

**2nd open letter to
prominent insider of the cultural business**

BASIC COVERAGE FOR ARTISTS (on the level of income support)

Erfurt, the 01st of June 2015

Dear Sirs,

I'd like to win your personal voice for a campaign, what I'm working about now. My goal is to achieve public awareness and subsequently also political guidance for a basic coverage for socially active artists and writers respectively cultural workers.

Maybe you know the situation on the basis of the independent cultural scene? From a minimum of 8.50 EUR/h most of us can only dream of. That's not the problem, because we like to work for 2-4 EUR/h, when it involves our own visions and artistic projects.

Only next to our projects, we have to generate the project funds for the expenses of our projects. In addition, there should be a residual remain on budget, which our own survival guaranteed. These are 3 jobs simultaneously.

In a figurative sense it would mean for a teacher who also can not sell his service to his clients (except private schools) - he may have to generate in addition to teaching the costs of his working place (rent, teaching materials, operating costs). And he would have to think about, where he gets the money for his own livelihood.

This is why most of us have reduced their personal standard of living to a minimum - just so that you still can survive, because you want to invest the available resources in your projects.

I know esteemed colleagues, which eat the food in the soup kitchen, if the money is not enough. Only people do not like talking about it because they are ashamed of it.

That is why we operate a carcass competition (deadly competition) in the low and medium-price sector, which our value increasingly undermined. The existential pressure of our 3 jobs will take us each freedom of action and driving prices down to the basement. We can't even afford to reject an inquiry to bad conditions.

It dares hardly noone speaking about the compromising truth, because he would be immediately cicked out of the business. Our clientele buys at the "successful". Buy Art is less cultural commitment as an investment. Which shareholder relies on a company in difficulties?

"Whining" is counterproductive. So we keep up appearances and pretend as if we could make a living by our art projects. But believe me, these which can make a living are the least!

We should finally make clear to the public that the idea of "creative industries" (creative economics means efficiency in cultural businesses) is definitely not implemented on the basis of the art scene. Therefor the public consciousness is too underdeveloped and the demand for artistic production is far too low. Even public theater would not be possible without subsidies.

Selling prices which can cover the production costs and still make a profit for your personal cost of living, can only be achieved through the bottleneck of the art market.

However, the art market is, as you know, an exclusive circle that wants deliberately to keep prices high on behalf of its profiteers, by excluding the vast amount of artistic production.

In this way the art market succeeded to give those handpicked elite of insiders this incredible aura of the fine and the particular (especially the deceased) - on the other hand the large amount of outsiders are cut off the cash flows of the art buyers.

Who does not like to be seduced by the myths of the great geniuses? The beautiful illusion, in which a powerful, finetuned network benefits - galleries, curators, museums, critics, auction houses, collectors, last but not least the educational institutions, publishers and tourism industry - this dazzling bubble would burst if the public could see through the mechanisms. But they can't. Too complex are the structures and too finely woven are the threads behind the scenes - the relationships, dependencies and secret deals.

You know as well as I do that bands can be "promoted", just like today an artist can be "placed" if all stakeholders / beneficiaries pull together on one string. Commercial success has only a little to do with artistic quality, but even more with image and marketing.

While in the artificial sky of stars outrageous sums of money for artworks are issued (what could happen so useful with?) - in the real world cultural life is practiced by self-exploitation of artists.

What would be left of our cultural landscape, if the base would stop working on their badly to commercializeable projects? Do not worry, we will not go on strike.

Does the art market give a relevant contribution to the cultural development of the people in our society, or does the art market only turning around itself?

It is not the art market, I want to abolish. (I'd certainly like to put it on the chain, for instance by introducing a "moral seal of approval". / voluntary percentage profit charge on "immoral prices" over 200,000 EUR for charitable purposes / comparable to the "Fair Trade Seals")

Let us not-established-artists continue to dream of success, please! That's the driving force behind our cultural work. Please keep us the illusion that one day our work and our visions could come into the focus of the powerful syndicate! A few will surely get it. Others will perhaps save the world? You can only benefit from our idealism.

But please help to educate and raise awareness of the public about the real situation at the base of the cultural scene! We should finally face the problem of voluntary self-exploitation in the cultural scene without shame! - Not by evaporating our commitment to the realpolitical possible, but due to the socially fair way out (solution) of a "Conditional Basic Income".

Recently, the general minimum wage for workers of 8.50 EUR/h has been introduced. The pilots, railroad workers, educators, doctors do not stop to argue, for their fair wages.

Our rich affluent society, should be able to afford giving also to their artists an existential basic coverage under certain conditions and well below 8.50 EUR/h.

The public needs to learn - if they really want these much invoked rich, flourishing cultural landscapes, they can not force us under the yoke of profitability! Why do they not expect economic efficiency even by the politicians and teachers?

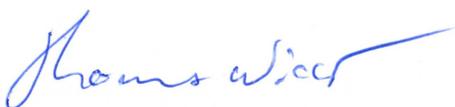
Should they keep us on a short leash and watching that it just not going too well for us! But they should ensure that we artists can remain artists - which are able to enrich the world with their visions , and not must be hucksters which sell their soul for a penny.

Yes, we artists must exploit ourselves if we are to deliver on our ideals! Only the question is: What we are exploiting us for? For our ideals, our visions for the arts? Or just only for a voracious market under unfair conditions and for a modest survival.

I want to ask you to support our initiative with the weight of your voice!

Please spread this open letter or our idea among intellectuals and representatives of the cultural scene.

I greet you sincerely



Thomas Nicolai

additional links:



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