

MAKE EVERYTHING NICE



I have been invited by <rotor> association for contemporary art to comment, as an artist, on Art Reclaims Foreign Affairs.

This issue is more than alarming and deserves attention, however, I find it difficult to answer this request as an artist, as I no longer see myself as an artist anymore. It is not that I discard the role of art and the artist per se, as this is something that I have loved dearly since I was a child, and have been artistically trained since I was 14. However, there is an issue: What would the contemporary art world (or market driven art world) accept as being artistic activity? This type of narrow-mindedness shapes the artists' production today and excludes the possibility of a deeper engagement by the artist.

As I do not find myself comfortable in this current situation in the art world, I would be happy to answer <rotor>'s call, as a cultural worker. Recently in the UK, the widely used phrase 'Art and Education' is changing its wording to become 'Culture and Education', which clearly describes that art has a wider scope and that the artist is being invited to be active in a more general context rather than only within the art sector.

This seemingly positive example of the appropriation of cultural policies could be seen from two points of view: firstly, from that of the policy makers and secondly, from the artists' (or the cultural makers'/workers') point of view. In the eyes of the first, it is important to 'give a more accurate description to the contemporary cultural/art activity, with the aim not to offend or exclude anyone'. This is in line with the absurdity of the policy to include the sexual orientation of applicants for grants, etc (simply in order to avoid the risk of someone feeling 'excluded'). From the point of view of the artist or cultural worker - this may lead them to believe, naively, that something is moving toward a better understanding within society...

By engaging with this discrepancy of interests and goals, I am drawn into think-

ing about how, in our case, the 'title' of this discrepancy is being represented. I have started reading in-between the lines of this new legislation: '*... At a strategic level, culture is seen as a vital element of the Union's...*' It all sounds so good, almost too good to be true. But reading further: '*... Union's role of culture in a globalising world...*' - and my dream world based on culture as a core methodology for development of the policies has flattened out.

If we look at the 'product' of European policy making translated into one of the most important fields - the economy - the results are pretty 'globalised', or in other words, 'generalised'. The Euro banknotes, the design of which is apparently intended to conceal the identity of individual European countries, points out the horrifying position in which Europe finds itself. What I read from the Euro banknotes is a land with no identity, no heritage, a land that prioritises 'architectural details' and bad taste. How could this political gesture win the trust of the cultural workers and convince them that policy makers are 'really' interested in seeing culture '*... as a vital element of the Union's external relations...*'

Is it not clear to policy makers that any action is a political one that no 'polite' gestures could possibly protect someone from being excluded. Do they not see that their decision with the design for the Euro banknotes was based on negative thinking, on the assumption that someone would be offended if, let's say, the Eiffel tower would be represented on one of the banknotes? Doesn't this attempt at 'concealment' of historical heritage reveal a more defined political gesture?

For me this action is far beyond the EU's external representation. What would aliens visiting our earth in year 4360, say about a land with such a banknote? ...

I would stop now, by returning to the beginning of my text - I find it personally necessary to redefine myself as an artist

because of the outcomes/results that the market driven contemporary art is producing. Because of this, I would not be able to trust policy makers whose product is the design of the Euro banknote - some internal restructuring is needed. But let's be productive, as the intention here is to try to help the methods of defining the Union's external relations. I would like policy makers to deal with cultural activity, instead of expecting cultural workers to simply 'serve them' their models and thoughts 'on a platter' - as we are doing at the moment.

But, let's find ourselves of use; I could help with the redesign of the Euro banknotes, for example. Here I am suggesting using the Brandenburg Gate as a symbol of one of the biggest political events of the 20th century. Please erase that tasteful work of modern architecture on your 500 Euro banknotes....