

# Art at the Aid of a Policy for a Mediterranean without Conflicts

**Michelangelo Pistoletto.** Artist and President of Love Difference – Artistic Movement for an InterMediterranean Politic

The cities of the Mediterranean are characterised more than ever by the multicultural societies that populate their streets. In this context, otherness should not be a problematic element but a factor of personal and cultural development. To this end, creativity plays a fundamental role, as it fosters rapprochement and activates imagination. Thus, creative and artistic thought must be considered as a basic tool to finally construct a policy that favours difference. Love Difference and its project of creation of a Mediterranean Cultural Parliament, which could be defined as a body of meeting and coexistence between cultures of the region, works in this respect. The objective is to establish, in collaboration with the political scene, a platform for dialogue and promotion of artistic projects.

The squares and streets of our cities increasingly more immediately reflect the multiplicity of cultures that today characterises ever more plural societies. We are all aware of the importance of the process of change that affects human geography all over the globe. The social fabric is no longer constructed based on a unity of reference, and solidarity itself requires the establishment of new modes of interaction, which can activate innovative social processes.

The multicultural society is characterised by the co-presence of individualities that exhibit traditions which are even significantly diverse within themselves in the same social organisation. Otherness must not constitute the problematic and marginal object observed by a self-centred subject and consecrated to the safeguarding of its own identity but be an opportunity for the development of the person

and the diverse cultures. Diversities constitute a fascinating creative occasion and a complex element of research. Hence the importance of guaranteeing an artistic contribution to the prevailing cultural meeting and of stimulating a reflection on the essential values of each culture, based on the concepts of tolerance, democracy and equality of rights, as well as promoting projects that interact with civil society.

In this context policy comes into play, which integrates into art when it activates a participative component between people and stimulates a critical reflection on contemporary society, but even more so when it undertakes a responsible innovation. Art does not become a policy to express sympathy with an ideology or a system of party control but rather develops the mission of creating a space that does not yet exist, because we still have to discover how to exist together without conflicts. For this to happen

a new way of thinking is necessary, which does not have its origin in a defined system, but in creativity, capable of creating a new fabric of relations between the many beliefs, religions and powers.

World politics cannot be guided merely by economic speculation. A new way of thinking must inspire economics and politics. The place of training in this new way of thinking can be the creative laboratory of a socially committed art. Faced with the test of multiculturalism and interculturality, our cities pay witness to the fact that Italy and the Mediterranean have always been a meeting place for the most diverse traditions; the most appropriate place to favour the development of a culture of otherness, which can link, in the logic of constructive coexistence, the diverse experiential varieties found in urban spaces. It is necessary to activate modes of relations and creative processes that foster meeting and dialogue on the current social, cultural and intercultural issues. The objective is to encourage mutual enrichment within coexistence of differences. And the assumption is to guarantee the full insertion of all in the democratic game, constructed from an innovative conception of the planetary citizenry.

From here comes a path that seeks to be the start of a continuous experimentation of democratic coexistence and the willingness to take on the responsibilities linked to the construction of a plural city, where differences interact positively with new and unseen opportunities in an intercultural perspective. Uniformity and difference are the two antagonistic terms that represent the maximum conflictive tension in the current planetary reality. A policy that leads us to love differences is vital for the development of new perspectives within the whole social assembly. A new category of thought is born that overcomes the rational meaning of tolerance towards the distinct and penetrates directly into the sphere of feeling: love means feeling

attraction, emotion, expressing affection and devotion. The differences between people and social groups are the first that must be accepted and welcomed openly, sensitively and cordially to give meaning to the word “humanity” in the ever more globalised society.

The answer is in the creation of an intercultural network of cooperation between institutions, artists, architects, writers and researchers in the countries of the Mediterranean area, oriented to the development of socio-political projects in favour of a responsible social transformation. The diverse subjects of art, culture, religion and sciences linked to the network collaborate in the development of projects and actions in which creativity designs new perspectives for the whole of society.

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Europe can exercise a great influence in the world only if it creates an inter-Mediterranean space, in which the “weak” part of the continent – for me, the most interesting – unites with the “weak” part of North Africa and the Middle East and engenders a new strength of thought. I believe in an Inter-Mediterranean Parliament; cultural rather than political. An Inter-Mediterranean Cultural Parliament in connection with the European Parliament: a voluntary initiative, non-governmental and politically independent, promoted by and made up of European artists and diverse figures of culture. It is the project of Love Difference – Artistic Movement for an InterMediterranean Politic. Love Difference is a name, a slogan, a programmatic advertisement. The movement links the universality of art to the idea of political transnationality and focuses its activity on the

Mediterranean area as the problems of global society are reflected in it. The Mediterranean Cultural Parliament seeks to institute a reality capable of offering itself as a consultation body with respect to the meeting and coexist-

ence between different cultures. Its objective is to provide, in collaboration with the political scene, a platform for meeting, reflection and promotion of artistic projects that can activate concrete social processes.