

INACTION? THINKING THE WORLD THEORETICALLY

Based on Chantal Mouffe book "Agonistics, Thinking the World Politically", 2013

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Left or right, neo-liberal, liberal, democrat, capitalist, totalitarian, etc.; we seem to carry a bag full of concepts and definitions to refer to the different political and economic models in a society. We spend a lot of time of our lives talking to our friends about politics or economics, just for a moment we truly feel we are specialists in the field. Apparently, we do have the answer to the problem, but unfortunately no power to shape those thoughts in a political context of decision making. But, as artists and citizens, we do have the power to intervene in public spaces and in everyday culture. Even so, and I do not want to be pessimistic, as an outcome of that confrontational attempt made by some of us in the arts field, we sometimes forget that even art has succumbed to the ruses of capitalism. No one is safe here.

In my opinion, Mouffe's notion of transformation through art and media is a transformation that proposes -in some way- a frontal clash with the neo-liberal model. Homogenizing both forces, there is no way we can win a single battle from that perspective. I believe that art should play a quieter role, having the ability to camouflage itself and act more closely to people, in public spaces. From within. Art as a parasite, it's almost invisible but there lies its strength in its ability to feed itself of the system without being detected on time and in its patience to generate tiny changes and differences.

Here is another problematic angle of the situation, in my opinion. Thinking has become another "problem" of our time, and even the "organic intellectuals" seem to be stepping in the wrong direction. We, most of us, don't have real everyday power where our actions have a real impact on the way we live and in our societal and political system. We might be predestined to think in solitude and in motionless, with no real effects. There are some exceptions, it is true we not all of us have the potential to be leaders, but if in anything the democratic model has failed is in generating, preparing, training, and enhancing good citizens with leadership skills.

We need leaders, able to think but also to act, that can develop new worlds, new life practices that weaken -progressively- the capitalist system. If the political conflict in our society is inevitable, then maybe we should put more efforts into training citizens who are ready for conflict. But all that we seem to be cultivating throughout our period in history is the creation of an individualistic citizenship, each day more incapable of relating to a pluralistic vision of community. We are totally disjointed, and there is where the power of neo-liberalism resides.

Art can help us to be articulated again. Art is not a form of resistance, art is a form of insistence. The insistence to bring us all together, create, and articulate new forms of social interaction. I don't like the word activism, but if being activist means that we can raise awareness to create small fractures in the system so maybe many non-political artists are really political artists after all, including myself. On Mouffe's words "I do not believe in the existence of a single form of democracy", and I would say that I do not believe in the existence of a single form of hegemony when democracy seems to be more and more a site-specific commodity.