Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Doctoral School

Constitutive Art

Dialog on Creativity and Reflexivity in Art

DLA Theses

Szacsva y Pál

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Supervisor:

Dr.habil, DLA János Sugár

associate professor at HUFA

The purpose of my dissertation is to position art among the other intellectual fields in a time when artists are required to provide a scientific legitimation of their artistic activities and their artworks.[1]

The most appropriate way of approaching this problematics revealed to be the simple gesture of integrating both attitudes — the artistic and the scientific one — into my own „individual" subject. It has turned out that someone is able to act as two or more individual subjects through an intellectual or artistic game.

However, the inclusion of different „fundamental attitudes" into a counsciousness implying one single subject proved to be problematic, because it threatened with the total (ethical, psychologic etc.) collapse of the self. In this respect the most important outcome of my docotoral dissertation is the conclusion according to which the consciousness of a person can not be based on multiple major attitudes, instead it is possible to have one dominant attitude and many other instrumentalized ones which all act as „taken roles" in the mirror of the self.

As I also mention it in the introduction of my dissertation, I engage myself to an artistic attitude and I shape my relationship with the scientific field in complience with this commitment. As a consequence, what ever kind and number of scientific procedures I use along my creative work (including the argumentation conducted in the present dissertation), I use them in order to achieve artistic (and not scientific) goals

My paper investigates the problematics deriving from the particularities of the relationship between art and sciences against the background of their social manifestations as well. Differences between art and science and their relationship are being analysed on the basis of their respective methods of research and creative techniques and at the same time also on the basis of their ways of communication within the larger social field.

The topics of my dissertation requiered to abandon the classical discoursive manner of formulation, instead I favorized a dialogic way of argumentation. In accordance with my

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[1] One of the most eloquent exemples of the current pressure on artists according to which they are requierd to provide a scientific explanation of their artistic activites is the wide spread of doctoral programs around the world. „The PhD in studio art is unique among nearly all degrees in requiring two bodies of work: the art and the research. It's as if the art needed to be validated by a kind of labor that the university can reliably asess […]." James Elkin: „Ten Reasons to Mistrust the New PhD in Studio Art", in: *Art in America*, 2007/May, p. 108.

working hypothesis presented above, the dialogue representing the body of my dissertation is conducted by two persons who's names are derived from my own name. Szacsva (taking its name from my family name) reasons in the name of artistic values and Pál (who's name corresponds to my actual surname) advocates in the name of scientific principles. The debate develops alongside the observations, findings and conclusions as listed below:

1. Theory is inconmensurable with art, consequently it is impossible to find any ground of interpretation which could make possible to establish a hierarchic rapport between the two.

2. Consequently, when writing a theoretical text in order to prove one's artistic excellence (that is a doctoral thesis in art) despite of achieving it by conceptual means, it is important to aim it not as an account written to the service of art theory, because that would imply an art theoretical perspective. My thesis is then, that a dissertation in art has to serve artistic purposes.

3. The idea of bringing closer art and science or to converge them makes no sense. Art and science, despite of having many common features, are activities based on different interests and intentions and their methods of research and ways of expresion vary according to their different attitudes.

4. In order to establish the artistic character of a work of art one does not have to look into its medium or physical materials used, but s/he has to recognize the attitude of its author as inscribed into the language structure and way of argumentation of that work. If, for instance we encounter a way of argumentation that is demonstrative and justificatory, using quantification and which produces enunciations easy to be generalized, then we have to do with a scientific way of approach. If we find an enunciation which renders itself vulnerable to the instrumental rationality and resists a complete rational analysis, then we most probably have to do with an artistic manifestation. We can generally state, that scientitsts try to make their enunciations the possibly less vulnerable by the instrumental rationality and on the contrary, artists are making enunciations/manifestations which are the most vulnerable by an instrumental rational approach. On the other hand, scientists' rationality can often operate on an irrational tectonics and artists often use many rational operations within their creative processes. We can also remark that art and sciences differ less on the level of their research methods meanwhile they differ much more in their way they formulate their results.

5. The subaltern position of art towards theory[2] and the symptoms demonstrating art's difficulties in aquiering a general recognition in the social field both add up to its being more and more a colonized teritory. The hierarchic relations to be found in the field of art production reflect the unequal and unfair circumstances ruling the production of goods in our societies at large. We should ask the question whether art should operate according to social prescriptions or not? We should search for new ways of operation and new places for art, one of which very possibly could be the cyberspace, where institutional censorship and commercial pressure are not to be sensed yet at such a degree as they are present within the more traditional institutions of art.

6. In the wake of the informatics revolution and as a reaction to the recent dominance of technical images we need to adopt new artistic strategies and we need to reform the language of art. The technical image resists all plastical elaboration, which used to invest images with artistic strength along the tradition of fine arts. Instead, the technical image offers itself to the procedure called „editing", a manipulative gesture paradigmatic for our times, allowing media artists to inscribe their message into its otherwise meaningless visual field.

7. Compared to other, more traditional ways of perceptual means of expression, technical images invite us to a more sentimentalistic and less of a critical reading, because their visual elements are the result of an „impersonal", technical procedure instead of intelligent human elaboration. Consequently, authors and beholders of technical images must act with suficcient awareness and critical attitude in order to keep visual artistic discourse being a considerable interlocutor in the cultural debates of our time.

Previous publications related to the topics:

Szacsva y Pál: „Why a Show on this Book?" in Timothy Brennan, Szacsva y Pál: *Empire in Different Colors. Another Finger Exercise*, Revolver, Frankfurt am Main 2007

Szacsva y Pál: „Art World's Hierarchy" in Tranzitblog.hu 2008
http://tranzit.blog.hu/index.php?author=122137

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[2] „Art is the kind of thing that depends for its existence upon theories: without theories of art, black paint is just black paint." (Artur C. Danto: *The Philosophical Disenfranchisment of Art*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986.) Quoted byPaul Guyer in his article: „When is Black Paint More than Black Paint?" (New York Times/ February the 1st, 1987. p. 23.) http://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/01/books/when-is-black-paint-more-than-black-paint.html?sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all