

A survey on the identity, contradictions, dreams and hopes of Italian artists.

***“Artist’s profile”: Dreams and hopes between the public and private sectors
The results of the ISPO survey on identifying the artist today***

Terna Award, 124 finalists identified, out of over 3,100 registered

Turin, November 9, 2008 - 68% of artists are unable to live off their work. 75% have conflicting relations with gallery owners, 86% believe that contemporary art should be supported both by the Government and by private companies.

These are some summary results of the first survey on the Artist’s profile conducted by the ISPO-Institute for Studies on the Public Opinion on behalf of Terna on a group of artists registered in the Terna 01 Award, that are representative of the Italian artistic scenario. The results were presented today during ARTISSIMA. The first structured statistical and sociologic survey on contemporary artists’ profile in our country identified the contradictions, dreams and hopes of the Italian creative artists that are suspended between a search for success and visibility, private wishes and support from institutions and the private sector.

Significant data emerged from the judgment of the artists regarding the overall situation of our country’s contemporary art market: a twofold result. Half of the artists, 48%, believes that the present Italian contemporary art market is experiencing a crisis. The other half, vice-versa, feels that the situation is “good”. Among suggestions to improve the present situation, the first request was for greater support from the institutions (71%) followed by stronger and more structured International relations among operators (66%), by a greater involvement of private companies and by sharing important projects among artists. Like other different sectors that are also facing difficult situations, the artists expressed the profound need for public support and 79% of those interviewed felt they should be funded by the government, the same way the film and theater sectors are. While only one third of Italians (34%) believes that contemporary art should be supported by the Government and private companies together, the percentage rises to 86% among artists.

A general difficulty from a financial point of view is also confirmed by the data that highlight that only 32% of artists live off of their artistic work, while 68% must hold another job.

Conflicting relations also exist with gallery owners: on one hand they are considered essential by the majority, 71% of artists, but on the other, 75% of those interviewed, believes they “take advantage” of the artist. Difficult relations with gallery owners are an aspect that is added to the request of greater support from structured organizations.

Data collected showed other interesting information concerning the artist’s work: 64%, in fact, evaluates its success on the basis of personal satisfaction concerning its artworks; the minority, 20% only, identifies success with appreciation from art critics. 11% does not feel to have reached success only for economic reasons. This seems to be a contradictory element: if on one hand creative power emerges as the principal motivation and a sort of carelessness with regard to the economic aspect, on the other, the support from a third party, even economic, is considered as fundamental by the majority of the artists that were interviewed to carry out one’s activity .

Almost all artists (93%) have already displayed their works at an exhibit, while 76% feels that it is more difficult to sell them in Italy than it is abroad. With regard to artistic circulation and visibility, 93% of the artists believes that an artwork should be exhibited, in addition to all the traditional places (museums, galleries, etc.) also in all possible public places.



62% of those interviewed feels that art awards and contests are the only way for a young artist to be recognized: this is one of the main reasons for participating in the Terna Award, followed by the interest for the energy transmission theme (37%) and by the “democratic” criteria for participating in the contest (27%). Criteria that were “awarded” by the extraordinary result of the online voting that only during the first day registered visits by over 30 thousand voters, for a total of over 120,000 visits as of today.

The results of the detailed survey were illustrated by Professor Mannheimer during the meeting with the press for the presentation of the 124 finalists of the Terna 01 Award. The first phase of the Award was created by Terna, the company that owns and manages the high voltage electricity grid in Italy and ended on October 30; the Award’s curators were Gianluca Marziani and Francesco Cascino. An outstanding participation: 3,158 artworks registered in the website www.premioterna.it in the three categories - Terawatt (only by invitation for famous artists), Megawatt (over 35), Gigawatt (under 35) that involved well known and emerging artists, creating an opportunity for exchange and for new talents to emerge as well as for promoting the role of artists as research and development engines for new creativity. All the artists – 58% men and 42% women – equally distributed throughout the national territory; North 36%, South 33.6%, Center 30.4%, participated in the theme “Transmitting energy: a contemporary metaphor”. The category that was most represented was the Megawatt, with a percentage of 55.3%, followed by Gigawatt with 44.7%,

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