

The Arts And the Youth

The three partners of the ARTQUAKE project have decided to make a little presentation a little presentation about the reality of practicing arts in every country. This is a little dossier where we can learn about different realities and compare them.

What kind of opportunities to practise do young artists have? Can they easily learn and study? Does the public administration help them? Is it possible for them to follow their passion, or do they have to do other job? What is the situation of the art scene in Italy, Malta and Lithuania? How do the historical, cultural and social dimensions influence the arts?

Every national group has treated the aspects they feel closest to their sensibility, and hence.. here you have our product.. It is of course partial, it is often focused on the point of view of a particular city, but it's a interesting first step to better know each other.

If you want to know more...read on.

Lithuania, Rokiskis

All the new art movements in Lithuania began with the political changes, i.e. after the independence of Lithuania was renounced. The period of eighties and nineties became the sign of the beginning of the new Lithuanian art history, which induced artists to participate actively in "the creation of new art speech". Such sudden turn of art was caused by the rich flow of new information which allowed to look more deeply at the history of Western art and to hear about such alternative art movements as Fluxus, the initiator of which was Jurgis Maciunas, the artist of Lithuanian origin. (It is not surprisingly, that retrospective Fluxus exhibition, held in Lithuania much later (in 1997), was one of the largest and most frequented exhibitions in the Centre of Modern Art in Vilnius, and later the constantly-working Fluxus room was open there.) The artists began to create not individually, but in groups, so some movements united in Lithuania. One of them, "The Green Leaf", a group of young artists (students then) was formed in 1988. It radically "turned its back upon" the traditional art and its themes. Their activities could be described as a wish to get over traditions and to aesthetise the other side of life - brutal, vulgar and full of complexes and standards. The group POST-ARS, formed in 1989, remained one of the most serious propagators of the art of action. This group was formed by the artists who were the specialists of their field: a sculptor Robertas Antinis, a painter Aleksas Andriuskevicius, a musician Ceslovas Lukenskas and a photographer Gintaras Zinkevicius. (Currently, Antinis and Andriuskevicius actively create together.) In 1990, the group announced its manifest which, as the group's name, showed the turn to the past, i.e. they turned back to the art history and adopted the ideas of the art "without place" - dada, Fluxus, futuristic art. In the context of the search of new form, two different art movements direct their look to the retrospective. The search of themes is directed to the past, and the source of the main themes is history. In general, history becomes one of the most fundamental art themes, what can be considered the expression of the Lithuanian nation's individuality. History becomes the image play, torn off the reality, history is the present, the past and the future. The past is superior to the present, so the past becomes even more realistic and authentic reality, ideal construction, which is constantly exploited. The first action of "The Green Leaf" was "The Iron Wolf" (1988). It has these tendencies, too: the sculpture occurs from the sound, so the form could only be foreboded and imagined, and the theme of action is a reference to the legend about Vilnius' founding: the howling wolf is transferred to the historical-cultural context. Gradually, overt places and nature change the close space. The nature becomes the inseparable part of the art work, and a human being - its mediator. POST-ARS' actions were quite different from those of "The Green Leaf": the latter were open to interpretation and turned more for

Joseph Beuys' propagated ideas, i.e. the inner experience, which was the dominating part of the work, only fragmentally opened to a spectator in its form. At that time, POST-ARS participants' actions turned more to the form and the search of it. Their creative work is based on two fundamental points: the nature and the culture. Although the style of each member is individual, the general creation of group is homogenous, because every creator tries to base himself on the same creative background. In these art movements, the form became dematerialised, the means of expression were found not only with the help of painting, but also other existing arts - theatre, music, dance, etc. This express a wish to be in art.

The government's 1994 programme underlined that it was important to "complete the model of Lithuanian cultural policy". However, to define the model was complicated and a controversial task at the time. In practice the "model" was understood as a legal document, where cultural policy objectives, guidelines and tasks for particular cultural sectors and cultural development should be indicated. The ideas of the model were expressed in the Principles for Lithuanian Cultural Policy (2001). One of the important tasks outlined in the document as required for further cultural development was decentralisation of the cultural administration. This process more or less was the same as in most other post-communist countries, which faced major problems including legal, managerial, financial as well as the lack of experience among administrators to share functions and responsibilities between various managing bodies. A challenge was posed by the process of decentralisation and the redistribution of financial and managerial responsibilities between different levels of government - state, counties and municipalities. A longer-term objective has been to move all territorially decentralised art and cultural institutions (cultural centres, public libraries, museums etc.) under the jurisdiction and financial control of the municipalities. Several important cultural funds (Culture and Sport Fund, Media Support Foundation) were established in order to endow independent bodies to take decisions on cultural development and funding. From a legal point of view, decentralisation has been facilitated by the passing of the Law on the Amendment of the Law on Local Self-Government (2000), which grants local self-governments legal and administrative capacities to shape and implement cultural policy in line with their communities' needs. In 2002, the Cultural Development Programme of the Regions was adopted by the government and aims to form the administrative, financial, legal and information basis for the development of regional (counties) culture. Several important cultural bodies were created (see also chapter 2.1 and chapter 2.2) as part of the decentralisation process. However, they do not correspond to the "arm's-length" classic model. The real impact on cultural and artistic processes of these bodies is still minor, primarily due to the lack of control of financial resources and limited intervention into cultural development. These reforms and challenges have shaped and still affect the cultural policy model in Lithuania. The system of cultural administration was created along the principles of decentralisation and upon models for co-operation between different policy levels (state - regions - local self-government). In general, the state has a dominant and decisive role in most issues of culture administration, financing and information dissemination. The current overall process of administrative management reform in the government may help to shift the speed of reform in the cultural sector.

The government does not have a special programme to support cross-border intercultural dialogue. However, the issue is included in the Government's Programme and Action Plan as well as in the Regulations and Strategic Plans of the Ministries. In practice, cross-border intercultural co-operation projects, initiated by regional or local authorities, twin cities, neighbouring national communities are considered to be more flexible and dynamic.

Over the last years, there has been an increase in government support for young people engaged in trans-national co-operation. The Ministry of Culture provides travel grants and scholarships for young artists, who participate in international festivals, art exhibitions, performances, workshops, training courses, conferences, artists' residencies, etc. Through competitions, the Ministry supports young artists' projects to be realized in foreign countries. In 2003, the government approved the Young Artists' Support Programme, which aims to facilitate young artists' training, social situation,

to promote creativity, integration in country's cultural development and become competitive on the international art market.

One of the best examples was the PIPE project, realized in 2000 by 7 countries (Baltic states, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Russia) in the framework of Special Action in Favour of the Baltic Sea Region (PHARE and Interreg III B). Among the social and educational aims, the project was focused on strengthening cultural exchange among young people, to maintain and develop local and regional identities and to encourage youth groups to take part in the development of local and regional communities. As a follow-up to this project, the partners created the "Innovation Circle" project which was launched in 2006.

Lithuanian artists abroad: job opportunities

The migration of artists comes in a multitude of different forms; artists have a variety of reasons to look for work opportunities abroad. Lithuanian artists may be invited for seasonal jobs or the implementation of art projects (e.g. guest performances or concert tours), others have contracts with galleries or concert agencies for a couple of years, some are on the permanent staff of concert or opera institutions. The latter are usually in a more secure social position than those with temporary employment. Many contemporary Lithuanian artists started their artistic career after staying in European artists' residencies or participation in training programmes for young artists (e.g. Lithuanian opera soloists at the Royal Opera House in London). The mobility of artists does not differ from the general migration situation in the country. The number of emigrants increased substantially after Lithuania joined the EU in May 2004. It is estimated that, out of a total population of 3.5 million, about 250,000 Lithuanians moved to other EU countries, most of them to Ireland and the United Kingdom. Figures provided by the British employee registration scheme in 2005 indicate that Lithuanians constituted 17% of all newly registered EU citizens.² The total number of Lithuanian citizens living in Britain is estimated at about 100,000 persons.

Limits of mobility

Recent sociological research findings indicated that young Lithuanian artists are more internationally oriented than their older colleagues. They are more interested in international recognition and integration into the world art processes than in living in a permanent location. The young generation has found a new and quite critical approach to national culture, social security and artists' financial situations.

M a l t a, Gzira

As Howard Gardner states, there are 7 types of intelligences, which are:

- **Bodily Kinaesthetic** – used for communicating with others
- **Interpersonal** – used for communicating
- **Intrapersonal** – used for self-discovery and analysis
- **Linguistic** – used for reading, writing and speech
- **Logical mathematical** – used for maths, logic and systems
- **Musical** – used for rhythm, music and lyrics
- **Visual Spatial** – used for visualization and art.

Through the arts one can develop one or more of these intelligences, thus enabling the person to full fledge his/her being and develop new ways of exploring things.

The local artistic scene has finally revived and much importance is being given to having good background knowledge, be it music theory, history of arts, photography, painting, etc... Following

this premise, the governmental department of Education has in fact come up with the idea of having evening courses targeted for practically everyone. Most of these courses are free. Some examples are: ballroom dancing, sculpting and gilding.

Malta also boasts of a School of Arts and another of Music, which offer numerous courses ranging from painting, fashion designing, sewing, guitar, piano, drums, bass playing respectively, and much more. Taking part in such classes usually entails a nominal fee of Lm5 [€11.64]. For those who are more theatre-oriented there is the Drama Unit. The unit gives theatre lessons on staging, projection and acting, and also puts up its own productions in which its own students take part. All of these schools are backed by the state, hence the low costs, and students are assured of being instructed and taught by professional people, who are artists themselves having dealt and still deal with the local artistic scene. These lessons encourage students to participate in big productions and audition for musicals and plays.

Live music is now much sought by the majority of people in Malta. Very good bands are now flourishing, leaving great impact in the local music scene and on airwaves. Lots of 'battle of the bands' are being organised, in which new bands can compete and win recording deals and money in order for their career in music to progress further. Apart from competitions, musicians and singers take part in music marathons, which are quite renowned here in Malta. These marathons help new emerging artists to make a name for themselves and promote their music. The more established bands then take part in lots of music festivals and plan various gigs around the year. Some of the local bars have in fact become important live music venues which give much status to the bands playing there.

Even though much is done and opportunities for young artists are finally booming, one has to remember that the start heading towards the artistic path is always hard. However, if one keeps an eye on local happenings while simultaneously training him/herself in the discipline chosen, something wonderful happens... that of developing a more communicative, introspective and expressive person. Once this development takes place, a true artist is formed, and only then will he/she be able to perform at his/her best.

Italy, Rome

The youth-oriented theatrical scene takes up a multitude of aspects revealing exciting opportunities which invariably propose an array of different artistic forms, activities and languages. Numerous cultural associations have given their contribution, through which new initiatives were developed, allegedly encouraging young artists to become independent and to build up an artistic identity of their own basing this identity on solid foundations without however neglecting experimentation.

One of these important initiations is *ZTL: Zone Teatrali Libere*, an accumulation of theatrical spaces strictly connected to five important realities belonging to the capital scene: *Strike*, *Teatro Furio Camillo*, *Rampa Prenestina*, *Astra Teatri*, *Rialto Santambrogio*, as to reach the vast majority of the youth-oriented theatrical scene.

In 2006, *ZTL* organized the convention titled: *Teatri Invisibili* [Invisible Theatres]; set up in order to promote independent theatre via meetings, exchanges and discussions on such theme. This convention has been an important milestone which brought about the creation of *Teatri di Vetro* [Glass Theatre]; this time with the help of the *Provincia di Roma*, always active and aware of the importance of theatre in the young people's realm, *RomeEurope* Foundation, and *RomaTre*

University. This project reflects itself as a showcase for independent art, not only for theatre, but also for visual arts and dancing, which are often deserted by the official artistic circuits.

Another project directed towards those youth who are interested in a more classical kind of theatrical expression is the *Rassegna Teatro Giovani Ettore Petrolini*, put up by *Teatro Sette*. This initiative gives the opportunity to groundbreaking theatrical companies to be listed in the performance list of an oh so important theatre as *Teatro Sette* is, without having to pay for inscription.

The Theatre *Tor Bella Monaca* is a newly inaugurated fully equipped structure which boasts of the direction of Michele Placido and simultaneously supported by important entities such as the *Comune di Roma*, *ETI*, *Regione Lazio* and the University for the Studies of *Rome Tor Vergata*.

All this shows how the roman theatrical scene does not pose any barriers between the world of theatre and that of community, but rather, it offers various opportunities for the community to actively participate and propose innovative initiatives directed towards creative territorial growth which enables people to communicate with the national scene.

The situation in Rome regarding the musical scene is a bit complex for youths face a number of difficulties:

Phase 1: The Money Issue

It is a known fact that musical instruments cost a lot. Additionally, musicians have maintenance costs as well to count for, like for instance the strings of a guitar or bass, etc., and also other related costs such as amplifiers, leads etc...

Phase 2: Learning how to Play an Instrument

A person is faced with two options: either going to music lessons or learning on one's own. If the first option is chosen then the student has to approximately dish out €100 monthly, which of course is quite a high cost, considering the fact that some students do not have a job.

Phase 3: Playing with Others

A band undoubtedly needs a place where to rehearse and thus it has to pay rent for such place, which approximately costs €14-15 per hour.

Phase 4: Playing Live

When it comes to gigging, opportunities are quite modest. If a band wants to perform live in some roman club, its members faces constrictions which are more of a managerial nature than performance-oriented. The owners of the clubs are mostly interested in having a good turnout especially in financial terms. Consequently, the vast majority of bands playing in pubs are cover bands since they are greatly followed, rather than those having a repertoire consisting of original songs.

Different initiatives have evolved so as to tackle this situation and give new emerging bands the voice to be heard. Amongst these, there is *MarteLive*; a huge event in which different disciplines such as music, dance and theatre are fused into one. This event also gives the opportunity to young musicians to take part in a contest which inevitably gives them much exposure. Polyester is another example worth mentioning. This initiative enables the coordination of different groups to propose their own auto-produced roman realities with regards to music, giving attention to the quality of the artistic proposal at stake, the technical aspects related to playing live and also to the human relations involved in such a sphere; a characteristic which is very often neglected.