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 Outreach Europe – Arts, Publishing, Film
 Total Time: 10:13
 09.09.2021

To begin with, I am an independent professional for more than 15 years now. As such, I have worked with institutions of all types and scales, as well as with artists individually, with educational organizations, with international companies. And I think this is important, if we wish to understand the context I address and also my position as compared to the other participants, most of whom speak from a rather institutional perspective. The three values that I have as an imaginary guideline in my work, but also as an expectation, a goal from my collaborations—be they individual or institutional, public or private, I don't differentiate them anymore, I cannot afford to differentiate them—are three concepts which, in a way, presuppose one another and at the same time emerge from one another.

First and foremost, it is my need—and I stress that it is a need and not a mere wish—for equal relationships. I believe that any collaboration in the field of culture, which is my area of practice, should oppose hierarchy, especially as regards individual professionals, natural persons, and institutions. First of all, “equal relationships” means to acknowledge that there is both supply and demand, no assessment involved. And, actually, since it is a transaction, it should be recognized as such. I underline that, mostly because I would like us to foster a culture within which no one is “in debt” to the other. To acknowledge that both parts have something to invest in the other. To find the point where the two parts' objectives converge and, finally, to not have this sense of moral obligation, of debt.

Let me speak about parity. Note that I use it also as a financial term, and this is a need I have as a professional many years now. I need the rationality of numbers, I need us to start quantifying things that haven't been quantified, or that we used to believe they could not be quantified. Because I think that this transaction, almost like a currency exchange transaction, can bring more balance to the dynamics that permeate every cultural production. Doing my research on this term, I discovered the concept “condition of parity,” which sorts things with more clarity.

And so I arrive at the second core value I am interested in, which is clarity—or transparency, for that matter. And I am interested in transparency in two ways. First of all, concerning the individuals that are actively involved. I really want to know the scope of their power, of their influence even. And at the same time I am interested in transparency during the process. This is something that, as a cultural producer, I demand in every transaction, I need it, even as a form of feedback.

The third value I strive for is taking responsibility. To my understanding, taking responsibility goes hand in hand with the concept of parity. There are two partners, two parties of an agreement, a convention, a contract basically, that mutually acknowledge supply and demand, and that this relationship entails services, not surplus value. Again, things are blurry when not quantified, and this reinforces the underlying culture of debt. Namely, that one does a favor to the other. I know that these terms are very financial and, maybe because I don't have the academic knowledge, I use them in an abstract and rather reckless way. Nevertheless, I believe that a good financial expert or a good legal expert could help form a relationship with boundaries. With a beginning, middle, and end. After all, instead of considering these terms financial or legal, it might be easier to think of them as terms of conduct, of a moral system. All three values concern the creditor, let's say, and the debtor, or the beneficiary. But, even in a linguistic sense, the terms point to a dynamic of moral responsibility, and I am not interested at all in relationships where one owes to the other.

<https://3137.gr/when-dci-met-gabriela/en/>

Debt is deeply problematic in terms of governance, on state level, personal level, let alone professional. However, all these things presuppose a reorganization of social relations in ways that I could not determine myself, that's why I started talking about imaginary values. Even so, if, as a cultural worker, I had to choose one thing that is at stake, it would be these three values. The way they affect me has to do, first of all, with the extent to which the value of my work, my knowledge, my professional experience, my capacity is acknowledged. I need this acknowledgement, mostly to feel that it is a fair exchange. I need to be aware of what has happened, as a form of feedback, but also to improve my self-awareness as a professional and to have a better sense of what or who I'm dealing with. Responsibility affects my work, mostly because it holds either me or my partner, be it an individual or an institution, accountable. It creates better conditions to balance expectations and reality. I want my partner to take my values and objectives as seriously as I take theirs. And I want my choices to define me in such a way that I will be able to proceed with consistency. Even if this consistency in the end leads to a different direction, to a development. But I believe that both parties' accountability is the only way so that no one feels exposed.

All three concepts I mention, because on the one hand they have a rather financial and legal basis, and on the other hand I use them very abstractly, I believe that they are, in the context of civil society, values that regulate all human relationships—personal, family, professional, friendly. So, to return to the concept of the imaginary, these guidelines are essential for an equal, fair, transparent collaboration, but they are also fundamental values for any relationship, whether it entails a transaction, a convention, or not, for any human interaction.