



International Association
of Art Critics

NARRATIVE REPORT

Evaluating and Formative Goals of Art Criticism in Recent (De)territorialized Contexts

29 & 30 May 2009, Skopje

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE CONCEPT AND PLAN OF WORK

The AICA International project *Evaluating and Formative Goals of Art Criticism in Recent (De)territorialized Contexts* has been completed successfully from 29-31 May 2009 in Skopje. Its main goals were to gather the young emerging art critics and other professionals active in the field of art writing and curating in the region of the South Eastern Europe and in such context to foster a critical discussion about the impact of the newly developed conditions after the split of Yugoslavia and accession of several Balkan countries to EU.

The whole project's implementation was imagined as a two part programme: AICA seminar and AICA meeting under the coordination of Prof. Dr. Suzana Milevska in the premises of the Multimedia Cultural Centre Mala Stanica – National Gallery and on other locations.

All announced speakers arrived and gave their presentations as planned: **Suzana Milevska (Macedonia), Branka Ćurčić (Serbia), Irina Cios (Romania), Dunja Blazević (Bosnia), Syrigo Tsiara (Greece), Melentie Pandilovski (Macedonia), Albert Heta (Kosovo) Iara Boubnova (Bulgaria), Zoran Erić (Serbia), Eva Sevasti Fotiadi (Greece), Slobodan Jovanović (Serbia)**. In addition, the Acting General Secretary of AICA Marie Luise Syring followed the complete event with useful comments and support.

THE AICA INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR – 29 May

The first part was a public seminar that took place on 29 May in the National Gallery's Multimedia Cultural Centre (please check the detailed agenda enclosed below). The seminar consisted of three sessions that reflected general and concrete issues with art criticism and institutional practices in art and culture in the region. Some of the most renowned art critics, curators and art managers from Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia gathered and openly discussed the political, cultural and social different and similar conditions of work throughout the individual presentations (slide, video, ppt) and discussions and round tables. Many different themes were tackled, such as the tension between theory and practice, the crisis of institutions of art and culture, lack of regional and international collaboration due to strong national programmes, some new strategies of organization and conceptualization of art projects, etc. A strong criticism was addressed to the local cultural policies wherein the voices of critics are not heard in very important and urgent issues such as some expensive governmental projects dealing with public monuments and art in public spaces.

THE AICA MEETING – 30 May, morning session

The AICA Meeting was a separate and closed event during which the participants introduced themselves to each other and spoke about the most recent projects that could become contexts for a more official art and cultural exchange. The theme of establishing new and renewing the inactive AICA sections prevailed. Several concrete proposals for future collaborations were made during this session:

⇒ establishing a new monthly magazine/newsletter that would publish a selection of translated texts original published in different domestic languages in the region

- ⇒ continuing this seminar on annual basis as a supplement to the annual Congresses of AICA International that not always reflect issues that are locally and regionally relevant or cannot be attended by the AICA members from the region since take places in remote countries
- ⇒ establishing a new AICA prize for critical texts that will draw more attention to writers that write in marginalized cultural contexts and languages.

ART AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS' VISITS – 30 May, afternoon

The seminar participants visited several national art institutions (Museum of Contemporary Art, National Gallery's Collection in Daut Pasha Amam) and Non-governmental initiatives in art and culture (Kontrapunkt, Lokomotiva) and had informal meeting with some of the managers and employees of these institutions. Thus they could get some more direct information throughout the short presentations and discussions of the art and culture scene in Macedonia and to compare this situation with their own experience in the scenes where they are active. Also, the exchange of contacts was imagined to enable all guests to continue working on different projects with any of the institutions visited according their own interests and on-going projects' needs.

During the free afternoon some of the guests were given the optional opportunity to visit some exhibitions and the most relevant Byzantine monastery in Macedonia: St. Panteleimon in the nearby village Nerezi.

AUDIENCE AND MEDIA COVERAGE

The audience consisted of local journalists, critics, artists, students and employees of art and cultural institutions. It was obvious that many of the local 26 AICA members of AICA Macedonia were not particularly interested and involved in the seminar activities even though they were invited personally by the president Dejan Budjevac who was also absent due to his travel. However, three members were constantly present including the coordinator Suzana Milevska, moderator Ana Frangovska and one of the ex-presidents – Viktorija Vasev Dimeska.

Three local and national TV stations (Telma, A1, MTV 2) recorded some of the presentations and interviews with several of the participants and broadcasted short or longer reports during their cultural programmes (Telma TV gave a 30 min comprehensive report during prime time TV after the main news).

Links to the media that published information regarding the seminar, both on internet and in printed version:

Weekly magazine Forum <http://www.forum.com.mk/tools/article/3376/view>

Cultural portal Premin <http://preminportal.com.mk/content/view/4145/138/>

Cultural portal Culture http://www.culture.in.mk/story_mk.asp?id=28602&rub=40

Daily newspapers Vest, Dnevnik, Utrinski vesnik

<http://www.vest.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=0B58D6A2E9164C47A71203266D247AD2>

<http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=64D8068E2904BE44867128AA5E1BB303>

<http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=ED278502C8DF1E45B7030609E3D85A6F>

CONCLUSION

The AICA seminar and meeting turned to be very exciting and urgent since the themes discussed during this two-day event proved to be common concerns for most of the participants. The suggestion to continue with such events (Irina Cios from Romania showed particular interest to organise the next meeting in Bucharest) was accepted by all of the present critics and is the best proof that such events are useful and necessary for raising the awareness that most of the colleagues in the region fight similar battles that could be won more successfully if fought together.

