

20, 21 September 2003

The Round-table took place in Istanbul Bilgi University, Dolapdere Campus
The program of the sessions and the summary of the presentations are:

09.30-9.40	Welcome speeches by Henry Meyric Hughes, Beral Madra, Mahir Namur
	Session 1/ The role, purpose, effect and scope of new networks & networking of EU in regards of the promotion of contemporary art and culture Moderator: Serhan Ada /Reporter: Khaled Hafez
09.50-10.10	Vanessa Reed
10.10-10.20	Ramon Tio Bellido
10.20-10.30	Stephen Wright
10.30-10.40	Christian Chambert
10.40-10.50	Pascal Brunet
10.50-11.15	Open Discussion
11.15-11.30	Coffee Break
	Session 2/ Current and future needs of cultural interaction, within the cross-cultural contemporary art communication and exhibitions or multi-cultural projects, policies of curators and strategies of artists Moderator: Haşim Nur Gürel / Reporter: Zoran Eric
11.30-11.40	Anda Rottenberg
11.40-11.50	Massimiliano Gioni
11.50-12.00	Khaled Hafez
12.00-12.10	Vicky Karaiskou
12.10-12.20	Ahu Antmen
12.20-13.00	Open Discussion
13.00-14.30	Lunch
	Session 3/ Redefinition of justice & poetry in contemporary art within the current world affairs and to what extend the artworks in the Istanbul Biennale come closest to matching up to the Curator's initial statement of intent. Moderator: Cem Erciyes / Reporter: Esra Alicavuşoğlu
14.30-14.40	Efi Strousa
14.40-14.50	Farid Abdullayev
14.50-15.00	Ali Akay
15.00-15.10	Zoran Eric
15.10-15.45	Open Discussion
15.45-16.00	Coffee Break
	Session 4 / The effect and the meaning of the Istanbul Biennale (and other global exhibitions) in our region and what extend the artworks in the Istanbul Biennale come closest to matching up to the Curator's initial statement of intent Moderator: Beral Madra /Reporter: Beral Madra
16.00-16.10	Eva Fotiadi
16.10-16.20	Tea Paichadze
16.20-16.30	Mai Abu el Dahab

16.30-16.40	Sandra Dagher
16.40-16.50	Levent Çalıkođlu
16.50-17.30	Open Discussion
18.00-20.00	Exhibition "Organized Conflict" Harman Sokak Harmancı Giz Plaza Levent 80640 İstanbul, Türkiye tel: 212.281 51 50 / e-mail: info@proje41.org / www.proje41.org Exhibition "Copy it, steal it, share it" Borusan Art Gallery, Beyođlu

WORKSHOP and ROUNDTABLE CONCLUSIONS / CLOSING SESSION

21 September 2003

Istanbul Bilgi University, Dolapdere Campus

www.bilgi.edu.tr

09.30-11.00	Presentations of the Reporters
11.00-12.00	Conclusive Discussion All Participants
12.00-13.00	Lunch and departure

Summary of the Round-table Sessions

Beral Madra- Ladies and gentlemen welcome to AICA Turkey's forum in conjunction with the 8th Istanbul Biennial and we will start with presentations of the reporters and then make a conclusive discussion about what we have experienced during this forum. However, as AICA Turkey we added a special presentation by Levent Çalıkođlu. So I am calling him to the podium.

Levent Çalıkođlu- I would like to thank to our guest who gave their support to AICA Turkey. In fact, this is our second dialogue with AICA International and evidently it has different meanings for us. In 1954 an AICA conference was organised in Istanbul and it became a transition point and debate in our history of modernism. We have also invited Herbert Read and Leonard Venturi at the beginning of the 50's and their speeches are quite interesting and deserve to be discussed. Obviously, the milieu of the 50's had an effect on the realisation of this organisation in Turkey, because the newly founded Democracy Party marked a new vitality for the village tradition, folklore and the so-called cultural mosaic and at the same time abstract tendencies appeared in painting and sculpture. The presentations of AICA members at that time reflected the milieu of this period, particularly accentuating the issues on local and national culture. For example, Mr Bülent Ecevit, represented the left and who has been our prime minister for long periods gave a paper in the 1954 conference, which delineated the meaning of the perspective in Eastern and Western art; as far as the reviews inform his speech was extremely successful. Another interesting aspect of this AICA meeting was a competitive exhibition, entitled "Work and Production" in reference to the mission of the governing power of the country. The international jury selected an unknown artist, Aliye Berger and gave her the first prize. The selection has been criticised by the artists professors of the Academy of Fine Arts.

I am telling you all this story to emphasise the importance of the foundation of AICA Turkey and suggesting that in 2004 we should celebrate the 50th year of AICA presence in Turkey.

Beral Madra- Thank you so much Levent. This is an important memory and I hope that in 2004 we will be able to celebrate the 50th year of AICA in Turkey, even if between the first years and the new beginnings there is a big gap, an absence of an institutional work. However there were many individual accomplishments which covered all these years and we can see it that the biennale is one of the proofs that this gap was filled with art criticism and production and theory and concept.

Now, I think we will proceed with the reporters' presentations and we will start with the first session of yesterday and Khaled Hafez is the reporter of the first session of yesterday, in which Vanessa Reed, Ramon Tio Bellido, Stephen Wright, Christian Chambert and Pascal Brunet have presented their papers.

Khaled Hafez- The function of reporter actually is new to me. I will go chronologically by the speech of everyone, summarising the key points of the speech.

Vanessa Reed started by introducing her foundation and I guess she did that for many times since yesterday, but it is essential because the function that she does is very important to all of us and it bridges the gaps in our Mediterranean area. She emphasised the importance of networking and for that she mentioned special grants such as the travel grant for art managers and going through the cases for funding what would the foundation fund. One of the most important points was the travel grant for art managers in which people from our countries can benefit from the foundation.

Christian Chambert came up with several questions, important questions, he asked about what is European identity, he started by this question and then he reviewed a networking through events, biennials and other exhibitions. What was important here is that all the topics he started with were in the form of questions keeping us to come up with an answer. He explained how art is growing important since it offers a dialogue, it is one of the now certified and well acknowledged ways to do a dialogue between conflicting cultures like what we have seen after September 11, East and West, art is one way to bridge and create a dialogue. Among the questions where the artist role in society and the sort of like, how important it is to create a magazine because the magazine approaches between view points yet the magazine is expensive and here came the Internet. He closed by emphasising that the Internet will be one of the best ways to communicate in the near future for all of us.

Stephen Wright took over and created fabulous terms like "radical de-skilling" of artists and which is something that describes a lot why in biennials today, most of the art works look alike. I say most not all but most of the art works look alike because we learn a certain number of skills and the majority of skills are taken off and thus at the very end of the day it is a formula, a recipe and most of the art works become alike. Stephen started celebrating networking and he used French sociology to analyse networking and celebrating it. He went backwards in a retrospective analysis back to 1975. What was interesting in Stephen's speech was how he related, he mentioned something about how art networking was very much linked to the business word and why Manifesta moved to Frankfurt and came the word networking and business and art together in one phrase. Among the most important points was the book he mentioned, *the Portrait of a Worker as an Artist* and how sociologists and social workers take the artist model as a symbol or as an idol or as a role model to workers, how this would be an ideal image for the worker. He also mentioned the world management and it was one of the few times that we talked about management as a science and art so we talked about business, about management and about art together. A phrase he concluded with which was attracted personally my attention that art is a collection of skills, aptitudes, preparation, competences and this is the definition of management, the science of management, what art is all about. He talked at the very end about "impaired visibility", that is one of his terms that I am going to celebrate in my own writing later. Art today is an impaired visibility and he stressed that this is his own point of view which is very important. This is by the way my own point of view as well that is why I took note of that in particular. He concluded by how some groups, some art groups collaborate and are activists and related that to social work.

Ramon Tio Bellido took over and he gave us like a brief of how networking is efficient in the world of art. He talked about the objectives of the AICA International, the Internet as an alternative to communicate, it looks like there is some sort of an agreement about how we are going among each other to communicate in the near future and how the Internet will play an important part in that. There was a mention of a Mediterranean identity and a need for identity, communication and research. Ramon revisited cultural nomadism and diaspora art and the impact of such status in cultural work today.

Pascal Brunet talked about European policy for culture, the meaning of Europe according to the perspective of his institution and beginning of a new idea of Europe that we all of us and apparently his institution will need to explore in the future. He mentioned briefly the stand of European Union vis-à-vis the Mediterranean area, how important it is the Mediterranean area to the European Union and I guess all of us we should address the EU for funds because he gave us a secret here and he mentioned three examples of networking.

Among the questions raised at the very end of the session **Sajid Rizvi** contested the Internet access of some people more than others and how -he did not mention this word but I am using- how actually we see it in some places like our countries and people who do not possess an efficient line like DSL line can not access easily, like stream videos and Internet functions that require high-tech. There is some sort of elitism in the access to the Internet with all its facilities.

Stephen Wright then came with one of the most beautiful phrases which is "if the art world would stop loving" and that was in response to Rizvi's raised question. Wright said yes. When he said that it was meaning that actually in fact most of our Web sites we see today by some people, some galleries, some institutions, some authorities, they are very sophisticated, difficult to access and full of colors and full of entries while the whole thing does not need more than informative Web site.

Beral Madra gave a statement about authorities and how authorities were some sort of a apathetic - I am using my own words here, I am not quoting her - or sort of indifferent to certain functions. You send them, you call them, you invite them and nobody shows up which is the case, sharing our best practices together in the past four days, it is a case in all our countries by all means. There is a whole gap, intellectual gap between how authorities or the institutions or the official bodies think and behave and what the actual work that needs a special faster rhythm among the private workers, there is this gap between both parties.

Sajid Rizvi took over and ended by the editorial, suggesting an editorial framework for the AICA Web site so that the whole thing does not become just like any other Web site.

Beral Madra-Thank you so much Khaled. These reports will help us in our publication which we are intending to work on in the coming months and we have promised to publish it latest in March 2004. Zoran would you please come here and make a summary of the second session where Anda Rottenberg, Khaled Hafez, Vicky Karaiskou, Ahu Antmen had made presentations.

Zoran Eric- Thank you very much Khaled now I know what to do, you broke the ice, I am also very new with this, so i will try to give you the highlights of the speeches and I will start with reading again the session's title, "current and future needs of cultural interaction within the cross-cultural contemporary art communication and exhibitions or multi-culture projects, policies of curators and strategies of artists". The moderator was **Haşim Nur Gürel** and the session was opened by Haşim with the idea that this panel should give some solutions. Haşim thought that within this panel we can try to open up discussion and give some possible solutions but also he proposed to the panelists to start with presenting their local contexts, analyzing their local infrastructures, the museums, how the cultural institutions function, what is the role of education. So, it opened up the possibility for panelists to start presenting their point of view and to analyzing local context and I will also go chronologically which is obviously the easiest way to summarise and to give highlights of the presentations.

Vicky Karaiskou was telling about the situation in Greece and she emphasised the role and the importance of the private sector and the private centre and initiative. For her, the key word was information in the global world; she said that everybody is seeking for information, is somehow compelled. Further analysing the local context, she emphasised again the lack of marketing and throughout her speech she somehow put on a very important position the financial support for projects and for the marketing in certain artistic environment; we understand that marketing is missing in Greece. Another very important point and here I would say that it is a very optimistic point, that she made, is the suggestion that we have a potential and we have the right frame within the AICA to start with initiative. So it is a kind of platform and that could be very important for further activities. So this idea of platform for future collaboration is to be revisited. Then I believe that also Vicky mentioned the need for creation of archives and databases, and here I can that there are some initiatives and there are also some networks existing in the Balkan region or South East region, South Eastern Europe region. One is BAN/Balkan Art Network that somehow Harald Szeemann was cooperating within his project *Blood & Honey* and the other is South East European Contemporary Art Network, short as SECAN. SECAN has produced or created a database for the countries from the region and it is sort of on the center of Macedonia and it would be very useful for most of us and I was visiting this site very often when I needed some information of local infrastructure because there is a lot of information on the artist, on the infrastructure, institutions etc.

Anda Rottenberg continued with a rather pessimistic approach and her crucial remark was how to put on the equal level the Eastern and Western art in spite of the idea of and the act of globalisation. She also mentioned that at the Biennial most of the artists presented in the biennale have galleries behind them, not the biggest galleries but important galleries and it is also kind of meaning that the art market is very much involved into this manifestation and she was speaking from this perspective of a curator coming from Poland; but my impression was that she was in a way too pessimistic with this approach always trying to find how many artists and how many curators are represented in major shows. She continued criticising Manifesta and said that Manifesta from the beginning should be a platform where Eastern European and Western European artists should meet. Then she complained that the choice of the city like Frankfurt was something that was showing that the city with a big capital and big airport and an international market is the place to set such an exhibition. Another problem that she mentioned is also that the production and the money behind creates a problem of production in the poor countries. How can contemporary art face this problem in the poor countries, that was a topic for her. And finally she came with, not to say optimistic but kind of clear and very straightforward statement that the artists are the only ones and the only people that are fighting for peace, so this could be also a point for debate.

Then **Khaled Hafez** took over and he gave us in his two speeches very comprehensive analysis of the local art scene in Cairo which I am afraid I did not have information before. So, that was really good to have all these presentations throughout two, three

days and to learn more on the situation in local scenes and to be able to compare them and it is also what he mentioned that we need to analyse the specification of each country. He showed that power struggles and monopolising of artists is taking place in Cairo and he mentioned that AICA Egypt is also doing, I will quote the word, "corrupted" events. Another problem that he mentions is that all the exhibitions look the same, as stated before by Stephen as "the radical de-skilling". Finally there was another constructive proposal by Khaled and I believe it is also a proposal to be discussed afterwards and that is a proposal for AICA, to create a kind of biennial for curators and art writers, and infuse new blood, to open up a course for curators and art writers to propose projects, then maybe some new ideas will get into form.

Then **Ahu Antmen** took over, spoke a lot about Istanbul and the Biennial; it was very important for me to learn about the history of the Istanbul Biennial and the relationship between local scene. So she came with a very literate quotation, how to read the city as a text; that was really nice way to put it. She said that each biennial is repeating the same story with the poetic titles. The city is always the inspiration for curators therefore they gave the poetic titles; starting from the forth biennial *Orientation*, that she found was the most important one in those terms, all others had a very romantic way of dealing with the city or they dealt with the city at all in the projects that were realized. She said that the idea of using historical sight for art events, is something also to be discussed. The identity of the biennial and how the biennial in Istanbul can achieve an identity without a comparison to Venice Biennale was a very important issue for Ahu and she also stressed the problem of the artist dealing with new media, presenting alternative work within the educational structures. Finally one of the toughest comments at the end was that, an American curator, speaking of the justice in Istanbul. She found that it is a very delicate ground. She stressed again the question of what is important for the local art scene, why is biennial important for the local art scene.

Then the debate went on basically around the Manifesta.

And **Efi Strousa** brought a very important question, a curial one, responsibilities, duties and ethics of the curator. Then **Sajid Rizvi** brought other important questions, such as what is the impact of the biennial on the local sector and do the students profit out of biennial.

Beral Madra - Thank you Zoran. Now the third session was covered by Esra Ali Çavuşoğlu and we will listen to her report. In this session Efi Strousa, Farid Abdullayev, Ali Akay and Zoran Eric had presentations.

Esra Aliçavuşoğlu - The title for the third session was "The redefinition of justice and poetry in the contemporary art within the current world affairs and to what extend the artworks in the Istanbul Biennial" came close to matching up to Curator's initial statement of intent". E

Efi Strousa from Greece, Farid Abdullayev from Azerbaijan, Ali Akay from Turkey and Zoran Eric from Serbia participated in this session.

Before I report on each speech separately, I would like to say that Şükran Moral, an artist from Turkey but she lives in Rome, in the audience stated that you can not make art with fancy titles and I think this was a summary of the third session which was focused on how titles generally function in big shows.

Efi Strousa gave us a general redefinition of all the kinds of topics and so the titles that we have come across over the years and exhibitions. She talked about how artists deal specifically and in more militant ways with many issues of injustice encountered in many areas of society. But she also talked of how drawing the curtains on the view of an unpleasant world can also be a gesture and it can be a poetic act. According to Strousa, today's political action by artist is different from that of Joseph Beuys. He is the first example because today's artist tend more to record situations. I think one of the points you can discuss is Efi Strousa's observation that will legitimise many artistic operations for their political content without equally evaluating their mental substance or their poetic qualities.

Zoran Eric started his talk by pointing out that we may all be falling into the trap of Dan Cameron's title and he agreed with Stephen Wright who had said that this title was quite eerie-fairy. Pointing out to criticism about creators being too theoretical. Zoran spoke of his own exhibitions and how he tried to combine theoretical and curatorial positions. Zoran also talked about the biennial exhibition in general and said that there were not many political works in the exhibition, this he saw as Dan Cameron falling into his own trap. Zoran also touched on the relation between the artist and the curator and gave the example of the work of Milica Tomic in the Biennial. This work is apparently pirate copy of an illegal video but because it was not presented like this, most people watched it as a normal video and so could not really understand the work.

The curator's position was the subject of **Farid Abdullayev**, who also discussed and he would find the two positions of being a curator; the research based and the management based. The research based curator is expected to make changes in society but the manager

curator is someone who makes exhibitions for fun. Farid said he was for the first position which entails reflecting and analyzing issues in society. Finally **Ali Akay** approached the subject from the artist's position. He stated that when we look at the concepts of justice and poetry in the context of big international exhibition in the 90's, we can say that within all these fast movements friendship is coming to an end. Living in the world system of art causes the artist to become lonely within all this speed. According to Ali Akay this situation leads the artists to live in hostility like in the business world. All this is also reflected in their works and he proposed that there could be more workshops that bring artists together.

Beral Madra-Thank you Esra. Now the last session yesterday I was the moderator and the reporter, as it is the last session and you will remember it more than the others I will not get into the details but make a very brief summary of the last session. The session again focused on the Biennial, on the Curator's concept and on the exhibition and all the speakers -the speakers were **Jeroen Boomgaard, Tea Paichadze, Mai Abu el Dahab, Sandra Dagher** and **Levent Çalikoğlu**- dealt with, briefly said in three issues that the title holds more than it reflects with art works yet the title is also problematic in the sense that it neither fills the expectations from the political point of view nor from the formal content of the exhibitions. The next issue was again dealing with the Istanbul and its relations to the Biennial so that the Biennial with its concept is the first one not touching or implying the position of Turkey between East and West and this is a progress in the curatorial, in the Western curators' approach to this paradoxical city. So in this sense, we agreed that from the Turkish side we are happy that he did not deal with the same repeating aspect of the city. However another issue was that nobody, not even the best curator can avoid utilising the monumental heritage as a background of the biennial. The third point, during the session, was that the exhibition is mainly based on video and mix media works. More concentration is on the videos and this is juxtaposed to a more spacious arrangement of paintings and installations. And that the Biennial had a professional vision and professional order in itself.