

### The Artist as a Critic

Since the Aufklärung, when aesthetics became an autonomous discipline, art criticism has imposed itself as an equally independent branch. For obvious reasons, all the systematic methodology of this art criticism could reckon with was a globalized art profile that had been neutralized within certain style groups.

The scientific ambition of this approach has gradually alienated the critic from art, which - as a living phenomenon - is constantly changing. Its detachment and lack of involvement (in a meta-language that sets it apart even more) have had artists reacting in a violent way. What they intended to do was to become critics themselves, critics of a different, less sterile kind. Such as Baudelaire, in his description of Delacroix' work, or the point of view Odilon Redon adopted towards both his own oeuvre ("A Soi-Même") and that of his contemporaries. Duchamp's motivation behind "La Mariée mise a nu..." served as an example too. The annoyance over what art criticism was doing was to escalate over the years ; not so much over the fact that judgements were being passed on art, but over the alienation that was tearing art and criticism apart. In contemporary art too, this would result in a tangible attitude and has had people wondering where exactly the line between artist and critic is to be drawn.

- 1 - Typical of a specific evolution within contemporary art is the way in which the vision and the criticism of art are fused within a tautological interplay of elements. The artist himself gives us his polemic opinion of the essence of and sphere within which art operates today. (Kosuth, Vautier)
- 2 - Others feel the urge to critically approach the achievements of fellow-artists and to thus remedy the problem of alienation at its very roots. The artist/critic projects his findings onto the screen of his own vision and experience (Zaugg)
- 3 - Another relation between art and its approach/art-as-a-science arises when the two can be united as relatively independent aspects of the activities of one individual. Here the interaction between art and criticism is implicit and not explicit; although here too theoretical art criticism is prized by an active, involved insight (Mayer)

4 - Finally, there is also this strange yet obvious option in which the artist acts as a critic of his own creations. He is a major witness and speaks from an advanced position. The gap between art and criticism is not closed, but abolished. A highly subjective involvement counteracts the empty blazon of objectivity and independence that current art criticism pedantically ornaments itself with (Thomas Huber)

A discussion about these respective critical activities of artists will probably give us a clearer insight into the essence of art criticism, of its necessity and duties.