

Tribute to Form

The “Gramsci-Monument” is a Form, it is a new Monument Form. It is a new Monument because of its Dedication, it is new because of its Location, it is new because of its Duration and it is new because of its Outcome. Everything related to it and coming from it is new and is - above all - ‘Form’. The “Gramsci-Monument” is a tribute to Form and my answer to the question: What is Form? To give Form requires making a Statement, fighting for it and being at War for it, it means understanding Form as Resistance and thinking its Universality.

Form is essential in Art, Form is the most important thing. By ‘Form’ I mean something coming from myself, from my own, something that I am the only one to see and perceive as logic, something that only I can work out and can give. The decision to Dedicate a Monument to Antonio Gramsci is Form. The “Gramsci-Monument” - in its precariousness - is Form and the decision to do a time-limited Monument is Form. The decision about the Duration of the “Gramsci-Monument” is Form. It is necessary to understand ‘Form’ as non-splittable, non-negotiable and - even - non-discussable. ‘Form’ only exists as something entire, undividable and complete, as an atom or a core - this is hardcore - and this ‘hardcore’ is Form. ‘Form’ and ‘Aesthetic’ are interdependent but not to confuse. ‘Form’ is what gives ethic, preciseness and clarity in the incommensurable, complex and chaotic world we are living in, today. ‘Aesthetic’ is the answer to the question: What does this Form look like? How is it made? What materials are used? Form never seeks a function, Form is not reductive, Form is never exclusive and Form can never be qualified with terms such as “the good Form”.

To give Form is a Statement and an Assertion I have to stand-up for. To give Form is an act of emancipation, it is a resolution and a decision I myself, must take. No one asked me to do the “Gramsci-Monument” and no one asked me to do it in The Bronx. The decision about Location of the “Gramsci-Monument” in The Bronx is Form. I am responsible for this Form. No one ‘needs’, no one ‘wants’ and no one ‘waits’ for the “Gramsci-Monument”. This work is an absolute Affirmation, and therefore cannot be reduced to any supposed function. I am doing it because I authorize myself to do it. Working out Form is a matter of production, of taking pride and dignity in this production. Form is never a fact, and Form never refers the only factual. Form is never an opinion and doesn’t appeal to opinion. Form is never a comment and doesn’t need to be commented.

In standing-up for a Form it is clear that I have to pay for it, and as the artist I must be first to pay. Why? Why be ready to pay the price for the “Gramsci-Monument” and for all my other artworks? Because to do a work of Art is a kind of War - not against something or somebody - but for something, for a Form. Because being at War implies to fight, to insist, to struggle, to make sacrifices and to have a strategy. Because I understand Form as a mission, and doing the “Gramsci-Monument” is a mission. I am “on mission”, as artist I have my own mission, it’s an art-mission, something to accomplish, something to absolutely fulfill and something to live or die for. ‘Mission’ is a War term - War for Form - never a religious term. To do the “Gramsci-Monument” is perhaps an impossible mission but - in any case - it’s a mission. Form - as mission - is a commitment, an engagement and a position. To struggle for a Form is the opposite of thinking “career” and playing tactics. And thinking about ‘Targets’ and ‘Opportunities’ has no place in this War for Form.

As a warrior for Form I must appeal to Art as Resistance. Art - because it’s Art - is Resistance as such. Resistance toward aesthetical, cultural, political habits. The problem to me - as artist - is: How can I do a work today, in my time, which resists the actuality of today? How can I do a work in my historical context today that reaches beyond its historical time? And how can I do a work which is, in any case, A-historical? The “Gramsci-Monument” wants to be Resistance – Resistance as such. Other terms for Resistance are Belief, Creation, Risk, Dynamic, Positiveness. The “Gramsci-Monument” is resolutely based on Positiveness but this doesn’t guarantee a positive outcome, it means that - as a work of Art - it is created in Positiveness, because Positiveness is Resistance. The “Gramsci-Monument” in its Outcome, is Form. This Outcome will be the ‘Resistance’. Resistance is never based on Solution or Justification. Resistance stands opposite to Argumentation, to Academicism, to Contemplation. In doing the “Gramsci-Monument” I need to resist all kinds of phantasms. The “Gramsci-Monument” is not a phantasm - it is a Dream and as a Dream it will be rebuilt - everyday - as new.

Art – because its Art - is based on Universality, consequently the “Gramsci-Monument” wants to be a universal artwork. There is no Art which doesn’t own ‘Universality’. Universality of Art is the condition

granting to touch the Other, the Reality and the 'Truth'. As an artist, Universality is my belief and my will. My aim is to be in touch with the Reality, with the World, with the one and with the unique World we are living in. It is only by aiming at 'Universality' that one can implicate a "Non-Exclusive Audience", and it's only by aiming at Universality, that I can bring 'Politics', 'Love', 'Philosophy' and 'Aesthetics' into the core of the "Gramsci-Monument". Universality is just another term for 'Equality' and for 'Justice'. To aim with insistence at 'Universality' is a way of fighting 'Tradition', 'Identity', 'Culture', 'Particularism' and 'The Personal'. The "Gramsci-Monument" wants - through its Dedication, its Location, its Duration and its Outcome – to be a Form, a Universal Form.

Thomas Hirschhorn, December 2012