

The silence of the complicit

Artists are also silent on Corona because they are afraid of "their" audience - from whom they need encouragement.

11.3.21 by Jens Fischer Rodrian



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"The artists! They just accept performance bans and corona terror, hunker down in silence and refuse to revolt - as we would have expected them to do." - Yes, for most artists this cliché is true. But what about us, the audience? Have we lifted a finger to get our artists - our musicians, cabaret performers, theatre actors and other live performers - back? Did we write protest letters to politicians and encouraging messages to cultural workers we know? Wasn't it much more comfortable to sit on the sofa at home gawping at Netflix and YouTube? And the truth is even more frustrating: many artists don't open their mouths because they are afraid of us - of a brainwashed public that seems to mostly conform to the government's Corona measures. Anyone who is declared a "Corona denier" and loses even part of their audience because of the ensuing public hounding could be out of business. Therefore, the author's message to all artists is: If you do nothing, the end will come anyway! You can also lose an audience through silence. And the message to "all": Show those responsible that you love your cultural workers and want them back! That a life without live culture is simply unimaginable for you, and that life certainly is one without the deprivation of basic rights and hygiene regimes. Above all, show it to the artists themselves!"

I care about you. I really do. For a year now, almost nothing has been going on - no theatre, no concert, no reading, scarcely a live event to pump blood into the veins, soothe the soul, fire the imagination, stimulate the mind or invigorate Eros, in short: making life what it always wanted to be - a full sensual experience.

You must be miserable. You, like us artists, have been deprived of a most basic sustenance. You must, like us, have withdrawal symptoms. The healing essence that bridges the gap between the mundane and it's disruption, between the material and the imaginary, the bridge between the delusional and the meaningful, a natural remedy that has the power to revive us and allows us to rediscover ourselves over and over again - culture - gone.

You have been robbed, constantly assured that culture would always come back, but that right now it just isn't possible. The now turned into almost a year.

When the doors did open, it was only for a short time, when it was warm, when the viruses rested and fell into summer sleep. There were a few concerts then, but only under very obscure conditions:

Keep your distance! Don't clap loudly and don't sing along, much too dangerous! Don't fall into each other's arms with joy, don't cheer enthusiastically, don't hang out with the artist backstage after the concert.

No, if at all, it's more like this:

Sit in groups of two! Mask on at the entrance, sometimes without at the concert - depending on the mood of the government ministers. But then, as anyone who is a halfway functioning citizen, like Richard David Precht, must understand, don't shout "Encore!" but rather send a friendly, pitying smile towards the stage. This is now considered a well-intentioned act of solidarity with the at-risk groups, ordered by the state. It's nice to be allowed back on the stage at all - so no encore, just don't overdo it, otherwise the risk of infection and pleasure increases. After the concert, with the handbrake on and the mask on, back home. On the way there, hold your breath and don't cough under any circumstances, otherwise the image of a responsible citizen will be destroyed in seconds. Wretched.

If it becomes too exhausting to follow the constantly tightened hygiene rules, then at the next sign of culture deprivation, perhaps it would be better to click on the documentary about the Eagles, Metallica or Michael Jackson? So much more relaxing, no stress with the official and self-appointed masked sheriffs on the way to the S-Bahn or in the concert hall. Netflix has something for everyone, from documentaries to horror - who needs a lively cultural scene?

No, this is not a satirisation or some dystopian story - it's the reality for audiences and artists since Friday, 13 March 2020.

I think we've all always had a kind of primal trust that in times of crisis there would be enough artists to rebel and cause verbal riots, to rebel, to resist. But unfortunately the Corona cult has also taken hold of the art and music scene.

This has had consequences. Online concerts, staring at cameras while performing - sexy. Unfortunately, many colleagues think more about how many fans they could lose if they were to complain loudly than actively participate in changing their own situation. That's why we need you, dear audience, now more than ever, because there are not enough artists who dare.

Not every reason for their silence is completely incomprehensible; livelihoods are at stake. In addition, some colleagues see themselves more as service providers, never having expressed themselves politically with their art and unlikely to start doing so now.

To the audience:

Perhaps you would help them to come out of the woodwork by showing that you remain faithful to them. In their fear of disappointing you, they have overlooked one thing: You can also lose your audience if you remain silent.

Now it is about you, dear audience. And quite honestly, even if you will resent me for it: I am disappointed, to say the least - at least by some of you.

Are we nothing more than interval clowns who stimulate life when we are present but are not really missing when we are gone?

Are we little more than a nice pastime that can now be replaced indefinitely with serials?

Why don't you demand the immediate resumption of all theatre plays, the revival of the concert scene, the opening of all performance venues?

What are we to you? Luxury goods to be given up for the illusion of security?

You accept that the whole cultural scene is going down the drain - with the justification that you want to save grandma by doing so. Have you ever asked her if she wants that?

Maybe the grandparents would rather go to the theatre and see the latest production of Brecht's "Mother Courage" than languish in isolation and wait for the world to become corona-free.

The world will never be corona-free - any more than man can abolish gravity. Some things are beyond our control.

It is far from enough to demand more money for us, as the "red alert" does. That will not be enough and is too short-sighted. To survive, we need more.

It's about spiritual nourishment, exchange, creativity and expression. It is about cultural DNA.

One more thing, so that we don't misunderstand each other: Those who are in general afraid of diseases and in this particular case fear the threat of a virus, have my full understanding. Every fear is real for the one who has it - no matter whether it is an objective threat or a subjective fear. But one's own narrative should never become the scale of evaluation for the general public.

I also understand that everyone has their own speed of waking up. But don't take too much time, because we are not available forever.

Almost a third of my colleagues from the independent scene have already given up their vocation - and there are more and more who are fed up with crawling from one emergency aid to the next and who see your silence as a sign that they are apparently not relevant to the system.

Show them that they' re wrong, otherwise we' re finished!

Jens Fischer Rodrian - DIE ARMADA DER IRREN (official video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8A1DcyJd1hw>



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