

Beyond Walls and Wars

What a lovely title for our congress, what a beautiful hope for the one who still believes in a better future for those who live today in a world that leaves them unsatisfied and anxious. I'm not talking of hope for a "joyous tomorrow", but of a today that is more open and brotherly, that is free, if one means by this word the possibility for everyone to take its personal and collective destiny in hand.

Does Art have the possibility or the will to play a part in this adventure ? And ourselves, art critics, is it within our competence to go into this debate, which, obviously, resorts to considerable forces ?

AICA has always made a point to encourage meetings and confrontations between the ones who, by their intellectual work, reflect to the society, at the same time they interpret it, the process of different artists, in different cultures. Today, as walls are falling, as the hope for a world without wars is standing out in profile, we are called on to reflect, with a renewed demand, at what the culture's diversity is giving evidence.

But what would be this wealth if it wasn't known or understood ? Of course, the values of some musn't become the one of others, but our critical work consists to show what is the sense that artists and creators are transmitting, and how general is this sense.

By dint of autonomy gained on academism, there's a risk for artists, if the criticism doesn't help them in their "reintroduction" in culture, to stay retired in this little world of art that we all know too well.

So I see other walls, other battles announced for the criticism, now that apparently - let's be careful, attentive here and there, but let's be full of hope too - for many people the political mortgage seems broken. The social battle, battle for the sense and its understanding, battle for Art doesn't get lost in the market game when its mission is to change our way to look, to feel and to understand this coming world, battle which is also the criticism' one, is requiring from us a renewed reflection. This congress is involving us into this, under the best auspices.

Jacques Leenhardt

President of AICA