

THE CENTER AND PERIPHERY

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During the past forty years European culture has suffered from economic and national divisions.

However, the borders and divisions notwithstanding, the language of art has always been there as a mean to transcend barriers and establish a dialogue between different environments. The language of contemporary art was the same but communication was hampered by art systems in the form of markets, official cultural policies, political and economic borders.

Until 1989, the year when many political changes began to take place in Europe and the world, one could consider the European Community as consisting of Western Europe anlone. But with the failure of Cummunism and the changes in the countries of Eastern, Central and Southern Europe, better and more realistic possibilities have emerged for the development of wider integration processes.

The first assumption is that the participants in integration processes are not only entire countries but their constituent parts, that is regions. In addition to the integration of European countries in the European Community, there are a number of regional associations, such as the Alps-Adriatic Community and the Hexagonal. The French Department of Aquitains has founded the Atlantic Arch with Potugal and the neighbouring Spanish regions. Similarly, Nord-Pas de Calais has established close links with Kent in England and the neighbouring region in Belgium. The Land

of Baden-Württemberg in German has linked up with the neighbouring regions in France, etc.

These regions are the main exponents of economic and cultural values has been proved by the emergence of a large number of new states in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which have formed within the internal regional borders of the former multi-regional and multi-cultural states, which have disintegrated because of the centralized political administration and economy.

We now see a two-way process - on the one hand is local disintegration and on the other universal integration. In this process a new pan-European community is being created with a new pan-European economic and political identity: this new community has been widely recognized as a Europe of Regions.

The European Community therefore has to consider these newly-formed states and find a place for them in its plans for the future.

Within such processes the question that has loomed so large until now, i.e. that of the relations between the centre and the periphery will no longer matter.

This process will no doubt lead to the creation of a new of different cultural identity of Europe. What we are interested in is how art, and particularly contemporary art, can speed up the creation of the pan-European Community or the Europe of Regions, how it can contribute to a pan-European cultural identity, a community of many equally important cultural and artistic *diversity*.