CRITICAL AREA: Art, Freedom, Responsibility

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There are those who pray that the art made in Cuba (accompanied, supported, spurred by an institutional system) is ordinary, mediocre art, pseudo-art. There are those who distort, with full knowledge, with clear intentions, the relationship between the institution and the creators. As if a government official had come to the artist's studio and oriented him: you have to paint this and that, you have to compose like this, you have to write, choreograph, interpret like this ... It's shameful to see how boldly they underestimate, belittle, ignore the great collection of Cuban art. It's art, it's high-level thinking, with great achievements, with a critical sense, with formal and conceptual strength. And that can only be achieved with essential freedom.

The so many times quoted (and so many times misrepresented) ***Words to the Intellectuals***, pronounced by Fidel Castro almost six decades ago, made a reference to that. The Revolution, which is assumed as a creative act, it's not coming to block ways, to homogenize an exercise. The Revolution has to be assumed as a cultural Revolution. And this is a dialectic process, which necessarily raises conflicts.

So the responsibility of the intellectual, of the artist is to be honest, coherent, participatory, committed to his time. Because the intellectual doesn't live in an ivory tower. He is a citizen. With rights. And duties. And the voice of the intellectual, of the artist is vital in the public concert. But we think that the main responsibility, obviously, is to create. Although the act of creation itself involves challenges. Well, precisely because the act of creation presents challenges. And it's not created for an inexact entity, it's not created for the nothingness. It's created for the people, for an audience.

The debates about the role of the artist in the social pattern are permanent. Art is recreation, but also critical awareness of a society. And opportunity for the spiritual enrichment of citizens. That is worth defending. That's what art is all about. Cultural institutions are there to support that thrust. But the creative flow belongs to the artist. It's his gift, it's his responsibility.

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