and optimism of the contemporary Jingle Dance.

The vision of Houle and his fellow collaborators on the Paris/Ojibwa installation was to create art as medicine in the telling of a new history. By ‘re-imagining’ the feelings and experiences of a group of Ojibwa brought to Paris in 1845 as ‘exotically garbed’ entertainment, Houle has not only bridged present to past/past to present; he has deconstructed history in order to bring integrity, honour and healing from what he terms, “the ravenous gaze of pending disappearance.” As ceremonial lead-in to the formal opening of the exhibit and in homage to the Ojibwa of 1845, artist, curator and dancer Barry Ace performed a series of pow wow dances beginning at the Louvre, winding through the Tuileries Gardens, on to Cleopatra’s Needle, and down the Champs-Élysées with his final dance in front of the installation. Like the Ojibwa of 1845 he too endured the pain of dancing on concrete, cobble stone, pebbles and marble in moccasins designed for contact only with the earth.

It’s difficult to describe the myriad feelings of being part of such an unprecedented and almost surreal event except to say the whole experience was itself a sacred ceremony. Our journeys to Paris were monitored by Project Manager Paul Gardner through emails so that, even though traveling separately we felt a strong sense of collective purpose and anticipation. Although the weather report for the 13th called for rain it held off and the moody skies provided a dramatic backdrop to the vibrant colour of Barry’s regalia and the grace of his movements. Following him on his quest and bearing witness to each dance of homage I noted the reactions of people on the streets and in cars and buses passing by, just as must have happened in 1845. Houle’s Paris/Ojibwa installation itself inspires the same sense of wonder, awe and delight as must have been felt by Parisians in the presence of the Ojibwa and the Ojibwa in the presence of Paris.

One hundred and sixty-five years later Houle has shown us the power and magic of art to forge a healing connectivity across constraints of time, space and the socially constructed colonialist divisions that have wounded humanity. His courage and the scope of his vision are evidence that healing happens on many fronts; the circle is stronger than ever.

http://minwaashin.wordpress.com/2010/05/19/the-role-of-art-in-decolonization-and-healing-from-history/
The Role of the artists in the history

What is the role of the artist – the intellectual artist – in modern society? If the role of the artist is obviously and intrinsically tied to the role of art, then what is the role of art? In modern society? Or in any society?

Art reflects reality at the very least. Art is humanity’s attempts to recreate reality, to create reflections of reality – and imagination & creativity are part of reality – thus also reflections of imagination; but then what is ‘good’ art? How is it separate & distinct from ordinary or ‘bad’ art?

The role of the artist then is connected to the role of art, in whatever medium – oil on canvas, watercolor, charcoal, pencil, colored pens, other canvas work, photography, computer art, sculpture, performance art, theater, movies, TV, poetry, novels, literature, music, dance, …………… cave paintings, ……..

The artist creates the art – but not out of thin air – but within a societal context, supported and buffeted by the conditions of the time – the resources, the technology, the intelligence, the knowledge, the economic, political, social, cultural and religious/philosophical conditions of the moment of the creation of the art.

What is art? Is everything the artist creates art? Is there bad art and good art?

Why does art reflect reality? Is that all it does?

Art projects back to humanity knowledge and awareness of the reality – which in turn allows humanity to understand reality better – better than what? Better than it did before the art. The essence of good art then is that it does this in a qualitative different and higher level than bad art.

Within the context of the conditions of society at the moment of the creation of the art, the artist as a human then through the creation of his or her or their art creates something that if it is ‘good’ art is able to reflect the reality of the artist and the community and project back to that community communication about reality that allows the community to better understand that reality.

If the reality is not a good reality, then the art – the good art – is able to communicate more to the majority of the community than simply an awareness of the reality; it can project ways and avenues to change that reality. Or at least project back to the community of humanity that reality needs to be changed for the good of the community.

What is reality? Is this beyond the question before us? If art reflects reality and can be used to change that reality then we must know what reality is? Art reflects the human conditions of the time – if those conditions or part of them are inhumane, then art can be instrumental in changing those conditions for the better.

Human conditions include the material objective context that humanity finds itself living in, the environmental conditions, the economic, political, social, cultural conditions of the moment, what humanity knows, the knowledge of the time. Of course, humanity does not live in a moment alone; conditions are constantly changing. But there are sufficient time-place equilibriums to be able to say there are historical moments.

The Role of the Artist

The artist then creates the art – in whatever medium – at a
The Mona Lisa is excellent art because it has stood the test of time, that it projects the awareness of the history of humanity, how an ambiguous smile is able to remain so over hundreds of years, projecting back to us an awareness of the history of humanity, that a smile was a smile five hundred years ago. Not all good or great art has to project back to us how to create barricades and topple governments.

If art to be great, only has to remind us of our humanity and our history, then wouldn’t a lot of artifacts and daily instruments of former times amount to that?

The more the art projects back to humanity its conditions, the more humanity is able to understand its conditions. And if they need to be changed for the good of humanity, then good art can instruct.

The role of the artist when confronted with inhumane conditions of humanity is to create art that is instructive to humanity so the members of the community can change those conditions. The Mona Lisa does this – despite a label of solely being a portrait of a ruling class woman – because it does these other things – reminding us hundreds of years of the ambiguity of life.

Why is a movie like “JFK” by Oliver Stone good art?

It reflects a reality back to us – the assassination of a well-liked president – and an awareness of the forces that conspired to pull it off without repercussion. No one ever went to prison for the assassination. Oswald was dead. End of story. Those responsible for the assassination got away with it. The movie delves into the controversy and helps to educate the American people as to who killed their president.

The role of the artist is to create art that helps us to understand our humanity and the historical conditions we live in, and to help us understand that we need to change those conditions and helps us understand even how to change those conditions.

But what about all the different kinds and types of art? How can a simple sculpture, for example, help us to understand that we need to change our conditions?

One object of art need not do all of those things. If a sculpture helps us have a deeper understanding of our own humanity, and/or of our history, then it is good art.

The role of art is to remind us to reflect on our reality and history, and even to draw conclusions on whether our reality needs to be changed.
The Cow is Sacred

By Avtarjeet Dhanjal

The cow is sacred. If you are an ardent Hindu, you worship her; even use its picture as your political symbol. If you are an artist, paint her, everyone shall clap for you, hail you as a successful artist. This is how it is done in India.

In the village, my father used to tell a story of two friends, a Goldsmith and a Trader. In this story these two men lived in villages about twenty or so miles apart. The way story went: Goldsmith often visited the Trader; one day Goldsmith invited the Trader for a return visit.

On Trader’s first visit, Goldsmith’s wife prepared a special meal and served it on a large shiny plate made of solid gold. The Trader enjoyed the meal but liked the plate even more. A fleeting thought went through his mind, if he could steal it. The Goldsmith saw the greed in his friend’s eyes, and understood his desire.

When Trader had retired to his room, the Goldsmith devised an ingenious way to protect his plate from his guest. He hung a basket over his bed from the ceiling, placed the golden plate in the basket and carefully filled it with water. He knew any one tried to take the plate would spell the water, and he went to sleep.

The Trader waited until he was sure his host was asleep; he tiptoed into his bedroom, surveyed the changes; noticed Trader’s bag was more inflated than it came in. He carefully removed the plate, replaced it with a steal basket and carefully filled it with water. He knew any one tried to take the plate would spell the water, and he went to sleep.

Early morning, the Goldsmith woke up to find the basket over his bed empty; he immediately knew who could have taken the plate. Now it was his turn to tiptoed to his guest’s room, who was sleeping like a log by now. He surveyed the changes; noticed Trader’s bag was more inflated than it came in. He carefully removed the plate, replaced it with a steal plate and secured the gold plate in his kitchen.

Next morning, Trader looked at his bag, felt happy at his achievement; and wanted to leave for home as soon as possible. The host checked the gold plate was still in the kitchen and wanted to teach his friend a lesson. Goldsmith insisted that his guest must stay for breakfast; the host’s wish prevailed. The host made sure that his wife served the breakfast in the same gold plate to the guest.

Trader was absolutely surprised and could not believe his eyes, asked his friend, how many gold plates he had in the house? The Goldsmith calmly replied, “My friend, I have only one gold plate in this house.” They both looked at the each other and smiled a knowing smile. The Goldsmith said to his guest, “My friend, we know each other well over a decade; let’s not play this game with each other.” Both agreed to travel the world and try their skills on others.

This was the start of a long story, during their journey many times they become rich and then again tried to cheat each other, as a result they lose everything. At the end of the story, the Trader asked again, how may gold plates his friend had at home. The answer was only ONE.

Three boys, Gopal, Harjit and Gogi, were studying in a village school; Gopal, only son of a priest had big dreams. He wanted to make a lot of money without knowing how and he did not care either. Harjit, a quiet one, son of a simple farmer, also had dreams but kept them to himself. Gogi was the only son of poor widow, who worked hard helping a big landlord’s family; and she earned enough to raise her only son.

Gopal, grew up into a trouble maker, had to leave the village suddenly, when one day the police arrived to arrest him as he had tried to rape his neighbours’ daughter; and never heard again in the village for decades.

Harjit, also wanted to pursue his dreams and left village became a student of a portrait painter in the hills, and ended up going to an art school in Delhi. Harjit saw a stage was set for him to fulfil his dreams of becoming as artist.

He started to daydream how one day he would become an internationally known artist. But in his dream image he did not like his name Harjit, which reminded him of his village background, decided to change his name to ‘Gautam’, more suitable for an artist in the capital.

Poor Gogi had to stay in the village to help his mother. After several years working as a helper to a farmer, he managed to buy a cow. The cow happened to be of a good breed and daily gave him enough milk for his family consumption and to sell a part to earn enough money for simple living. His life was a smooth progression of getting married having children and buying couple of more cows.

Cows brought good luck to Gogi’s life, provided him and his family everything they needed for a simple life in the village.

Gopal, whose name means protector of cows, became a Trader. Gopal’s priest father who worshiped the cows chose this name for his son. Times changed so quickly that now his son exported cows to Bangladesh to be killed long he made money.
Gopal, after he had made good money came to Delhi where set up a property company and made lots of money. His son, who had joined him, set up a new Property Company. While his son worked in the Company’s Mumbai office, he met a film actress who played the role of goddesses in several Hindi movies and married her. Gopal took his son’s marriage to this demi-goddess as his personal success and made sure all her wishes were fulfilled including building a new mansion for her in Mumbai.

Harjit re-branded himself as Gautam had established as a successful painter in the capital. Cow was his choice subject in his paintings, those sold like hot cakes.

His full size painting of golden cow was sold for Rs.50 lacs (approx $100K), enough money to buy 200 best breed cows. But in this climate when only money counted, who wants to buy 200 living cows, it would need a lot of infrastructure to look after them and before one would see the money from their milk sales.

Delhi that had become part of the global market, Rs.50 lacs invested in one sculpture had the potential to doubling it in few years, without feeding the cow in this painting.

Who would have bought such a painting in India, of course a spoiled actress from Mumbai? The sale was celebrated in a five-star hotel, Gautam met the young husband of the demi-goddess, who introduced Gautam to an opportunity for him to invest in his new Property Company.

People in the city’s art circles talk about the success of Gautam’s recent exhibition. An art critic had written how Gautam’s work had created awareness toward the plight of cows in the city. One review even mentioned Gautam was creating cow awareness as effective as the dissected cow of Damian Hurst. But the stray cows on the streets of Delhi were still feeding on plastic bags. Who cares in this global city? Cows are sacred.

Last year came the global financial crisis, the property company in which Gautam had invested all his money collapsed; leaving scores of other investors in the cold as stray cows of the city.

Gogi was sitting in his courtyard, enjoying the afternoon cup of tea, thanking his cows, those provided him his livelihood without leaving the village. One day while he was thinking about his two other childhood friends, both his friends Harjit and Gopal arrived one after the other.

Both of them were looking at each other trying to recognise each other’s faces those were covered with layers of thick skin, a gift of city life.

Both had a look of someone when one who had lost the game of life. There was no need to say anything they both just laughed a hearty laugh.

Gogi was the only one knew how many brass plates he had in his house; other two had seen their gold plates disintegrate right in front of their eyes. My friends - cows are sacred and will remain sacred while noisy traffic of the city goes by them.
Congratulations on a magazine that has definitely improved radically over the last few months in quality and weight! I know that it might sound a bit stupid but it is a pretty heavy magazine. Otherwise I really enjoyed the special about Digital Art and I suppose in the future you will do more special themes like that.

And one suggestion: are you going to include cinema in your themes? I suppose cinema and video are included among the performing arts.

Sincerely yours

Ali M.
Warsaw

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Dear friends, thank you once more for taking the time to write and send us your mails and letters. We do appreciate them and we always read them carefully taking seriously your suggestions. We thank you for your prayers, they encourage and motivate us. So let's start with some answers. Mohammed, funding is a very serious issue not only for our magazine and for the entire artistic world and sadly we live in really difficult times; you just need to have a look at Greece to get the idea. We try our best and with a lot of volunteer work we hope we can manage something positive. Subscriptions are an answer but unfortunately not the solution but we are working that way.

Distribution is something we still work with, at the moment we have more distributing places in UK and, yes, in the future we will try to put some more information about the distributing places around Europe. I think this issue is the best example on how aware we are on social issues and how much they influence our work, having an issue about art and politics is having a totally social issue. Ali, "cinema" and especially video have been part of our presentations, for example in the last issue the work of Bilal included a lot of videos. But this is a good idea, a special only for cinema and we will consider it for the future.

Please remember that we need to add more art news from all Europe and this is something you can help us and become our correspondents in the places you live by informing us for local migrant artistic events.

Please don't stop sending us your comments we need them now more than ever.

Thank you

Thanos Kalamidas
Helsinki

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Social Issues

Congratulations for your last issue and the special on Digital Art, I enjoyed all the articles and I would like to see more society articles involved. As one of your writers writes in one of his articles, "Society inspires art." I think that should motivate you to add more social articles in your content.

B. J. Austria

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Do you have feedback for us? We welcome all of your opinions, thoughts, criticism, praise and suggestions. Send them to:

info@eu-man.org

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Funding ...again

In the last two issues in the feedback section you keep repeating the problem with the funding and I have the sense that you are asking money from the state, what about private donations? No I don’t like a magazine full of adverts but still some adverts can bring money.

Except that there are always other ways, such as subscriptions, perhaps a subscription campaign would help. Apart from that, promoting the work of immigrant artists is something missing from similar magazines around Europe and I sincerely wish you every success.

Mohammed K.
Holland

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Distribution

I wonder how many people can see your magazine and all the effort behind it. I saw the magazine for the first time in a friend's place and I was hooked from the first page.

I tried to find the next issue but I had to return to my friend for his copy since the places I checked didn't have it. Could you publish the distribution places?

Roger Stern
Stockholm

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Cinema

Congratulations on a magazine that has definitely improved radically over the last few months in quality and ... weight! I know that it might sound a bit stupid but ... it is a pretty heavy magazine. Otherwise I really enjoyed the special about Digital Art and I suppose in the future you will do more special themes like that.

And one suggestion: are you going to include cinema in your themes? I suppose cinema and video are included among the performing arts.

Thank you again, best wishes for the magazine

Sincerely yours

Ali M.
Warsaw
Grande Finale
African, Asian, Arabic, European and American dances and dances from the Pacific islands.
24 September at 7 p.m. Savoy Theatre, Kiasermintau 46, Helsinki.
Tickets 12/8 €. www.hppupuupuupuupiitl

Ourvision
goes dancing

Tanzanian Cultural Week
Art and craft cultural workshops for children, art exhibition including Tinga Tinga paintings and Makonde sculptures. Swahili language workshops. Traditional dance and music performances at the Festicity Hall. Week 16-18 September 2010.

Three generations of Ukrainian artists
Well-known Ukrainian artists Oleksander Savenko, Nina Savenko and Lesia Menzhevik-Savenko present their art at Cultural Centre Caisa’s Gallery. Exhibition is open from 3 August to 3 September. Caisa’s Art Gallery, Mikonkatu 17 C (Helsinki) is open Mon-Fri 9-18 hrs and Sat 11-18 hrs. Welcome!

Follow our events from Facebook, Caisa’s profile can be found with “Kansainvälinen kulttuurikeskus Caisa”

Caisa
The International Cultural Centre | Mikonkatu 17 C | www.caisa.ti