

Images of Europe: Past, Present, Future

SECTION IV

Art, Theatre, Literature, Music, Culture

RATIONALITY & RELIGION
A Perspective from the Arts

Chair

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Presentation

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We cannot conceive of Art in general without relating it to a specific rationality, that works not only under the form of a stated technique but also as a mediation in which the “humanity” of human being as such and the material element of any art meet in an unique symbolic encounter, full of expression and meaning. It is in this sense that a relationship between artistic practices and religious expressions has inspired throughout millennia the outcome of magnificent forms and motivated the creation of so many of the greatest productions of mankind.

This relationship reveals a rational and anthropological - i.e. “pre-cultural” -basis, which allows us to find some common features in artistic religious expressions of all cultures. At the same time, such features offer valuable keys for a reading of those manifestations in their very diversity. Hence, we can think of foundational, general roots in religious art: temples in a general sense, sacred places in which the order of the stones configures the expectation of a presence; musical manifestations, from vocal expressions attached to a text to instrumental environments oriented to raise spiritual atmospheres; visual approaches to the divinity - or their absence-, like paintings, sculptures and other forms of visual arts; or codified religious corporal expressions, committed to signalize a physical and emotional blending with mystery, as it happens in all liturgy.

This workshop brought together scholars of different fields in order to explore the rational and anthropological dimensions of artistic religious expressions and furthermore to enable a way of a fruitful specific dialogue based on the analysis of these dimensions, useful to defy some of the challenges of an increasingly multicultural Europe.