

## LOVE DIFFERENCE SEEN BY...

### Visions, reflections and future perspectives for the Artistic Movement for an InterMediterranean Politic

"With his extraordinary energy and attentiveness to the present day, Michelangelo Pistoletto continues to churn out ideas, and work with the younger generations. This is how the Love Difference experience came into being recently, which involves me directly along with him and many others. When Michelangelo Pistoletto asked me to take part in setting up Love Difference, a creative and thought-based movement for triggering political commitment in art, it struck me immediately that he had hit on something that the art system needed. Art, as the production of artistic objects, is no longer sufficient today while, instead, the need to leave preconceived judgments on art behind and create new ways for being creative has become unavoidable. Creativity can take up spaces that up to now were foreign to it or which had never been related to it. It can be used differently and I'm thinking of the system of economic production, the nearest activity to material reality. *Love Difference* is exploring this terrain in order to bring about constant change to creative thought, and set it in line with its time".

by Chiara Bertola, *curator of the Querini Stampalia Foundation of Venice, in Michelangelo Pistoletto. La realtà come dimensione aperta, attiva e mai immobilizzante, Edizione Il Ponte, Firenze, 2003*

"Art is a massage of the atrophied muscle of collective sensibility. Collective sensibility, appeased by television and computers is massaged by a wake-up system which is art; it is strengthened to becoming a collective muscle that doesn't make war but is nurtured by the co-existence of differences".

by Achille Bonito Oliva, art critic, *From the speech at the Art, Culture, Knowledge and Democracy round table event during the 51st Venice Biennial on the Island of San Servolo, Venice, 8 - 9 June 2005.*

"Love difference is an art project that creates a threshold for entry into real, working with different states and nations, observing the differences, considering the multiplicity and diversity as an absolutely essential form of wealth. In Love Difference Pistoletto brings together references to the work of a lifetime. The mirror becomes table, a table that takes the form of the Mediterranean Sea, which reflects the people coming from different experience that sit around it to talk and exchange ideas. The work opens in an exponential manner and involves individuals who are no longer audience but active part in the definition of the project. So this process that started with the mirrored works of the Sixties has much broader horizons now, and art, - Love Difference branches into projects which measure against a globalized world, and with an order of problems, stimuli, contradictions, challenges and differences, which have never been seen before.

We are at a new passage. Art is the threshold for crossing it."

by Cloe Piccoli, *Independent art critic and curator in Progetto Arte - Journal 9, Fondazione Pistoletto Onlus editore, Torino, 2005.*

Starting out from the idea of the sea that bears the name Mediterranean we extend the concept of Love Difference to planetary level broadening our vision to other Mediterranean Seas of the world. Each of these gathers historical and contemporary realities of different cultures around its shores which are related to different countries. The name mediterranean has a meaning common to all seas surrounded by land, as opposed to oceans and expanses of water without defined perimeters."

by Michelangelo Pistoletto, *in Progetto Arte - Journal 9, Fondazione Pistoletto Onlus editore, Torino, 2005.*

"We are convinced that the issue of the differences in Mediterranean cultures should be tackled first and foremost on a cultural level. The crux of the problem is aesthetic-ethical, namely of the forms that express, determine and set off moral processes. This is a responsibility to be shouldered first and foremost by intellectuals who instead of merely following, noting, discussing and commenting should be in the front line in playing a significant direct role in changing tendencies, beginning to investigate and propose, organize and set up new mental forms. The issue now pressing upon us is: 'Uniformity or difference? - predomination of the global economic system, or multiplicity of social forms, ideas, cultures, methods and individualities?'"

by Michelangelo Pistoletto, *in Osservatorio Intermediterraneo, a publication distributed in 2001 for Arte al Centro di una trasformazione sociale responsabile, Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella.*

"People have been thinking about the Mediterranean for some fifty years, analysing and turning issues and problems inside out.

If artists want to get involved, either they study a lot and only then do something or otherwise they look like raw amateurs only out for cheap thrills and applause. Good intentions are one of art's biggest perils today, and I feel it is no coincidence that Baj and Virilio were the first to realise it. I feel that Love Difference could be an interesting container as long as its aim is not to force commitment as an artistic form but, instead, sets off directly to do works whose reading makes some sense and encourages the provocation of reality. I'm tired of seeing architects and artists concentrating on the Israeli wall or on immigration without there being any real impact on resolving the problems. Furthermore, I think it's a scandal when someone works with handicapped children to make art. The worst is having salvaged the category of art as something intrinsically positive. Artists are in danger of replacing boy scouts or

charitable ladies with the same hypocrisy and nil impact on reality.”

“The Mediterranean is not a place for putting recipes into practice. It is first and foremost a very complicated and violent place. Artists could use their sensitivity to tackle these issues, but in order to understand them or seek to understand them. One example for me comes from Pierre Huygues who has extensively studied illicit practices in the south of Italy as a key for understanding what dreams and hopes people have when they make a home. I repeat, my viewpoint is wholly external. I am an anthropologist, I do fieldwork and research and I know the Mediterranean well enough to be aware that art is very often used for hiding essential lacunae.

I grew up in Gibellina in Sicily and I know what a scandal art is there. Having said that, I’ll stop here and leave those really involved to pardon my highly primitive reaction.”

by Franco La Cecla, *anthropologist*, in comments delivered to the 2nd Love Difference Members' Meeting