**The Educational Dimension of Art**

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The title of this topic is problematic for the present time and needs to be explained. In education we tend to strive for a specific object or quality in a person, or even a form of development, maturation, which we aim to achieve. The concept of formation which we use today in modern languages when we talk about education includes a root ‘forma’ which means 'form'. Considering art we must bear in mind that today we are witnessing art that is no longer justified with beauty, but it determines the expressive power of the individual. Expressiveness is related to aesthetics; aesthetics today however is no longer defined by beauty. Something similar is probably happening in education and I am afraid that even modern pedagogy is caught up in the individuals and in their expressive capabilities. With this I just wanted to stress that we have to deal with concepts that have been changed a lot, not to say radically. Therefore, we must be constantly attentive to our perception of words such as education, art, beauty, an individual, a person.

**Modern Art**

Modern art begins with the discovery of the classical era. This discovery is offered to modern man as a substance which an artist deals with in a very confident and free way, in accordance with his needs. Take the example of the Renaissance period, which represents the most prominent mark of the beginning of modern art, while at the same time we can note an entirely unique use of classical art in the Renaissance period. It is not about a historical-critical approach, but it can safely be said to be a rather lay, not integral approach, which has enabled the construction of a new vision of art. This has become a reflection of a new vision of man, life and history. The main novelty of this 'new vision' is certainly the supremacy of ideas. An idea becomes fundamental, it becomes the starting point of perfection which an artist wants to present. An artist contemplates the idea of ​​perfection in this world considering perfection as perfection of form or, in other words, the form is the most convincing and expressive reflection of perfection. Therefore, it is self-evident that perfection is expressed in harmony, in the harmony of forms, in the coincidence of forms. This harmony of form creates balance and harmony of perfection in the field of painting which is not seen in creation, but which we know only as the idea of ​​creation. Thus, Renaissance art returns to that classic platform where an artist corrects this creation, improves forms of objects, things, and the universe in general in accordance with the image of ideas. An artist creates images on the basis of ideas, which is a kind of idealization. Since form is attached to material properties, modern Renaissance art definitely represents perfection of material bodies, and architecture.

At the heart of this art are artists with their intelligence. Everything is subject to their perspective. Their vision has its origin in themselves and from it expands and extends towards the vanishing point, which means the third dimension. It is the point where a series of rather serious issues arise. Does this excessive focus on the individual not mean that on humans a kind of responsibility is imposed which they cannot cope with and which does not belong to them? Is this anthropocentrism just an expression of a historical 'pendulum' which means a reaction to a mystified totalitarian supremacy of the divine? Is this anthropocentrism not just the opposite extreme to the theocentrism which a couple of centuries earlier came to its peak of globalization?

Renaissance art thematically still deals with Christian content, but Christianity has no longer been the true content of culture since theocentric globalization. We cannot ignore the fact that Christianity is the content of a culture and its life-charge, i.e. its creative force, only so far as its foundation is the divine-humanity of Jesus Christ. The real novelty of Christianity is the inseparable unity of God and man, the unity that is grounded on the freedom of the love of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit men are sacramentally grafted onto this divine-humanity of Jesus Christ, in which they learn the love of the Father and receive their share of it. As soon as we deviated from that foundation and started to stress the divine unilaterally, we started losing the Christian dimension of our culture, since the essence of the Christian faith is the revelation of God to mankind. So we started to reduce God to the conceptual world and slowly faith got separated from life, and from love. What faith should be has shrunk in a totally wrong and limiting way to religious ideas, theological doctrine which should be learnt by man and then lived by accordingly. By this, faith has been reduced to religion. Religion presupposes the human effort to improve their lives and the life of society by religious norms, in the name of religious doctrine, religious ethics, spirituality, that is, in the name of some god. If men carry out everything correctly, they will receive a prize, if not, they will get a punishment. When faith slipped to this level, we lost sight of the very innovation that was a fundamental feature, its essence, which was life that a man accepts as Christ's life. It means that when men adopt and come to life in an existential novelty, they are joined to the existence of the Holy Trinity. Faith lost free belonging of a man to God and God to a man. Freedom was no longer an integral dimension of love, faith was no longer a vitalizing power, but merely an ideological doctrine which resulted in moralism in practice.

In Renaissance art an obvious expression of this dramatic dichotomy between the divine and the human can already be observed. Art which is based on the perfectness of forms cannot show the novelty of a man who lives in Christ. It merely shows their earthly, physical, formal perfection as the one which should represent the truth of a human. If Christ before his death is depicted as totally perfect in body and shape, in the Apollonian style, and then just like that after the resurrection, this can be a great trap in which a man can get caught, as well as art. Does it help me, if Christ in his body is so perfect and rises from the grave in all His physical perfection, if I do not have anything in common with him considering appearance, not before and – even less – after death? How should a man who is suffering from cancer, stuck in a bed, be comforted by an image of Christ who in Apollonian style is fully floating through the air although he also carries with him the full weight of his muscles? Is this art not rather food for an illusionist’s imagination than for confirming the faith of victory over death? Does such art not exaggerate in the presentation of a perfection that does not exist but is only an imaginary expression which does not take into account the reality in which we find ourselves when we come into this world and when we leave it?

**The drama of dividing the real and the ideal world, the natural and the supernatural dimension**  
In the Raphael rooms, the so-called “Hall of Constantine” (see Figure 1) a very problematic scene is depicted on the ceiling. It is a scene that shows the image of what we have just explained. We see the pagan god cast from the pedestal, which is replaced with a cross with the crucified Christ. The fresco represents the pagan god of stone while the cross and Christ are made of bronze. At the time when these frescoes were painted, Christianity was already understood as a religion that simply replaced the previous religion. In the same context as the Raphael rooms the Athens school can be found (see Figure 2), where Raphael set up a monument to human creativity and intelligence. In the centre of the composition there are two giants, Aristotle and Plato, who point with their hands to the division in the very core of human cognition: for Aristotle the true way is realism, and for Plato idealism.

On the opposite wall a large fresco of the 'Eucharistic discussion' is presented (see Figure 3). The scene is marked by a clear division between the supernatural and the natural world, where the natural world coincides with the real whilst the supernatural with an ideal world. This division was also confirmed by the centuries that followed. All modern thought from Descartes and Kant onwards has actually followed this structure. At the same time this scene contains another, no less problematic aspect, which is the following one: the Eucharist is no longer an act of worship, it is no longer an event, it is no longer the river that the apostle John described in the Book of Revelation, which is poured over all the centuries and places of history. Liturgy is no longer seen as an event that is continuously active and combines history and the eschaton, which is the beginning and the end. The Eucharist is shown here as a cult object. It is an object of veneration and not for the holy event, which also varies in sacred history and through the Church extends its sacramentality to all humanity and reality. Not only that, the debate about the Eucharist is fundamentally flawed, because we cannot understand or comprehend the Eucharist separated from the act of worship which is in the life of the Church. Here it is torn from its context and has become the subject of philosophical debate. We have therefore moved from the liturgy into philosophy. Or, in other words, we moved from the sanctuary into the classroom, but now we are trying from the human perspective, that is, by human activity, to rationally comprehend and explain the Eucharist, which is a mystery of divine-humanity, even more, which is the secret of the unity of God and the human world. It is here where a large loop of anthropocentrism appears. How should man himself with his intellect grasp something that is in itself an inseparable unity, namely the unity of the divine and the human? Here you can see that a man no longer participates in the life of God-humanity, but people have started to perceive themselves as separated from this life.

This gap between the ideal and the real, which is reflected in art, of course, has its consequences for education. Christianity offered education as growth in the newness of a life whose share man was given by the Holy Spirit. But here we have a man who will constantly have to reach out for some ideals which he has yet to conquer and achieve. Some time will pass and Freud will come, who will devote his entire life to various theories on how to cure this neurotic man who broke into this separateness which occurs between one’s reality and one’s ideals. Considering this vision man is merely an individual who carries out his uniqueness, the uniqueness of human nature, including those dark, opaque precipices, while at the same time the individual fears his ideals which society sets upon him - or he even does so himself - as idealized uniqueness which is no longer merely one’s own nature, but a kind of idealized supernatural world.

A subsequent variant of Modern Art, Baroque, will mystically reshape the idealized supernatural world in such a way that it will dissipate into a multitude of forms originating from the dignity of Renaissance forms. In the Renaissance period, for example, the dress of an angel would fall in its magnificence and the light would point out just a few of the dazzling pleats, while this dress in the Baroque period became agitated, as if wind were blowing it, and those few Renaissance creases, proud and upright, would disappear and shine out in the crowd of waves. Everything that is important in the Baroque period is transferred to the ceiling, which is raised above the level of human sight. Baroque primarily aimed at presenting the spiritual ideal, the supernatural world. But the culture outside the church rushes forward at its own pace and Baroque remains bound only to churches and mansions, while outside new flows which refer to the Renaissance period pervade, such as Classicism. The latter is a still sharper artistic production of design perfection and no doubt we can say that this emphasis on perfection leads to a kind of formalism which turned into a kind of a cultural dictatorship. Take a look, for example, at paintings by Poussin, Velazquez, and late Ingres and you will easily notice how this social formalism supresses the soul of man in the name of an ideal; psychoanalysis would later name it as "that dark soul of man." It is not difficult to see how this repressing and pushing human reality under a kind of lead shell into the human subconscious evokes and increases a negative charge in man, which causes man to crash internally that he can no longer live freely, but turn into a victim of these internal tensions which cannot be coped with by one’s reason.

We can quickly sense that according to the law of the 'pendulum' the next phase will bring an explosion of the individual against formalist levelling. The individual will break into the world and want to assert his originality. But all that individuals have is their own nature, which is, as we know, hurt - not only by sin but also by the culture that requested individuals to overcome their nature and fulfil some supernatural world. Therefore, these individuals cannot fulfil their originality, they cannot achieve a certain quality which would assert them in society. If one would like to implement a kind of quality of one’s own nature, then again one would be subject to idealism. What is left is that one may concentrate on the form of expression. The content does not matter anymore; the form and expressiveness themselves are already the form and the content. Contemporary art does no longer want to be an aesthetic model, but its aesthetics start to change on the basis of expressiveness. The more primal the expressiveness is, the more energy is loaded on it, the more direct it is, the more it approaches what new aesthetics is about. Thus artistic currents are born which work according to the principle "art is an expression of the artist" (we can classify all diversity of expressionisms and conceptualisms here). An artist expresses himself: what he feels, experiences; what his inner state is. This transfer from the inner to the outer world, and the success of this transfer becomes an aesthetic ideal of the new art. Considering this, a hundred years ago there was a premonition of what we see today. If individuals were subject to some supernatural world for centuries and had to live in the name of it, in accordance with the laws of the supernatural that guided their thinking and action, it is clear that a time must come when individuals will resist it and try to assert themselves so that they will rule nature. Of course this does not mean mastering nature in a kind of ascetic spirit, but an individual becomes nature’s consumer and chooses nature by himself. Before that, one lived in a situation where one could not choose on one’s own, and what’s more, one had to silently submit to it, now the time came where individuals could select and choose, even their own characters. And because the most painful in terms of human nature is its incompleteness, vulnerability and mortality, it is clear that individuals want this nature in such a way that they themselves create such a descendant, who will at birth have some of that supernatural perfection that has already been purely conceptually conceived and formally painted. Man should be born already with a corrected nature. Furthermore, as far as nature is concerned, it is most important for a human being whether it is male or female, which is why it is logical that individuals will choose their own sex and society with all its structures should allow one to do that.  
The 'new technology' and the digital culture therefore provide an individual with a very wide range of expressions, where one can conceive oneself and society in some virtual world and create an atmosphere of massive power of the individual at the same time. Even in case that individuals do not have the economic potential of cultural or legislative options to genetically select and correct their own nature, this happens in the virtual area of digital internet culture, where the mass of humanity moves in a sphere that allows an individual to experience the optional power of an individual. Certain artistic presentations that have a wide scope in public (the Eurovision song contest, for example) help to enforce these norms of the individual who takes revenge on the idealized supernatural world by deforming his/her own nature (Figure 4: from Ingres to Conchita Wurst).

**Without the Transfiguration there is neither art nor education**

We have seen that modern art actually once again asserts its pre-Christian base, which represents a basic duality, the division between the natural and the supernatural, the real and the conceptual. That is why in modern art no traces of the issue of metamorphosis (Transfiguration) can be found. Not only that, in modern art man cannot find the slightest trace of visual art that would be able to present man and the world in the process of transfiguration. Therefore the milestones of modern and contemporary art are defined: modern art either tends to idealism aiming to overcome a given reality or depicts realism as a praise of earthly reality, as it is presented to us in the visual, experiential or cognitive way. Modern art either resorts to conceptualism as a substitute for some real symbolism or it rests in a simple expression of the internal, emotional, or psychological state, which can finally lead to the point that an artist only seeks some kind of reflection in things, a kind of romantic quote, or simply comes to a stop in the fatality of the status quo.

By this, art actually gave up its most important task, which is the transcending of these realities. Art thus gave up eternity and mystery with it. Therefore, it has become fragile in its technique, in its expressive material. It has become a short-term occurrence, subjected to the transience of life, temporality. Art has become merely an installation and even this mostly not in space, but on an iPad screen. The creative ability of the individual only seems to be unlimited.

It is in Christ only that man is revealed as a person who receives that kind of existence which is typical of God's people. Christ says: "He who has seen me has seen my Father" (John 14:9). This means that in one Person lives another Person. One Person is the revelation of another Person. Christ as the Son actually lives His identity in the revelation of the Father. In Christ humanity also takes a share in such an existence. Christ is not an individual who would be merely an expression of the divine, or human nature. Christ cannot be called an individual. When we talk about an individual we have in mind, for example, a single chair, where each single chair expresses the nature of a chair, just as each individual rabbit expresses the nature of a rabbit. A man however cannot be reduced to an individual, because a man is not simply an expression of human nature. If all individual people were merely an expression of human nature, then all individuals would be unified and integrated because of this common human nature. Life however testifies all the time that human nature does not suffice to keep us together; human nature is not the core principle of unity and the unity of the human family. Christ, therefore, is not an expression of the divine nature, but exactly the opposite: his divine nature in its entirety is affixed the seal of sonship, because Christ is eternally born by God the Father. Christ therefore is not an expression of human nature, but exactly the opposite: Christ is changing human nature, as it is seared into his sonship. He imbued our human nature with His filial love. Therefore Christ is not an ideal man to be imitated by an individual but the contrary: man has the opportunity to participate in the sacramental reality of Christ and not by his own efforts but with freedom to accept the newness of existence.

When one is involved in this new existence, when one is imbued with the novelty of life, one can no longer be satisfied with Dualism, the division of the material and spiritual worlds, the natural and the supernatural, one can no longer moralise. One’s knowledge becomes much more challenging than what one is used to. Our understanding moves between two poles: If I should discover a certain thing, I have to isolate it and take it as it is itself, which means that I need to separate myself from the object of my knowledge. Cognition is therefore based on the separation of the recognizing one and the recognized one. The second pole is scientific knowledge of relationships between elements, things, and objects. After rejection of metaphysics, which essentially does not exceed analogy, our knowledge is shut in between these two poles. Analogy and metaphysics suffer from this strict division of the two worlds.

In Christ, as well as in sacraments in which - as St Leo the Great says – what has been the body of Christ is continued, there is a relationship which is the foundation of cognition; a relationship is not only the relations among the subject and objects but a loving relationship that allows us to get to know one another. It is not a relationship between two points, but a relationship that reveals to two points to see one **in** the other one and at the same time one **with** the other one. Christ says: “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also” (cf. John 8, 19). The relationship is also revealed as a space of love, reciprocity, communion and truth. A man as a person is revealed in his human nature. And because man as a person is in a communion, that is love, this is expressed in human nature so that it reveals love and communion with people. And this is what Transfiguration is about. Transfiguration therefore should be understood as a manifestation of personal love, communion in mankind and in the cosmos, which is why transfiguration is open to eternity and infinity, because in Christ the unity of the divine and the human is bondless and infinitely open to the Father's love.

In art, transfiguration is seen as overgrowing the individuality of faces into the face of the communion of persons. One face does not only express itself, but it creates within itself a space for other faces. One face becomes a place of revelation for another face. Let us first have a look at how classical art at its peak already understood the problem of individualism. Let us take the statue of Aphrodite (see Figure 5): it is soon clear that the lines of the face as well as the body do not indicate a specific woman, but an idealization of femininity in its universality. But if we take a look at the Girl with the Pearl Earring by Johannes Vermeer (see Figure 6), we see that there is a single woman who is depicted as an ideal. We have come from an ideal which is universal to an individual who is presented as an idol. Both images reveal two closed horizons. Classical art presents a closed horizon because this ideal is unreachable for a concrete individual; and even if it was, it would mean nothing to an individual who questions the quality of life. The quality of one’s life counts as much as there is life which is no longer subject to death. Such a classical ideal of life cannot be provided for an individual, so it is an imaginary ideal, an illusion. The Renaissance ideal was already mentally poorer as well as frustrating in substance, because that ideal was nothing more than a correction of formal failure of an individual, his formal inadequacies.

This means that an individual as such simply turns into a universal epicentre of perfection, while it is quite clear that it inflates individualism. When men are standing in front of such an ideal character of an individual, they actually have nothing to do with it except that they love to dream about it, that they want to become like it but at the same time they are completely separated from it and external to it. Hence such ideal individual characters are mentally and psychologically problematic and may lead individuals to pathology.

Let us take another example, where man is perceived as a person that is denoted by existing in a communion, as the space of revelation of another person, in the last instance as a symbol, as an inseparable connection of two worlds. In the scene of *deesis* (see Figure 7) we see the Mother of God and St. John the Baptist pointing to Jesus Christ. This kind of art emphasizes the attitude of man which is the attitude of the relationship. The essence of Mary is her face, bowed to Christ, focused in the look and in the hands that follow the face and the look. The essence of a person is attitude. A person exists in a communion. Therefore, the body of Mary in this fresco is not autonomous as it cannot be like that. The body - like all its human nature - is only the space which manifests love, a loving relationship which is revealed by another person. The body would lie itself if it was placed in the centre. The body as such cannot be the protagonist. It cannot be an end in itself, so this kind of art does not wish to highlight some formal perfection of the body, but its perfection exists in the perfection of a person. A person is perfect in divine-humanity, in communion with God, with other people and with the world. The dress is simple, it is the "architecture of a person' to help us see the body as a whole person. The face is not the idealized face of an individual, but the face that has become so essential that nothing can be taken from it. So it is not an ideal, but a human being who has fulfilled herself as a person. The beauty of every person is reached when it is so perfect in its materiality that nothing can be withdrawn from it; when only the essence is depicted which is the essence of love. God is love. When a person experiences love, they come to their fulfilment and become the face in which we can recognize God as well as all those who love. Thus, we see Mary and John the Baptist in the gesture of pointing to Christ while at the same time this attitude reveals the relationship between the two persons. When a man is revealed as a place of Christ's life, say Christ’s divine-humanity, one discovers oneself in communion with other people.

Art which is an expression of a person is therefore art that is able to demonstrate how a relationship changes an individual into a person. From a man who was merely an expression of his human nature into a man who is changing his human nature with a relationship, with love, with living in a communion. That art therefore strives neither for an ideal character nor for a realistic, naturalistic character or even some ill, tortured expressionism, but it creates a face in which harmony is revealed. It is a face of coexistence. In the following figure (see Figure 8) we see Eve when she is attacked by the temptation not to follow the intelligence of communion, that is, not to follow that discovery which connects her with the Creator, who speaks through the creation of all things. The temptation proposes her not to accept the gift in unity with the donor because she can take it herself and become the epicentre of everything. And yet, in Eve’s face there is the space of coexistence, the face of the new Eve can still be found there according to which she was created. In one face there coexists another face and this second face brings together all those who contemplate this face. The same process can be seen in the face of a sleeping Adam while God is creating Eve out of the rib he had taken out of Adam. In this face, which is resting, in this tranquillity, the space of coexistence is again revealed because in it there coexists the face of the new Adam after which the first one was created. In it we can contemplate the sleeping of the new Adam when on the cross, from the pierced side, his life is being poured out to mankind, his existence, for which to stretch over us he came. This existence is the love of his Father in the Holy Spirit when each of them is the coexistence of all three Persons.

**Harmony, symbol and beauty**

In the course of this thinking it is becoming increasingly clear what a symbol is about. A symbol is not something that a man chooses or makes; something that one subjectively places on some meaning. For a symbol, one cannot use this kind of terminology: "This symbol means this and that". The Christian conception of a symbol is not idealistic symbolism which is - from Kant onwards - merely the expression of the subject. In this subjective symbolism there is an individual who lays some meanings in things intellectually. These meanings are attached to the essence of those things, but others can see those meanings only if they are explained to them by this individual. Such symbolism is closely related to analogy which still builds on the division, on the separation of two worlds, because of which the recognized content always remains something external, something that can be grasped only intellectually. In the last instance we are not interested in a thing in its materiality, but what this thing is supposed to denote.

The Christian conception of a symbol is different. A man discovers a symbol, he simply 'comes across it' when he starts to live as a person. A person fulfils oneself in the communion, in love, and a man begins to discover that the whole of creation is actually given to him as a symbol. A symbol is the unity of the two worlds, it is an expression of communion. A symbol represents the discovery of unity, when a man has an inkling that in a concrete thing someone is revealed to him who is able to achieve unity and that He actually united all in Himself. A symbol is the space of coexistence, in a sense a symbol offers a foretaste of the final coexistence of everything and everyone. It is because of this finality of coexistence, this definite discovery of oneself in another person that a man can experience a symbol as beauty. What is beautiful is what brings us together with someone else. Florenskij rightly writes that beauty is love which has fulfilled itself. And the beauty of fulfilled love is that it is final, because it carries neither death in itself nor mortality but it is truth. Florenskij also says that only what is true remains, something that does not deceive you, not something that pretends to be and then disappears, but what truly *exists*. And something *truly* *is* because it exists in communion. It remains just because it is torn from loneliness and included, engrafted on this infinite organism of communion which is the body of Christ. A symbol therefore cannot be used up in its meaning. A symbol is presence, revelation, the unity of life, a life of love. Solovyov added something important: beauty is the body of goodness and truth. If goodness does not become lovely, it is only dry moralism and fanaticism. And if the truth cannot be grasped as beauty, it is only an abstract ideology which in its own name may also devour people. In this view it becomes clear how this physicality of the symbol that we are experiencing as beauty is inextricably linked with the mystery of the Other, is inextricably united with truth and goodness. That is why we experience a symbol as beauty. And this is the transfiguration of creation in the body and in the face of coexistence with others.

If, for example, through flowers given to me by someone I can experience the love and presence of some other person, if my face encounters his/her face in the flowers, this realization is coloured and perfumed by the flowers; so I cannot just discard these flowers, I cannot trample them. These flowers become precious to me as that face is precious to me; and as the love that reached me with these flowers is precious to me, since love was revealed through these flowers. Here we can see how we can begin to explore the whole world as a symbol, as beauty; here is the real spiritual-theological foundation of ecology, a loving attitude to objects, to things, to creation.

**The Educational Power of Art**

Let us return to the educational dimension of art. If art is understood as an expression of an individual, then art probably has some very specific educational function, or it has so to the extent that it helps an individual to express himself. Modern society and culture, however, clearly prove to us that mere expression as such has its limited range, and it can even turn into a real illness. Narcissistic love of one’s own expression means subjectivism that sooner or later leads to uncommunicativeness. As I strive for increasing originality of expression, the originality becomes increasingly illegible to other people. If I speak in my own language, according to my own subjective grammar, it will probably be very difficult for other people to understand me or it may not be possible for them to understand me at all. Therefore, they also resolve their interest in my expression. Lack of visitors to contemporary exhibitions testifies to a general disinterest in the arts. If, however, we understand art as I tried to show above, then art in education is invaluable.

If art means manifestation of the world and life as a symbol, then it is clear that there we no longer question art as such but we question the art of living. As long one does not enter into life as a space of harmony, as a communion, the whole creation cannot speak to one and others do not address one. When one enters into a loving relationship, one begins to see things as a manifestation of this relationship with the beloved ones. And then one looks for ways to show the others how one experiences oneself in unity with them. This inevitably leads to the inclusion of materiality. When we begin to weave together the mental world, the experiential-intuitive world and the world that is tangible then we begin to experience real life, then we begin to live. And here is where art begins. Therefore, the largest educational point of art is a kind of organic or holistic vision, perception, and of course knowledge. Art in this context overcomes any dualism and combines knowledge and life, ideas and ​​substance, intelligence and hands, the truth and the body.

A few years ago, at the World Conference of UNESCO in Lisbon, where I was present as a delegate of the Holy See, it became very clear that the consequences of unilateralism in modern education could be detected even on the physiological level, in certain changes in the human brain. Modern education has only one mathematical-scientific dimension, while the artistic dimension is being increasingly pushed out and ignored, without any socio-economic perspective for youngsters. If a child shows a talent for ballet, drawing, music, or singing that is its private matter which mostly concerns its parents. At school such a child will progress only with the mastery of science subjects. Since all of these scientific subjects are based only on reason, which is only one dimension of human intelligence, the ability to grasp wholeness and consequently the ability to evaluate completely fades out in an individual over time. Evaluation is not only a question of reason, but of wholeness - the true knowledge of life and out of life. And art, as we have seen, is inseparable from life.

At the last World Conference in Copenhagen, in his closing address, the president of the USA Barack Obama emphasized that it is not enough if one country or one branch of science introduces some changes, because the state of the whole planet is so dramatic that it is necessary to find an approach that could be considered holistic. Which is what we are not capable of at the moment, says Obama, or we do not see how it could be possible.

Art in the symbolic sense, in terms of beauty, however, is precisely the realization of life as an organism, as an organic all-connectedness, all-unity.

**Conclusion**

Finally, let me illustrate these findings I have tried to convey with my own experience. In fifteen years of working in our spiritual art studio in Centro Aletti I have had the opportunity to observe young artists and see how their lives have been changing and coinciding with the maturation of their art. A mosaic is a multi-faceted artistic creation. First, the drawing must mature in the essence of its moves. An artist has to outline everything that will present the guideline for the stones in the composition of the mosaic (see Figure 9). The drawing itself therefore already requires a certain asceticism from us: we need to delete what is irrelevant, we must take into account everything that is absolutely necessary so that the image will not betray the truth it wants to express. Therefore asceticism of purification is important as well as the asceticism of compliance with the truth of another person. This compliance of truth with other people is followed by preparing mosaic material, which is essentially about cutting stones. It is there where an artist learns that art is not about enforcing one’s own will but it is about a dialogue, a conversation, accepting other people. Stones cannot be cut down by force, but by wisdom. Every stone has to be listened to and taken into account, the only way to open it. The next step is to work together with other artists. Mosaic is choral work and its greatness is shown exactly in the harmony with other people. This coexistence is impossible if there is no true friendship. Only when artists start to live in friendship – in a true friendship, not an idyllic, romantic, or a purely psychological friendship but a true one which is marked by the Paschal mystery – are they able to work in a chorus on several hundred square meters, and this in such harmony that in the end, when the scaffolding is removed, everyone can experience the consistency and vital power with the mosaic-painted walls. They managed to ‘translate’ into a mosaic their experience of life or, they themselves as a mosaic have left their mark on the wall (see Figure 10).

Even in ancient times, when a young boy came to a monastery to learn icon writing or fresco painting from a great master, life was in the first place. A boy brought paints and brushes with him, thinking that he would begin to paint the next day, but the master took all his material away, put it in a closet and invited the young boy to start a new life with him. When a young man walks with determination into this new life and takes a deep breath of it, it will not be difficult to express that life. Otherwise he will create only something cosmetic.

By the grace of God it is also my experience. When young people come and, step by step, become involved in a certain depth of life, they themselves become one mosaic which they try to create, then a wall. And it is interesting that wherever we have ever worked, people experience a mosaic as something alive and spiritually attractive. Everyone can identify oneself in it. A mosaic is therefore a symbiosis of us and those who place themselves in front of it, and live with it and in it.

**Visual material:**  
Figure 1: Tommaso Laurel, *Victory of Christian Religion*, 1585.   
Figure 2: Raphael, *Athens School*, 1509-1511.   
Figure 3: Raphael, *The* *Eucharistic Debate*, around 1509   
Figure 4: From Ingres (1805) to Conchita Wurst (2014)   
Figure 5: *Aphrodite of Melos*, the ancient Greek statue   
Figure 6: Jan Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, around 1665   
Figure 7: *Deesis*, Church of the Saviour in Chora, Istanbul   
Figure 8 (and details): *The Creation of Adam and Eve*, John Paul II Sanctuary in Krakow   
Figure 9: A drawing and a mosaic   
Figure 10: Setting a mosaic (Ljubljana’s main cemetery, Žale )