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Reconfiguring Think Tanks as a discursive, social model in contemporary art.

Residencies as places of continuity, mutuality, free thinking and independent research.

1. Ideologies, ideals, values and interest

Before defining the approaches they will employ to, to being about research based policy influence, think tanks need to ask themselves: 'what kind of organization are we?'¹

People have interests and worries about their private life, from the activities they need to engage in, to private relationships and ideals they want to strive for. There're also public interests that derive from living within a community, where one's own aspirations can be cultivated, where security and justice can be found.

Precisely because there're public interests that are values (according to which society must be articulated), there're also conflicts, differences of opinion, and because we have ideals pertaining to what we want our public life to be like that, there's politics. But problems in politics are not exclusively technical problems, or problems inherent to power per se.

Ideals have meaning because they can be found within the vaster context of humans' life, and must respond to the recondite movements/transformations that all individuals are privy to. Thus political ideas rapidly become ideologies whenever they're removed from this broader context.

Revolutionary Marxist movements² played out this very parable, channelling ferment and expectations that were extraneous to politics of the period into the public arena; but then they immunised these ideals from transformation and critique alike. Liberal democracies have shown a greater propensity to welcome change and pass this on for political deliberation. Nonetheless, will these same democracies be able to comply with the transformations of the meaning of individual lives? Or don't they also risk offering a set image of society to the detriment of the plurality of visions and models of living?

We often talk of shared ideals and interests, but ideals vary from person to person, while common interests are instead pertinent to a community, where all private lives are recognised, and in the name of which all ideals must be sacrificed. In this sense, politics, by attempting to conciliate all individual ideals, would limit personal liberties. But even a common interest might be an idea, albeit a commonly agreed upon ideal. There might be situations where a common interest (i.e. where people should respect specific rules even though don't necessarily agree with them) is a shared ideal. Vice versa, there might be conflict between ideals and interests: one of the reasons why it's necessary, even within diversity of opinion and evaluation, that a few behavioural norms should be respected so as to make sure that dissent doesn't degenerate into conflict.

One of modern democracy greatest conquests is that once conflict has been registered, there's an attempt to convert it into competition (articulation of opinions) that is into dissent, while respecting specific rules of the game. Hence derives a situation in which the multiplicity of ideals corresponds to the common interest of free expression of ideals themselves.

Much is being said about the eclipsing of ideologies. Thus where can the term "ideology" be collocated historically?

French philosopher Destutt de Tracy coined the term at the close of the 18th century to indicate the science of the formation of ideas, to which concept the late-Enlightenment philosophers known as *Idéologues* referred. The 19th century, apart from being the century of ideologies par excellence, saw the emergence of theories on the demise of ideologies. The "social positivism" of

Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte addressed the theoretical issue of the end of ideology by positing the primacy of scientific “laws”. Naturally, the theory of the end of ideology can in itself also become an ideology, more precisely the reason for the end of ideologies, or rather the ideology that justifies and legitimates a technocratic type of power³.

Attaining some form of power leads to an attitude according to which we’re no longer interested in ideals as they were originally thought. We’re living in a society predominantly permeated by a consumerist attitude, where economics logic implies the decline of certain types of values. Nonetheless, ideals don’t correspond to ideologies.

20th century most successful ideologies were based on the assumption that it was possible to radically alter the world, within and through history. Once ideologies had died, the ideal, mostly regarding the absolute “form” in which an intellectual or moral instance is presented, is also able to subsist in our time. This might even be a positive point. Ideals surely have greater value than any ideology. Ideologies could easily end up being an artificial, contrived covering forcibly placed over reality to radically transform it beyond the needs of transformation, while waiting for a captious model of “new society”.

Several 20th century great political forces have operated on ideological assumptions, where “ideology” implied the notion of “radically changing” the world, often not “comprehending” it, where “changing” often corresponds to hypothesis of forced will aiming to unhinge a specific reality. Here the purpose would be to construct a completely new building, which, among other things, imposes the global alienation of society and the systematic violence exerted and unleashed by power over its own citizens, transforming so-called “ideologies” into systems of ideas whose aims were “totalitarianism” itself.

That hierarchy of values on which a civilized and advanced society should be based, should always be respected, and yet constantly re-discussed.

2. Applied, empirical and synthesis research

To retrace history from an objective point of view may offer possibilities to understand better the complexity of our time: i.e. recovering the concepts of “place” and “continuity” throughout historical revision can produce synergetic development and a straightening in whatever the artistic expression.

Ideologists subdued by the concept of “progress” have partly increased a sense of “uncomfortable” in the human condition, also contributing to destabilized artist’s role in contemporary society, and within reality.

In our modern times, people constantly conditioned to achieve accumulation, not only for economic wellness, but as a way to affirm their own identity, have started to neglect/lose a certain sense of profound aesthetic pleasure, by being pushed to find their own legitimacy exteriorly, due to a capitalistic system solidly founded on deprivation: a necessary assumption needed for system’s sake.

Perhaps too artificially, contemporary art begun to abuse metaphors even if ripe with evocative values, searching for new suitable symbol to portray its time. But symbols can’t be configured as autonomous objects⁴. The overwhelming sedimentation of signs, words, objects, its addition to something totally contrary to what it really is and being less, is dramatically due to the fact that art has become a fictitious surrogate, an analogical simulation of imitation, distressed by trying to give form to ideas at any cost, stitching improbable thoughts to forms, which inevitably end grinded in a Beckettian cylinder mincer⁵. How it’s possible to communicate a sense (or meaning), without having previously understood and singled out its content?

Within this progressive exhalation of the artifice, concepts are deprived from their substantial

dynamics, producing affected effects, rather than necessary debates and participation, soliciting an effort of acknowledgment: the exact contrary to the deceitful appearance of its supposed "truths". What should evolve devolves: creative management faces tangible difficulties on addressing funding for medium/long term projects; and on which scale/basis new methods of investigation and independent researches should be considered. How to view a contemporary art research/work in all its conveyed meanings, recognizing in it qualities such as continuity and openness, if today art seems increasingly subjected to its market unpredictable moods, risking to be disqualified to the range of one of the many ordinary accessorial commodities?

The congestion of signs and images that characterizes contemporary society and culture have provoked a progressive impoverishment of messages' inner meanings, to evoke other possible/imaginary worlds now ends to be a form of mystification: messages become mnemonic stipulations, weakly reactive, merely graphic or decorative. Hence, how is it possible to newly configure the faculty of interpretative freedom with the creative participation, to establish concrete dialogue between the individual and the institution to implement new methods of research, and reconfigure a discursive, social model in contemporary art?

To outline new ways of investigation focusing on the importance of history's space-temporal context has always been vital. Conflicts and contradictions arise also when the chance of realizing "possible utopias" is reduced to a mere pretext, which put humans in front their actual ordinary condition, though superficially covered by the fabricated veil of fiction. Enticed in this factious process art mystifies reality and betrays itself, entangling authors and public inside cultural habitats continuously mutable and discordant, often empty.

Why? We can't neglect that today human behaviours are induced, and needs artificial. This is today's mankind historical condition, which influences the new mechanism of its cultural production. Inside this reality, human potentialities are reduced, and values are often dictated by individualistic, particular deformities of taste and unrefined uniformity of fashions. It's a reality that our comprehension has difficulties of holding onto, often indecipherable, and where "to become" seems sliding into the realm of a mere "having".

To seek for transformation, active integration of languages capable of symptomatically and semantically re-conducting mankind toward the present experience of "today", is an actual urgency. For instance, if the artificial needs of contemporary man cause artists to be more open and reflect on how serious the problem of the "artifice" is (as one of the several topics *du jour*), art could surely speak of tomorrow, offering possible but notable answers to many questions. But to do so, today artists require the necessity of vibrant places, which can offer them at least splinters of free space, time and support, to think freely, confronting, and pursue their investigation.

3. On the ethical and social role of art

Many consider contemporary art as synonym of a market that establishes and rewards those ones committed to efficient organizations, prepared to invest money to promote/publicize specific productions, whichever they may be, often uncaring of the content qualities that they have; a "job" deprived by the capacity of communicating to mankind; a mere business between dealers and collectors. It must be seriously considered that the majority of people, when they approach contemporary art, feel like to be gulped by a bubble where contents and meanings are hard to be deciphered; where already known images are repeated and re-elaborated; where copies increase, means of mechanical reproduction are often over spoiled, and results just merely conventional. One common sensation is that anything becomes immediately obsolete, forgettable, in the name of an apparent newness subdued to art market requirements, paradoxically because if the intellectual vision that structured 20th century art by stating that "everything can be art and

everybody can be an artist”⁶, also allowed the contrary: that art could be an “objective nothing”⁷. Today, art faces difficulties to carry out collective ideals as they’re progressively disappearing from contemporary consumerist culture. In such a reality, artists seem “producing” mainly for themselves, trying to affirm personal ideals that may change day-by-day, assuming also different identities to survive at any cost. By doing so, instead of really turning to society, art runs the risk to be useful only for those who make it when it succeeds, losing sense for sacredness and civil values, assuming features more and more individualistic and decorative, though giving evidence that “people continue not to ask what they really should”⁸.

The conciliation, the unitary ideals of synthesis of cultures that too many times the speeches about art like to propose without really knowing “how”, are now replaced by absurd differentiations of genres and splitting of specializations to mystify an overwhelming deliberate plundering. To affirm the existence of an “international-plural-multicultural art” is not anymore sufficient to set expensive itinerant exhibitions around the world, or propagandize books, movies, records with hammering advertising campaigns: it’s just the inner message that can involve people, more or less directly.

Do people just want artworks nailed on some collector’s walls or stocked in some dusty museum storage; yellowed, mouldy books stockpiled in libraries or fated to maceration; scratched CDs and DVDs?

The fact that the ideal, as entity in itself, is declining is something that needs to be faced profoundly. The ideal has arrived to annihilate itself while trying to affirm itself. Consequently the concepts of “useless and futility” of the arts arouse because everything can assume an artistic value, independent and intrinsic, but without any criterion. Everything can become an artistic expression complete and accomplished in itself: any kind of motifs (conceptual, symbolic); things, objects; rhetorical imitations (conventional, artificial). In such a situation, it’s hard to talk honestly about “development of the arts”, when annihilated for a wild speculation of genres and values. But art cannot, above all, balk at this task, even though it is now abandoned and reserve-less in the process of disillusionment from which the concept of the “poetic” arose in our century: an art that gives no illusion or that is only reasonable, is like a reasonable beast, there is simply no such thing⁹.

Although de-centred within a void, within flatness and the uniform nature of existential chaos, ensnared within the demagogic viscosity of a phantom creative belief system, artist’s desire will always be “to retrieve and experiment”, even exasperating formal expression to seek for new possibilities, might be also totally devoid of naturalness and dilated to such an extent to become a murky whirlpool where only fiction and simulation survive in any definite form. Form collapses, and along with it the contents, but by being aware that the formal characteristics of the work only rarely coincide with, or clearly express, contents in their entirety, artists and researchers are allowed to continue to fail, as by now they are fully authentic, and more, being eclectic, they could evoke other possible worlds, providing that history can’t be at someone’s complete disposal without having first run through its spatial-temporal context; accepting de-centrality in reference to reality; manipulating own and others’ image, as hoaxers who loves to continually represent the Self within different scenarios, as chameleons who has lost all traces of behavioural innocence, even though fully intend not to forego an attempt to retrieve an improbable and indefinable naturalness of action and production: in a sentence, standard-bearers of a constant contradiction. This is a behavioural trait that is obviously induced and dictated by artificial needs. But this is the historical condition of today artists; this is their new nature, and these are the mechanisms of today cultural production. Not to accept this given would imply the onset of incalculable risks, not the least of which is that of offering the current territories of society’s imaginary constructs, and therefore art, an other, a different territory. Perhaps this territory might appear to be purer, more

just, but it's imaginary none the less. In art, which in any case has to remain faithful to its time if it is to maintain any sense, past meanings must be made to resound, as the qualities of any artwork are determined by singular choices.

Man stands on the verge of the first decade of 21st century as an extremely hyper-individualistic being, exasperated and continually wrong-footed by reality by his/her own and others' misleading, artificial appearance. The problem of artifice is a serious and complex one. It offers vast opportunity for replies, reactions, and possibilities of saving the naturalness of being/producing. A means of guaranteeing the survival of human quality is to lead artifice to its extreme consequences, perpetrating a continuous dynamism with both constructive and deconstructive characteristics.

What actually might now appear to be artistic phenomenology tied to, or derived from a certain avant-garde, is so thoroughly held under check and domesticated by imperialist logic that it's quite natural to wonder if it isn't time to look for a new, complete series of models (both regulatory and in terms of resistance) able to counterbalance the totalitarian phenomenon of globalisation, towards which con-temporality is irreversibly moving. Standardisation has absorbed and made impotent all those cultures that once represented moments of rupture, opposition, and counter-trends. Moments of quality could be used again to discuss, arrange, evaluate already existing precepts, and inspire profound reforms in man's ethical evolution. The affirmation of a new collective consciousness now seems light years away, while the last spark of a decrepit idealism that engendered the idea of autonomy has already been consigned to history books. In a certain sense, 1968 was the last cultural expression from beyond the pre-existing system, even though it carried within itself, from its very birth, the seeds of its own failure. Shortly afterwards an apparently crystalline world was supposed to appear, the role of which was merely to respond (and blindly accept) numeric imperatives and sinister formal manipulations; a world that was to be solely built on the concept of economic control, so strong to impose rules derived from the most arid and sterile economic logic on people, while able to burst brutally into individual consciences, right up to the present. What should be richness consubstantial with the human spirit has given over to ever more synthetic, artificial criteria. Capitalist system's abstract, deceptive proclamations have almost entirely infected the spirit of our age. False values codified by a media-dependent system have found their *raison d'être* in the ability to justify wars, environmental disasters and intolerable repression of those opposition movements who, courageously, are continuing a search for an affirmation of identity.

The annihilation of the capability to autonomously evaluate events is due to the inertia and cultural conformity in which each individual conscience is ensnared. The unscrupulous use of the means of communication by so-called democracies has led to ever more widespread standardisation and uniformity, forcing the masses to interpret the role of subordinate extras. Individuals are ever more steered and coerced by those who control the media. Precepts expressed by the media system are converted into norms, insidiously defining themselves as ordinary statutes able to manipulate situations where they're then accepted as real.

Then, telecracy has made public opinion less prone to react by replacing democracy in its formal aspects. The completely passive attitude we assume when watching television is the exact opposite of what it means to observe reality with a critical eye, to experience events feel responsible, and react to what is happening¹⁰. The currently dominant, prevaricating social form is everything that belongs to the concept of "capital", which metaphorically could be defined as a sort of "enroller" able to transform individuals into vectors of desire: in that it acts on factors that are linked to the concept of privation and, by organising individuals as vectors of desire, they are subjugated at will. In fact, what were once considered determining social forms (territory, group) have "morphologically" been transformed, submitted to the concept of capital, the arch enroller

able to apply totalitarian surveillance schemes and control all signs of potential change.

Also in light of recent tragic events, it's obvious that those aspects bandied about as success stories of modern technocratic society are also leading to confusion; they're beginning to show themselves to be failures. What we normally define as "competitive attitudes tied to the concept of maximum profit", must in some way be transformed into values of growth, power and domination, as they are intended nowadays, and are no longer sustainable. If we were to think of the freedom that is implicit in all artistic creation, not only as a vehicle and possible escape route, but as an element necessary to uncovering and changing the socio-cultural characteristics of the world we live in, then what should contemporary artistic production be like in order to be able to respond to requests for cultural renewal and change? What new paradigms should contemporary artists assume if they want to contribute to evicting what has become the materialistic yoke able to make life itself unnatural, reducing it to a useless game that entraps the reawakening of its own spirit?

Perhaps rethinking and discussing again ourselves as individuals who can determine their own existence through the ethics of doing, might be a first step towards that much desired path that could possibly save mankind from the frenzy insanity of the current era. From these perspectives residencies have a high value, by guaranteeing and enlightening that what counts the most is the actual creative/artistic process of making, and not just the final result to be merely fruited. They can become more and more the perfect common ground where artists gathered to confront and develop topics they concern, being somehow assisted, "protected".

Why? Let's take this as an example.

There're doubtless fears of various types associated with going beyond certain taboos when we're dealing with themes such as spirituality/religion. One is the fear of losing control. And yet it's only when you abandon your self-control that you arrive at new forms of vision. In fact, when fear of the unknown makes room for confidence, then change and innovation are possible.

In an era such as our own, where we're constantly faced with infinite transitions, we're often tempted to wonder if it isn't possible to codify the different phenomenology of contemporary art in a sort of cinematic ritual that would make it comprehensible in its totality, in its unitary globalization.

If we start with the assumption that all art (and not only) is matter, then it's only natural to reflect on whether it's right to bring matter back to a level that transmits pure energy. This consideration derives from the fact that, alongside the external world, there's also an interior world. As there are always two sides to every coin, we would therefore have found the right, but certain, balance. And individuals, dealing with art, have, as it were, the possibility to re-design their own role, along with their limits. The meaning of all this lies in the fact that metaphorically, art reveals itself as a travel companion able to accompany us towards new dimensions of life, asking questions about which and how many resources we're harbouring, about what we're able to mobilise to reach new horizons. If we want to undertake this journey, again we need bridges, common places-places for community, as to think Art-to make Art to lead us back to a situation in any case consubstantial with man, in which thought begins once again to logically restructure new grammar and language. New in the sense of re-found.

All contemporary art is a reflection of the philosophical idea of a transversal, complex cultural era. It attempts to represent the interior world of man. It simulates the feelings, sensations, emotions that s/he would be experiencing if s/he were faced with his/her own thoughts and wanted to completely traverse these thoughts. This is why it seems ever more willing to provide innovative spatial dimensions, new temporal dynamics. For this, the need to re-tool residencies is also due to the need of settling new "laboratories" to think/produce ideas.

New "art laboratories" might also reinforce the concept that a work of art is thus the end result of

a specific process – possessing specific forms and aesthetic, and that it serves no purpose except that of channelling a very specific form of energy. It's always a sort of communicative performance. It allows man to plumb his/her own conscience and to void it, as it's only within empty spaces that energy can unleash its creative force. Consequently, by asking how to develop this energy in the face of the world complexity, questioning the need for free mental space, individuals are experiencing a journey where reality and virtual go hand in hand: two dimensions which are no longer disjoined, in that the virtual is nothing other than an "as-if" reality.

Nowadays the contents aspect of any work of art lies in the presupposition that artists are in fact able to explain the most concealed of man's movements and desires. Once this clarity has been acquired, artists can purposefully use their talent, shaping new form-and-images for values to speak of form once again through a continuous process, constantly scouting what is really important in life, by following an extremely progressive path. When art is put forward as the locus of communication, then it is also the locus of self-reflection. In that everything is related to everything and everyone. Therefore residencies are also laboratories to favour/implement reflection.

Again, why this?

Each artist or, better, each individual ought to be free to express ideas, according to the constitutions of democratic countries, but these constitutions do not specify how this right can be guaranteed to the weaker categories, who have no direct links with the powerful or who are not economically independent. Who knows, perhaps people think that only individuals who are able to say something have the right to say it, or that fate will set everything right in the end. In truth, this is the reality: we are told that we have rights and we take this for granted, but these rights are not guaranteed in any way. Often democracy is also applied as a perverse form of government: the supremacy of a dominant majority over an oppressed minority or minorities. What's more, political subjects now seem to come to life or consolidate their position exclusively in order to see to petty economic interests. Cultural positions seem to end up being included only as side-dishes to be brandished as a secondary, fragile apparatus of faded references, reduced to clichés during the spectacular, and by no means essential political skirmishes between factions representing purely economic interests that reduce the dignity of individuals to their mere social cost, their more or less marked autonomous ability to meet their own existential needs.

Art, seen as an elevation of conscience by researchers and the creative act of the individual, to the collective of organised society is a craft that must be, for its acceptance, highly civilised; that is, a permanence within individuals of an intricate network of values and of values attributed to things. And unfortunately it doesn't seem that today's society is moving towards those conditions that enable the dissemination of these values or that society has assumed the tenets of humanising its subjects.

The urgency of analysing the mutations of the spirit of individuals, who belong to a specific social context, or to the same population, is prior. How to protect the profoundly ethical reasons informing the existence and production within history of new researches/works of art, not by referring to a discriminatory and unfounded criterion which is assumed by a mercenary logic, the only universally and imperiously overarching logic in today's economic systems? How should we answer these questions? How should really guarantee, for art and for artists, better conditions and prospects for their very existence and life?

The fact is that such enormous issues investing the conscience of our collective society must be dealt with on a large scale. The attempt to develop cultural projects of serious renewal end up conflicting with an infinite series of problems, not the least of which is general apathy. Apart from a subjection to and an ensuing cooptation with the dominant cultural elites, there seem to be very few options available.

Some might ask, at this point, whether it's worth continuing with cultural operations, whether producing art and bringing together survivors of artistic creation has any meaning. The answer is yes, because apart from the see-sawing sense of frustration and defeat that often results from accepting such an onerous task for which we feel destined, legitimating a role that someone has chosen as a sincere calling will always be an onerous task, essential and necessary. This because the germs of cultural renewal will always have a reason to exist only within and through the communal, constant efforts of those we call enlightened spirits. In this sense, residencies undoubtedly represent opportunity.

4. Defiling and contaminating beyond market rules.

In the post-modern world, *Homo Oeconomicus*¹¹ has taken the place of the *Homo Faber* and begun to measure any-thing = product, based on purely economic factors and variables. Although flexible, these parameters are in fact the sole tools used to express value, and what can't be validated economically is unanimously labelled as "having no value", i.e., not identifiable as a valid "product".

On the other hand, the capability to transform, modify, "to wove and unravel" like Penelope, to unmake-remake even though stemming from the constant survival tension (therefore undergoing a continuous metamorphosis due to permanent stimulation), and the inspiration, tributary to human talent and to the solutions that one has to find and shape time after time, is what animate the research of vitality of contemporary cooperativeness, and the spirit of *Homo Reciprocans*¹².

Taking them into account, it's possible to analyse to what extent the dynamics of human actions have become more and more aggressive. Within the realm of strategy of competitive markets, aggressiveness is not just a primary element, but rather the basic, unavoidable feature and absolutely recognizable expression.

Social systems constantly develop media-strategies to broadcast effectively images of themselves, reiterating/celebrating endlessly this very concept: what doesn't have any economic value is not a product; and to transform products into something popular (craved to be purchased), market strategies adopt increasingly sophisticated means of communication to seduce and reduce customers' decisional freedom through a subtle, if not subliminal manipulation, shaping values and expectations to the advantages of the market only.

This trend allows only one choice for the modern man, namely to enter a sort of *cul de sac* where the process of depression seems to be by now irreversible. Contemporary economy is so sickeningly unbalanced that it has no other remedy to hold it together in its own precariousness; this generates a widespread climax of fears and tensions that are not instrumental to figuring out what it would be – or better, what it is – that something which allows economy and production to exist. The product, or the final result of the production process, is determined by a different set of values, which determine its importance. As it must affect and weigh on the consumers' choices, it prevaricates ineluctably the necessary ethic values of all those actions meant to aim and determine its state of being, depriving the customers from the understanding of the real sense of necessity.

In order to make modern society prosperous, the role of the product can't overcome completely the inherent positive aspect of the set of the rules employed to make it, even if we base our analysis on a hypothetical scale of values. It's always the quality of the action that confers upon to the product new possibilities of renovation, versus its mere reification.

When people join together to conceive projects, the quality of their actions in this sense is, and will always be, the priority element that allows any system or civilization - and life itself - to improve and prosper.

Again, the role of artist-in-residencies is crucial in this sense, as probably the answer to this issue stems from the capability (or given possibility) to transfer the attention from the product – as static – to the production, which is the creative, active part. The production process is intended as a multiplicity of actions that a group of people adopt and destine from a start to an end, between form and content, animated by a desire of pure awareness and self-conscious approach towards the methods of producing, something absolutely indispensable to the group. Innovation, sustained development, renewable sources, responsible implementing and accurate utilization of the public as well as the private financial resources will be really possible only through a far-sighted, sane, clean way of planning useful to the producer – of course – but also, to the same extent, to the consumer, as they are both “participant” of a same thing.

A new way to cooperate to finalize innovative methods of planning artist-in-residencies (their task and mission) can derive from what today is called “international presentation” and the opportunities that it can offer. Conferences, conventions, events - supported by institutional organisms capable to involve accurately people of clear fame that operate in culture and art in general – offer producers and financial operators the chance to give birth to synergic, strategic processes between those different characters (actors) and the territory where they operate. The main goal is to address different efforts and resources towards a more complex common activity, in order to develop already existing actions and future projects not necessarily finalized and destined to a “product *tout court*”, but instead to those products that are not consequentially circumstantial to the single event, but rather to a more wide-open vision, necessary to consolidate a philosophy of enduring development for the environment and the territory. This is something that is highly civilized and socially beneficial at the same time.

The overcoming of the actual stagnating situation can be identified in that self-conscious, intuitive, constructive planning, where feelings and intelligence merge to further mutual goals. It is what the ancient Greek philosophy called by the word *poiesis*: the art of doing, the creative process of making things. Actually, whatever it will be the project that someone is going to start, face, make, it is always how good and serious will be his/her approach and, how ethically honest are his/her intentions: that is the real value. Whatever we can do, it will always have to arrive to the point where it comes across as completed, but never definitive or closed. It must be somehow comprehensible – not damaging – and always open to modification and flexible, in order to gain new added values.

Nevertheless, to fully understand the reach of this precept, we must re-conciliate with the universal value culture has; a value that has been lately already destroyed, crumbled away by a dull set of senseless rules, fragmented in the ghetto of useless roles, while it ought to be entirely rooted into the contemporary dynamics of the productive processes.

The aspirations of mankind can be positively alimented in this way, by feeding and nourishing the spirit of all of us as contemporary human beings, artists that live in this planet and move across it. Whether they want it or not, artists always express their spirit by their emotions, thoughts, feelings and matters, and more, by living the world. All artists bear this knowledge within, more or less aware of it. It is part of the artist’s condition; something ingrained in the artist’s state of being. Artists investigate how to bring to light something that it is hidden to the normal sight, something that the eye – as pure physic sensor – can’t see. In few words, artists always try – or look for – a way to see differently things and reality, in a more concentrate way, as well as inside the things, for the sake of reality, where here place of production and work destination are equally important.

To raise the question about what the public can understand, digest, appreciate and feel the most - therefore capable of leading the single beneficiary to a more profound reflection, it is undoubtedly a post-modernist action, maybe even a bit spoilt if not vicious. Nevertheless, many artists

themselves – everyone with their own peculiar language and way of expression – are capable to face individually these kinds of problematic and subjects, talking of their worries, allowing their works to exist as results of these thoughts, although in many different ways.

Residencies may provide a lot in this sense: they can offer to artists dimensional space/time situations to consider and choose which direction to take, how to implement the research, re-discussing methods, and, in a sentence: *how to trans-form*.

The complexity of contemporary art leads also to consider a fundamental, determining factor that it seemed to be more and more unavoidable: the specificity given by a *vision d'ensemble* (analytic and punctual) that allows one - or more artists - to relate the work to a particular space and a particular situation.

For this, artist-in-residencies are “an opportunity”. They could function as factories, addressing that what is vital is to contextualize to stimulate, to diffuse to contaminate, this in order to make art not just the most comprehensible to beneficiaries inside a specific framework, but also by trying to provide evidence, to differ, empowering world visions, opening to new territories of investigation, clarifying aims, and where the intimate processes of art making emerge because of the fusion of the *pars construens* with collective intervention.

To look for mutuality, for a symbiotic relation – with a precise feedback, not necessarily only economic – also between artist-in-residencies and enterprises (private, public), it is undoubtedly a way to perceive and follow. In the same moment that art enters and belongs to such a context, it obviously contaminates while being contaminated as well, it dismembers and recomposes itself in a continuous process without losing its own identity.

Today, the deficiency that many *sui generis* operations (projects) have, is based on the idea of finding a unity at any costs, therefore neglecting possible openings to new, unknown developments, as the one of being able to perceive a possible sense of things that it can also be beauty beyond aesthetics, and value beyond ethic itself.

Notes

1. “First, think tanks may work in or based their funding on one or more ways, including: a) Independent research: this would be work done with core or flexible funding that allows the researchers the liberty to choose their research questions and method. It may be long term and could focus on ‘big ideas’ with no direct policy relevance. On the other hand, it could focus on a key policy problem that requires a thorough research and action investment; b) Consultancy: this would be work done through commissions with specific clients and addressing one or two key questions. Consultancies often respond to an existing agenda; c) Influencing/advocacy: this would be work done through communications, capacity development, networking, campaigns, lobbying, etc. It is likely to be based on research based evidence emerging from independent research or consultancies.

Second, think tanks may base their work or arguments on: a) Ideology, values or interests; b) Applied, empirical or synthesis research; c) Theoretical or academic research.” Retrieved from: <http://onthinktanks.org/2010/10/03/on-the-business-model/>, 5-12-2011.

2. Callinicos, Alexander Theodore, *Marxism and Philosophy* (Oxford Paperbacks), Oxford: Clarendon, 1983; Callinicos, Alexander Theodore, *The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx*, London: Bookmarks, 1983.

3. Ref. Emmet, Kennedy, ‘Ideology’ from *Destutt de Tracy to Marx*, New York: Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 40, N. 3, pp. 353-368, 1979.

4. Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacres et Simulation*. Collection Débats. Galilée. 1981.

5. Beckett, Samuel, *Le dépeupleur*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1970.

6. In 1973 Joseph Beuys wrote:

"Only on condition of a radical widening of definitions will it be possible for art and activities related to art [to] provide evidence that art is now the only evolutionary-revolutionary power. Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline: to dismantle in order to build 'A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART'... EVERY HUMAN BEING IS AN ARTIST who – from his state of freedom – the position of freedom that he experiences at first-hand – learns to determine the other positions of the TOTAL ART WORK OF THE FUTURE SOCIAL ORDER."

Joseph Beuys statement dated 1973, first published in English in Tisdall, Caroline, *Art into Society, Society into Art*, ICA, London, 1974, p.48. Capitals in original.

7. Severino, Emanuele, *Il nulla e la poesia*. Milano, Rizzoli, 1990; Severino, Emanuele, *La filosofia futura*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1989.

8. Engels, Friedrich, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*; Source: *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, Volume 3, p. 95-151, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970.

9. Original quote: *Una poesia ragionevole è lo stesso che dire una bestia ragionevole.*

Leopardi, Giacomo, *Zibaldone*, 1817/32; Source Besomi, Ottavio, *Giacomo Leopardi: discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica*, 22/23, p.105, Casagrande, Bellinzona, 1988.

10. Ref. Steigler, Bernard, *Telecracy Against Democracy*, Cultural Politics: an International Journal, pp. 171-180, Vol. 6, N.2, Oxford: Berg Publisher, 2010.

11. Mill John Stuart in his *On the Definition of Political Economy, and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It*, London and Westminster Review, October 1836. *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, 2nd ed. London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1874, essay 5, paragraphs 38 and 48, was the first to consider this issue. Today many economists use these terms when deriving, explaining and verifying their theories and models. The basis for a majority of economic models is the assumption that all human beings are rational and will always attempt to maximize their utility - whether it is from monetary or non-monetary gains. Homo Oeconomicus, or Economic Human, is the concept in some economic theories of humans as rational and narrowly self-interested actors who have the ability to make judgments toward their subjectively defined ends. This theory stands in contrast to the concept of Homo Reciprocans, which states that human beings are primarily motivated by the desire to be cooperative, and improve their environment. In the last decades these concepts started to be applied also in philosophy, political science, and sociology.

For a thorough investigation see also:

<http://econpapers.repec.org/article/homhomoec/default1.htm>, about *Homo Oeconomicus*, a German quarterly journal born in 1995 and fully internationalized with articles being exclusively in English in 1998.

<http://ideas.repec.org/s/hom/homoec.html>, (of the Institute of Socioeconomics of Hamburg). See also: <http://www.homoeconomicus.org/>.

12. Dohmen, Thomas; Falk, Armin; Huffman, David; Sunde, Uwe, *Homo Reciprocans: Survey Evidence on Prevalence, Behavior and Success*, IZA Bonn and University of Bonn, Discussion Paper No. 2205, July 2006. Retrieved from <http://ftp.iza.org/dp2205.pdf>, 3-4-2007.