



Speech Anne Wiederhold-Daryanavard

Co-Founder & Artistic Director – Brunnenpassage
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Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

It seems undisputed that the question of migration has advanced to become one of the most important social conflicts of the present and future.

The fact that questions about diversity, inter- or transculture are currently so highly valued is certainly a result of social transformation processes in the context of global migration and globalization. We are currently experiencing in many European countries that two opposing forces are at work here: A policy of isolation that wants to return to the supposedly pure origins of culture, religion and community. This is opposed by the progressive hybridisation of cultures and the search for transcultural possibilities and forms of living together.

Migration-related diversity in European cities is a reality (not yet recognised). This non-recognition leads, among other things, to migrants or people with a migration background not being perceived as part of the society; they are regarded and treated as 'foreign' population groups. As we know, this applies not only to newcomers, but also to people who came to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s as "guest workers" or migrated within Europe as a result of wars and crises. This discourse continues and allows the so-called second generation and even the third generation -the children and grandchildren of the guest workers or refugees- not to be seen as part of society.

The cultural sector reinforces and reproduces these exclusions: In the cultural sector we also find ourselves in the paradoxical situation that migrants are regarded as foreign population groups. Artistic productions, which are subsumed under "interculturality" and address topics around language, identity or migration - are not perceived as part of the regular cultural business, but as parallel or migration programs.

The separation between migration and art/culture is an artificial separation.

Publicly financed cultural institutions will increasingly have to deal with the question of what they can and should achieve as places of social reflection in migration societies. What responsibility they bear for society and the population.

This brings us to the essential question, which is also the conceptual basis of our work in the Brunnenpassage in Vienna:

- How can we establish (institutionalized) art practices that can become relevant for the entire population and thus enable collective coexistence on the long term away from origin and social class?

In addition to the established cultural institutions in the city centres, decentralised art and cultural locations, shared spaces are also needed.

People, including myself, need social spaces to approach each other, to dare to get to know each other. Living well together needs time and focus. Nowadays it's easily possible to have more friends on facebook anyway, but also to spend more time with "friends" on Instagram than in real life.

How can people feel each other, how can I focus myself with all the daily distractions and information flood, how can I come back to our bodies, how can I feel myself?

Art can do that. Art can be a tool for people to find and express their individual, unique identity. Art can trigger to raise your voice. Free and independent of market criteria, fashions, populism and advertising.

The active participation in art also creates a new reception of it. This changes the way we look at the world. Cultural leaders have the responsibility to involve as many people of our societies as possible.

Art can be a way for social change, for progressive urban development, for approaches between people.

And: The vision is to bring the aesthetic experience of contemporary transculture into the arts and high culture.

To work at the local level and in partnerships with the inner city, allows new urban synapses to grow.

It is also about liberating art itself. The art business is thoroughly commercialized. Reach, audience numbers, admission prices, selling prices.

The need for a rethink in the art and culture industry is obvious. Everyone pays taxes. However, the publicly funded "high culture" institutions are only visited by a fraction of the population. The large institutions are called upon to acquire transcultural concepts and implement them. It is far too short-sighted to act purely on the audience level. Questioning one's own practice with regard to production, staff diversity and new approaches to programming are essential elements of a transcultural opening to connect with the diverse populations in Europe and the world.

Festivals can do that, think globally and act locally!

Ground to experiment in the present moment while looking into our common future...

festivals have the power to temporarily suspend existing mechanism of society and propose alternative realities/rules...

I personally come from a family of musicians, my father has played as a cellist in various orchestras, including Bayreuth. There you have to wait 8 years for a ticket. So I come from the "most high cultural corner" of all. Last year we were asked by a large Viennese cultural institution to cooperate. This institution has an annual budget of 108 million euros. The

25,000 euros promised for the joint project were too much. For financial reasons, the cooperation did not materialise. It is a long way.

What else?

When my son, like countless other children growing up multilingual, learns Persian and German children's songs and lives in Austria, then the immaterial cultural heritage has already been transformed.

A colleague from Istanbul visited us last month, now folk dance classes were banned in schools there. We speak about folk dance not contemporary dance. We have to be aware and show solidarity.

As a keynote speaker, you can make a wish:

I wish for...

Freedom for artists* who are censored or threatened

Funding criteria for diversity

Worldwide networking of transcultural experts

sustainable openings of large houses and festivals

I wish for us to live peace. every day, locally, in one's own daily activities.

With all the hatred - we need places of solidarity.

with all the fear - we need places to build trust

with all the consumption - we need places of non-commerciality

with all the entertainment - we need places to participate

Places of rethinking

Places of liberation

I wish all of us festivals that positively change the way we live together in our world.

Thank you.