

Manifesto

COSA è Arte?

The conceptual focus of the competition *COSA è Arte?* to which the artists must refer, relies on the word "**Cosa** (what)". This special word is to be considered in its pragmatic use in every sphere of human experience, the intention to stimulate a semantic study of the concept according to the personal artistic interpretation of the participants.

In contemporary Italian, the word has been clothed with a trivializing aura, becoming the symptom of superficial generalizations to the point of being ostracized from important communications where a high degree of punctuality and accuracy is required. However, an examination of its etymology reveals an unexpected underlying dignity: "*cosa*" derives from "*causa*," a Latin expression used first and foremost to indicate a "subject of interest," a "reason for coming together," a "matter worth discussing." *Cosa*, then, etymologically speaking, is anything that deserves attention, anything that "unbalances" the individual outside himself, that involves him. But, at the same time, in its colloquial usage, it connotes everything that is generic, and unimportant.

Depending on how it is used, the word relates to two different gazes of the human being on the world: an interested gaze, which seeks a relationship with another, and a detached gaze, which has lost all desire to establish such a relationship.

It is in the light of these considerations that the idea of the *Iuvalt* competition emerged, with the aim of fostering a **meditation on "interest" in the authentic sense of the term** which - as the Latin again teaches us - means "**to stand between**", **to inhabit a relationship with the world**.

The concept of the competition starts from two parallel perspectives, both tending toward the same vanishing point identified in art itself: the safeguarding of the national artistic heritage and the encouragement of artistic freedom. In fact, these two guiding ideas open to complex reasoning on the relational "what" of art, triggering a capillary reflection on both art for itself and its representation, with which every subjectivity interacts. Hence, the search for that "what", which lies in the middle and in all aesthetic perception, between the subject and the object, between memory and oblivion, between need and desire, between the finite and the infinite in the midst of art itself.

To facilitate the development of this concept, three keywords are emphasized; each brings a series of intrinsic questions on both the theoretical and aesthetic front, that both artists and public will experience:

- *interest*

What is the meaning of "interesting"? Can the root of the word (from the Latin, *inter-esse*, "to stand between") provide unprecedented perspectives on the subject? How do current modes of communication influence the notion of interest? What is the relationship between time and interest? Why and how does interest in something arise? Is a work of art always interesting? Does the process of art creation presuppose, on the part of the artist, the manifestation of an interest in something? How much do the context and the way a work is presented affect its ability to arouse interest?

- ***relationship***

Can there be a relationship without interest? Can there be interest without a relationship? Doesn't the Latin verb *inter-esse* itself indicate a relationship between two things? Can artistic reception be described as the establishment of a relationship between audience and work? If so, what are the prerequisites and characteristics of this relationship? And what happens when this relationship fails?

- ***disinterest***

Is "disinterest" synonymous with the absence of a relationship? Is disinterestedness socially acceptable/accepted? If so, on what occasions? Is it acceptable to feel disinterest when standing in front of a work of art or at an art site whose value is institutionally recognized?

The issues raised by this discourse directly affect the ethical sphere. Indeed, reasoning about the aesthetic dynamics underlying interest and disinterest is relevant not only in the field of art.

Other key questions unfold: why do some events take more of a central role in public debate than others? Which issues are most forgotten and why do they fail to attract community attention? Does the urgency of an issue necessarily make it interesting/catalyze attention?

The complexity of these insights is intended to challenge the artist, stimulating him or her to emotionally interpret the discourse, thereby arriving at the creative reasoning that will lead to the creation of the work in competition.