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"CONCEPT OF AVANT-GARDE, FALSENESS AND AUTHENTICITY IN THE VISUAL ARTS"

What we know of Puerto Rican art from the late 19th century to almost past mid-20th century responds essentially to a historical-critical process in the country's life which required pertinent will and action regarding the awakened notion that we are a people, a nation that claims the affirmation of its cultural identity. It was a time in which intellectuals and artists had the need to establish strategies and initiatives geared toward the affirmation of what is ours; those who took on intellectual courage to undertake the task of their vocation in less than flattering times. This was the historical sentiment with deep ethical sense that was in the mind of the generations that did the best of their work in the decades between 1940 and 1960.

In that historical moment, most of our artists, reflexively and intuitively, concurred in the decisive efforts to rescue, broaden, and strengthen our notion of being a distinguished people, which was indispensable in order to incite our weak self esteem as well as to stimulate the intelligence and understanding with regards to our own coexistence and that of our neighbors and associates. That is how those generations raised the flag of collective conscience and the artists produced works of particular merit for Puerto Rico's dignity and honor. But back then there was hardly any avant-garde expression in Puerto Rico; we did not align ourselves with the new interpretation proposed by some culture focal points for the modern era. Although there was always avant-garde. Applying the concept as we understand it today dates, according to some, back to the mid-19th century, when part of modern art consciously unfolds into transformations, discontinuity, and ruptures.

Partially having overcome those historical times of a Puerto Rico with its particular crisis, we go into new times in which obviously variations have taken place that affect our internal life as much as its relationship with the external world. On the topic of the arts, we enter the scenario of international innovations, and it is precisely this field that encourages us to formulate thoughts that are the fundamental tone of this speech I present you with, titled *Concept of avant-garde, falseness, and authenticity in the visual arts*.

The challenge of the new times is being approached by a number of Puerto Rican artists with a positive sign that denotes the innate sensibility of our people to create significant works within the complexities of life and new technical resources of the contemporary world. But there are also deceptions that affect and may distort the values that encourage the creator and re-creator in our island and in any other place. These negative winds are precisely what we shall address, for personal satisfaction and to be a thorn on the conscience of those who deal with critiques, those addicted to its appreciation, and those involved in promoting it and its commercial facet.

It is the spirit of authenticity that encourages us to suggest, propose, incite, and even to roll around in the sea of ambiguity and contradiction –inherent to the contemporary world– in an effort to clear a path of authenticity in the field that concerns us. Of course, we have the firm conviction, therefore it is a premise, that the appropriate attitude in facing the problems we present is that of intelligent openness toward the expressions of contemporary art which imply a healthy shock when facing stubborn blockage in the traditional, but also

with the firmness necessary against a certain type of irrationality in such rupture, as well as novelty, which is sometimes very ingenious but full of shallowness; or the desirable awareness of ethical detours like the one that occurred in POP ART, which began in the 1950's as an ironic critique against a civilization blinded by objects of consumption and ended up reconciling and integrating itself to it.

This all presents questions and challenges. Challenges that also imply an effort of trying to reflexively and intuitively distinguish authenticity from falseness in the repertoire of Neorealism, Hard Edge, Neo-figurative art, Gestural Art, Informalism, Junk Art, Objet Trouvé, Arte Povera, Land Art, Conceptual Art, Action Painting, Matter Painting, Op Art, cybernetics, Kinetics, Minimal Art, Dripping, Hyperrealism, Christo-style 'Packaging' Art and Storefront; also newly-coined tendencies such as Behavioral Art, meaning, of behavior, in which the artist works from his own body inflicting burns, flagellations, and it is logical to expect that it ends in suicide as a supposed maximum expression of artistic work. Mail art is also coming up, which consists of sending letters or packages to oneself by mail for the mere satisfaction of sending and receiving objects; also Fractal Arts, a particular orientation of digital resources, coined by mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot, concerning the potential foundation of visual arts in nature's own microscopic geometry, and places mathematics as something that has always been present in artistic expression.

We have left *Happening* behind and parallel to it, *Environment*. In it, an object is not enough to create a frame of life, rather an entire setting is necessary. A supporter of avant-garde and novelties, Romero Brest and Pierre Francastel's most eminent disciple, I refer to Carlos Damián Bayón, has expressed the following regarding *Environment*: "That millionaire can or has been able to buy a bathroom or a bedroom or a Pop barber shop and has placed it on a stage (to show that it is a work of art) and with that astonishes his guests at the most recent cocktail; that that same piece costs \$30,000 should not shock us that much. It could also cost \$30,000 or \$3 or nothing: it all depends on the law of supply and demand. That has helped the creators stay alive, who like anybody else have to eat everyday if possible. Such a set up is nothing else than, in the house of the great bourgeois, a conversational piece, the strange, never seen object that unties the tongue of shy people present at the gathering." And he completes the comment, "Strictly speaking, it was always about an art for educated minorities at the limit of snobbishness."

Regarding this experience, it has been perceived that within the monotony and uniformity of a businessman's life, approaching the world of the arts is an exciting past-time. Becoming friends with artists, rubbing shoulders with hippies (both, the meticulous and the luxurious ones) may result in an experience almost like doing drugs, although certainly less dangerous and of greater social prestige, because it gives him the sensation of doing something for the culture.

Oddly, in this pseudo avant-garde melodrama a type of circle has been created, a phenomenon of camaraderie among artists, critics, merchants, gallery directors, and some initiates. Mircea Eliade warns, in *Aspectos del mito* (1963): "...tension between artists, critics, collectors, and the public no longer exists. They all agree always..." "Today," Eliade adds, "their terror is not being able to guess in time the genius of a work that is at first sight unintelligible." Therefore, we add, if in doubt, they erect an altar to any work, like to an unknown god, and they will pay tribute to that which may favor the greatest economic benefit. That is the panorama in the world of false avant-garde.

In addition to the previously alluded ones, other "esthetic" fashions shall arise quickly at the changing and fluent pace of the times in which we have had to live. Speaking of Conceptual Art, it has been thought that it could be something else, not art. It has been suggested that it could be a classification error as usually happens in the botanical scale and zoology, where there are animals that look like plants and vegetables that have the ambiguous aspect of animals. It could be that "conceptual art", the most important creative force of the

new times, requires exceeding art's classifying molds and having been stuffed into a space where it does not fit. We could apply the neologism of "creatomania" to it in any mental artifice adjacent to art.

On the other hand, it happens that some people become accomplices of falseness, mainly pseudo-critics of so-called avant-garde, who takes advantage of it to create a soup of juggler cryptic writers. In any case, today's art writers register such successive phases of esthetic fashion of recent times and, like many others, we think that this is desirable to the extent that such meticulous inventory favors later on –having already had the necessary perspective and purification– the precise art history of our time.

We had previously alluded to reflection and intuition as resources of discernment; it should be made clear that reflection implies having an eye (which is a projection of the brain) to know how to see experience and historical culture in art; and intuition, the intuitive apprehension Alfred North Whiteheads refers to, the natural insight and sensibility that in a lesser or greater degree decorates the spirit of each human being. Reason and intuition are excluding, but as Niels Bohr has warned, it is necessary to admit that quantum paradoxes are deeply-rooted in nature, which is why I present the notion of complementarities as a legitimate medium to describe the relationship of said excluding phenomena, but indispensable to explain a solid fact in its integrity.

Something as excluding as continuity in electromagnetic radiation as opposed to discontinuity in atomic formulation of matter, or at the psychological level, the cognition as opposed to affection in our lives, meaning, the flow between knowledge and analysis on one hand and emotion or feeling on the other, which makes it necessary to underline the interactive action between one and the other. It is the desirable condition to approach the explanation of a work of art, precisely because the most characteristic thing in the process of its understanding is the intimate cooperation between intuition and intellect. And as Emile Beneviste has warned, if the greatest form of ability inherent to the human condition is the faculty to symbolize, being able to represent reality through a sign, and understanding the sign as representation of reality, it is up to that conjunction between intuition and intellect to approach that significant relationship between different signs and wait until the necessary convergence occurs.

Of course, such an instrument of reflection and intuition presupposes previous conditions. Just like we usually admit that we do not have an ear for music, we should accept, as part of the reflexive process, that not all of us have a perceptive eye, visual perceptiveness, and the appropriate magnitude of sensibility to collaborate effectively in formulating judgment of artistic value. But let's be clear, when we allude to judgment of value, of course, we do not refer to the subjective focus of I LIKE IT or I DON'T LIKE IT, IT APPEALS TO ME or IT DOESN'T APPEAL TO ME, because there is no possible argument there. It is a different case if we allude to the work as pretty or ugly, because that is objective appreciation and, as such, susceptible to discussion. Let's quickly accept as an elucidative premise, that esthetic value is debated in objectivity.

We precisely coincide in the idea that the lack of objective criteria could be the main reason for some of the negative aspects in today's art. In this sense, philosopher and aesthete Rudolf Arnheim's thought could be enlightening, whose work *Ensayos para rescatar el arte* (*Essays to rescue art*), warns that we cannot blame an artist who claims that art is what he decides to describe as such, when people who could elaborate the rules that should judge artistic quality sustain that there is no such objective criteria.

That is how the principle has become widespread: that anything works, whether it is art or not, of low or exceptional quality, superficial or deep. In contemporary art, "everything goes" is usually accepted. Yes, but it is a reality in which the debates are on one hand about what are mere lies or psychic racket elevated to the category of esthetic experience by the critic that is as ingenious as unscrupulous, and on the other hand, the work – which entails richness

in the intelligent and sensible organization of objects arranged with significant meaning. Some have warned that instead of entertaining ourselves within the easy pleasures of relativism, we should take a step forward and face the problem. Likewise, with objective criteria we could become aware that art plays a concrete role in the development of the human mind, as well as determine if a work is worthy of particular consideration.

Such ideas imply true challenges, necessary risks, if we care to distinguish between what is and what isn't art. To exercise intellection, to distinguish authenticity, it is necessary to perceive sense from the work, and that requires sensibility and knowledge regarding color symbolism, the texture of graphism, of the game between space zones, dynamic tension, parallelisms, contrast, interaction between focal points, energetic points, scale and rhythm. In conclusion, we most notice the perceptual elements that symbolize the work's psychological theme.

No matter the tendency it could be affiliated with, the effort of intellection is absolutely necessary in the process of trying to approach the work as closely as possible in order to search for its authenticity. And if the value is present in it, it is because the configuration of a style is the result, as it has been sometimes expressed, of a long and painful construction on behalf of the artist that does not suppose a day or a year, but rather that it represents the patient or desperate struggle between a technique, a will of form, and an eagerness to express himself and his time. And when we approach his work, as Francastel has suggested, we shall not ask it: What do you represent? but rather, What do you respond to? And if we do not follow Paul Valery, it even requires a personal labor of constant reflection by the artist, which implies an effort of progressive conscience in artistic work.

Unfortunately, there is also pseudo-reflection, which makes us remember what Eugenio Delacroix warns about in view of comments by fellow countryman and member of his generation, poet Théophile Gautier about a painting. Delacroix says: "he takes a frame, describes it his way, and in his description he produces a lovely work." Today, many times we go through what may seem a similar experience, but distant from the alluded poetic interpretation. It particularly happens with youngsters who have recently graduated from college, intellectually prepared in art subjects where they are enriched with great conceptual skill in the verbal handling of formal elements and supposed meaning of particularly contemporary works.

But a few, lacking the reflexive need that experience provides after various years of study and professional work, when analyzing works to be consumed by a less informed audience, that audience seems to perceive the description of artistic work of greater merit, although the works do not merit greater consideration or are worth nothing. Those mistakes remind us of experiences in Puerto Rico's past when 'a person we know' wrote literary essays of which the most outstanding ones consisted of intellectually destroying any works he faced, which even caused the self-exile of some of our artists.

It is happening locally as well as internationally: the tendency of some amateurs liking works of avant-garde appearance, indiscriminately accepting as good anything that appears to have such an orientation. The concept of avant-garde implies a new form of significant thought that has consequences, and that experience is not easily acquired. Authentic avant-garde is not the product that satisfies the taste of those who worship a novelty that could be ingenious, but definitely insignificant. It is also not necessarily adopted by that esthetic philosophy adopted by some psychologists by whom pleasure or hedonism constitutes the purpose of art because art should be merely defined as an emotional experience.

Chemical drugs could be a stimulus to incite that emotional experience, and in fact it happens, but such an experience divorces the fundamental essence that encourages artistic expression which is to be a form of significant thought that in the end will result, consciously or unconsciously, in an ethical purpose and a will of shape and style. Chemical drugs that run life and soul within contemporary society and on many occasions are behind pseudo-artistic

things, it are not the only or lesser of drugs. Other types of drugs are also cultivated: the nihilist, irreverent, demoniac attitude, or giving in to the false pleasure that cultivates delight toward shallowness, superficiality, gloating over deception and the false esthetic created by the frustrated artist that entrenches in literary demagoguery.

But there is also the most common drug of our times; the "snob", the supposed art lover who has notoriety as qualitative paradigm, unarmed in reflexive capacity in matters of art and are an ingenuous protector, sometimes in good faith, in a vehicle for spreading works with super-inflated market value, with a destination to nowhere but which in the short run decorate walls as symbol of a pretentious socio-economic state.

The drug of visual art has a historical aspect that dramatizes the addiction to that peculiar taste: false avant-garde. At the beginning of the last century, newly-coined critics absurdly acknowledged esthetic will to the accidental stains that a chimpanzee induced on the surface of a fabric. It was an experiment by Dr. Desmond Morris at the London Zoo, who created paintings that way; these paintings were owned by Herbert Read himself, and the elicited praiseworthy judgment from famous critics with literature that we have named "plastic literature". But let's clarify, if Herbert Read himself adduces that when some pretend to make "Action Painting" by allowing the brush to be guided by instinctive gestures, which they are proud of, then they likewise gesticulate in the same way as chimpanzees, but immediately we must clarify that this is a half-truth because a true artist who expresses himself in "Action Painting", will be able to ensure a significant structure for the work conceived that way; plus there are only a few that can do it, and not that many will be able to detect it.

In pseudo-music we also have the ear's drug, which alienates with a rhythm adapted to a type of music-like screaming which mounted as if on a wild colt, shakes us with its stridency, deafens and surprises us, which has nothing to do with new concepts of harmony, including its denial, nor dissonance nor the new structural techniques of it. The exaltation of the timbral effect by dodecaphonists has been authentic musical avant-garde, their effort for an almost autonomous articulation of each sound as opposed to tone filling, and the schools derived as a consequence of breaking the mold.

We identify with the words of the indisposed and loved friend Carlos Damián Bayón, when he warns that, although it may seem contradictory, on one hand we can be very enthusiastic with what novelty means, but, on the other hand, quite skeptical in accepting en bloc what for some years now is presented to public consideration in avant-garde museums and galleries.

However, all of this does not necessarily conflict with the spirit of authentic innovation. It has been observed that novelty seems to be "a destiny of our time. A time with an acceleration as violent as today's cannot meditate, it cannot mature," its glory, some say, is that "just after finishing his boats, like Cortés, he has to burn them to make new ones, maybe worse, but always under the sign of novelty." There can be positive novelty in contemporary art, and there is, one that is not that which aims to satisfy a new public or for increasing a new clientele, but rather with the authenticity of responding to a change that no longer responds to the requirements of what I know, but of what is known. "Novelty in itself is nothing if it does not at the same time engender a series of consequences," said my teacher Francastel, and adds: "Let's give a primitive village steam; a railroad will not come of it."

Of course, this effort of novelty, so symptomatic of our times, it could be that in some cases it could result in solid and intelligent consequence, in general terms it produces an unreasonable appetite of originality." -We remember pages by Manuel García Morente, where he warns that each large, medium, or small philosopher, "each mini-philosopher, each tiny philosopher, and even philosophy students, expect to have their own system today." And he adds, "just like each painter wants to be a complete renovator of painting and each musician wants to completely renew musical art. And it results in horrific gibberish and rubbish."

For one or two that are in fact creatures of genius and bring an original element to their art, there is on the other hand an infinity of sloppy ones that only, as they say in Paris, 'épater le bourgeois'. That is why Ramón de Campoamor's opinion is appropriate when in 1800, he said: "the habit of making so many mediocre artists into great men is a horrifying signal of unsubstantializing intelligence."

Let's also remember the words of Pío Baroja, with rigorous validity nowadays when he says that: "There cannot be new art made in a deliberate way. It is the vanity of some poor-spirited people who boast themselves of being audacious by saying that we are making a new art. Those who have made something new have almost always done it unintentionally. Even the geniuses who have founded religions and sects have always thought of being continuers and not inventors." And he added: "This new art is something like what is said about the school kid who explained the Discovery of America by saying: 'Christopher Columbus went into his caravel and told his peers: 'Let's discover America','' or what that German general said: 'Let's begin the Thirty Years' War'."

Wise men of our times have said that the search for originality at all cost could be a misfortune of contemporary cultural life. Of course, there are resources of great sociological and pseudo-philosophical demagogy to justify the forced existence or encouragement of innovation. It has been adduced, perhaps rightfully, that it comes from a feeling of insecurity. Some artists feel that what they think of spontaneously, what they come up with, is not enough to attract attention. Their first improper step could be the search for an extraordinary way to liven up the ordinary; the second, changing thoughts to adopt another one that is extravagant. Especially when he or she abides by fashion or adopts a model and makes his art an imitation. The distance with authentic originality is that it is not sought, it is found. It proceeds from spontaneity of seeing life; Beckett never wanted to surprise or do anything unusual, but rather express his own way of seeing the world and human beings. He did not imitate. Another weakness is that the works of the artist arrive at a mimesis of itself that hurts it; he tries to repeat his own formula, to rush or exhaust it.

These observations are inspired by the spirit of authenticity. When I was writing these notes, I inadvertently thought about Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida, for whom I feel great admiration. His work, pure abstract, is of an authenticity so free of mimesis, of repetition of itself and superficiality, that it borders on ineffable emotion. Chillida, who died not so long ago, never deceived himself; neither does our Carmen Inés Blondet. However, we remember Mario Vargas Llosa's sculptor friend, who tired of having galleries refuse to exhibit the splendid woods that he worked on from dusk to dawn, the sculptor decided that the safest path toward success in the arts was to attract attention. And said and done, he produced "sculptures" that consisted of pieces of rotten meat in glass boxes with live flies fluttering around. Vargas Llosa's sculptor friend 'triumphed' to the extreme that Jean Marie Drot, French radio-television star, devoted an entire program to him.

And since we are already on a plan of critique, may it be a hopeful grain of salt that the sparks of light made by the friction of feet may, more than explain concepts, serve to create awareness of the interesting problems that contemporary art presents. It is commonly known that it is characterized by the mix of expressive forms, a concoction of solutions, where generally it is everything, but it could be nothing. There are those who claim that the artist should submit to his own self-analysis, first to see if he is on the right path, or if perhaps he is mistaken in the means he uses. Regarding this, there has been warning, perhaps controversial assertions, that there are painters, but there are others who are, essentially, natural decorators, book illustrators, frustrated photographers, set designers, graphics designers, and although it is possible that they could all be good at what they do, not so in the ambiguity, unless they are geniuses, but geniuses are not abundant.

Other questionable aspects regarding the pseudo-artistic features of contemporary manifestations could be that of "exhibiting" an absent or inexistent object, which transfers a

literary category such as the well-known reference to Mallarmé and his famous date with a non-existing woman at odd hours. It is also questionable to force an appearance of poverty to place a label of "arte povera". Such types of audacity have been classified even by the critics most open to its innovative spirit as "faux intellectualism", plus "an enormous mass of audacious improvisers who afflict us and must be denounced without mercy.

We must also be alert to whether or not accept "perishable works in the short-term"; fleetingness is inherent to the circumstances themselves of contemporary times, but equally susceptible of being or not being an authentic sign of the vertiginousness that penetrates the core of our time. Regarding this, Richard Serra's sculpture is praiseworthy and was installed at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao not long ago. It is a monument to multiple temporalities where times superimpose as the spectator enters it and moves inside the parts that make up the unit. It is a case where the concept of fleetingness, which we have identified as inherent in peculiarities of our time, is elevated to an esthetic experience with ethical meaning. The author has expressed its meaning: "the spectator becomes absorbed in a journey in which sensations depend on his will to invest time and allow his memories to merge into perception."

We also remember John Balossi's serious behavior toward fleetingness, as owner of his firm artistic will, he trapped momentary and elusive concepts and transformed them into static concepts in a series of sculptural panels on sheets of beaten and embossed aluminum. They are very different from the colored feathers that are thrown into space-time like whirlwinds of stillborn fashion, full of shallowness, which are soon labeled by novelty merchants and added to the list of pseudo-avant-garde movements.

We should also be on alert for siren songs of some art critics, headed mainly by Europeans of notorious advertising praise in the panorama of today's art, given to literary and pseudo-philosophical flight creating poetic prose about what they admire. Let's remember the particular case of the Delacroix trial about a critique of such nature by Théophile Gautier, but today it is not a particular case but rather a common place.

If with such critique they mean to imply a sound judgment of artistic value, they pointlessly digress. And if artistic literature means to praise what is vile, even worse, worse than the destructive judgment of he who is pleased to knowingly ruin even what is good in order to build an ingenious literary essay. We shall not infer from this that we believe that critique should ignore the correct and imaginative linguistic expression to describe or note values, because it is quite the opposite. It is possible that it does not imply a rigorous relationship with the aforementioned; we remember a slogan with content as follows, which at some point appeared on the murals in Paris. "All power to the Imagination!" To which a sensible critic replied with the following words: "If the future belongs to those who imagine, oh, poor me, imagining is done by those who can and not by those who want to; many are called but few, very few, are selected."

However, we are convinced that much of what is done today goes beyond responding to merely insignificant urgencies, because in fact there are works that are lighthouses in time. Each of these works of positive signs is a lit light bulb that guides toward new paths; it is a consequence of an honest work effort, a way to strengthen a vocation according to ideals, one in which the artist wants to prove something. On the other hand, we believe that those who massively and as a rule destroy all values that have a hint of the past forget that those values are the foundation of life on which, despite themselves, they stand. Karl Marx has an appropriate phrase for that: "Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater." Rafi Trelles did not throw out the value of *El Velorio (The Wake)* by Francisco Oller along with Courbet's 19th century realism; he made the magnificent new Velorio which is a contemporary masterpiece. Others who did not throw the baby out: Rosado del Valle, Rodón, Domingo García, Hernández Cruz, Martorrel, Nick Quijano, Homar, Félix Rodríguez, Félix Bonilla, Elizam Escobar, Tuto Marín, Tufiño, Sobrino, and many others.

When faced with any kind of iniquity, artists may and should abide by an ethic as reactionary reply, like Picasso in his *Guernica*, which attacks in the correct direction. This, very much unlike he who derives pleasure in blowing a pseudo-artistic plastic grenade in the face of the spectator like a barbarian who morbidly identifies with the irrationality of the alienated, or because of the frugal satisfaction of seeing his name in the newspaper and on television, like our friend Vargas Llosa. Of course, there are those who warn that such gestures or "gests", labeled here as irrational, are part of the artistic reason of our times, time of wars to end all wars, or of murder to end all murders, or of politics (science of good governing) turned into a phenomenon where senselessness is entrenched, or the times when human lives are exchanged – with impunity – for petroleum, or where the absence of that Greek "gnome", or rules with which to govern, allows opportunism and shrewdness to prevail. If that is the tone of our times and what we allude to are established values, no matter whether or not they are official, and if false avant-garde adheres to it usurping in the mind of the new generations the authentic innovative effort of contemporary art, we must also remember that subversion, when facing what should be overcome, has been a resource of authentic revision or artistic revolution for centuries.

Another open window that is suggested in our ideas is relevant to the idea of identity. Today, the criteria abounds that it is an obsolete feeling when faced with the expression of global scope in a world that narrows through communications. But we should warn that the greatest force of globalization is of economic order and it is not for artistic and telluric feelings to allow themselves to be strangled by existence categories that are marginal to them. We agree with José Saramago in that globalization, as an idea, tends to squeeze the world of its values of identity and to be a new form of totalitarianism where in the end human beings could come to be reduced to a mere object. Beware of those who inadvertently play against what attempts against the value of individuality in the name of siren songs that lead to the essential disintegration of all things human. And as we try to conquer outer space, we do not try to conquer the microcosm with the same interest, which is more within our reach.

There has been warning or insinuation regarding the desire or need to imply an ethical sense upon artistic expression. That, when facing confusing, contradictory, dark, provocative, changing, irritating, unstable, pseudo-conceptual, fleeting, vacuous, and many other epithets, attributes, or converging and diverging elements that appear in a certain dose of today's art. In this picture, as per Francis Bacon the critics should refuse to approve any expressions that feed on excessive tolerance, insensitivity, brutality, and ironic detachment. And following that same line of thought, we say if such negativism responds to a phase of today's reality, it is precise to activate the other side of the positive value of all things human. It is necessary to shake the ethical reason that artistic thought could express, presently quieted by the hundreds of factors that pressure and surprise us, what we have summarized in the myth of Odysseus, who, to restrain himself from the fatal enchantment of the mermaids still listening to the melodies, stuffed his crew's ears with wax and ordered them to tie him to the ship's mast. Camus also summarizes all of this in his claim for measure, the necessary moderation engendered by the own rebelliousness and healthy inconformity of artists.

Only then, will art, in addition to being automatic seismograph of the times, be able to express itself for what it is: a form of thought capable of showing new directions of a dignifying future. We agree with Italian Gino Dorflès, one of the best known critics and philosophers of art, when he warns: "Naturally, I do not believe in redeeming recipes or recipes of salvation that may be written and imposed publicly with the purpose of healing the flaws and sins of humanity; more certainly, I believe that it should be considered, not only in its cultural or erudite aspect, but also valued by its indisputable moral effectiveness. That it may mirror the situation we are in, yes, but at the same time, be the means to improve and overcome it; art, also in our times, is not only its artistic expression, but in all its forms of

exhibit: theater, music, and literature, should be the most sensible and efficient instrument to guide the future of humanity."