HOW CASTELLUCCI 'ABUSED' THE LITHUANIANS OR THE ROLE OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE ARTS MARKET

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ABSTRACT

HOW CASTELLUCCI 'ABUSED' THE LITHUANIANS OR THE ROLE OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE ARTS MARKET

In the early October 2012, the Lithuanian Parliament devoted more attention to a single performance by director Romeo Castelluci (presented by the Italian touring company during the theatre festival SIRENOS'2012), than to the whole theater system over the last term. The show 'On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God' had not seen by any of the 141 member of the Parliament by that time, subsequently was discussed in three consecutive sessions of this national legislature body and threatened the production of the Socìetas Raffaello Sanzio and the host festival by the special Resolution aiming at closure of the show. The campaign coincided with the coming election to the Lithuanian Parliament. The main objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the reasons why rather random performances chosen for touring from abroad to Lithuania cause an eruption effect;
2. What relation is there (if any) between the political climate in the Post-Totalitarian country and the governmental decisions regarding 'uncomfortable' art censorship;
3. What is the role of the media in conflict management in the area of the arts;
4. Are the art agencies (international festivals) ready for the encounter with the provoking artworks and are familiar with conflict management, with regards to realia of the societal life;
5. Is the artist community aware of and efficient in giving response and demonstrating solidarity upon emergence of provoking art?

A case study as a model is used here: followed by the national media for the week before the Italian director Romeo Castellucci showed the play 'On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God', impressive public debate and outraging tide of hatred received unusually detailed coverage, including the press, television and the Internet proved to be reflected by more than a hundred posts, articles, and various public comments. The article intends to examine the context and the essence of the incident.

Several hypotheses and research questions were raised in the research. During the festival all the society divided into two parts: the supporters and antagonists of the thought-provoking show. The 'peaceful' plot of the show – a helpless old father and a son patiently taking care of him – reveals one of the eternal themes of art, but the shocking naturalistic imagery (feces and the smell) grew into vast generalizations, and the company using Christian symbols was named an iconoclast and provoked inadequate reaction of the audience and cost additional moneys to the festival to hire police and security.

The first hypothesis is that since Mr. Castellucci paradoxically discusses our heavy human obligation to take care of each other, and the play is very short, the sudden transition from 'profanation' level to metaphysical heights seems shocking to many spectators of the Catholic Lithuania.
However, nothing had happened in the same country during the screenings of P. P. Pasolini or L.Cavani films or dozens of other provocative art works before. Or what about Ms. Dalia Ibelhauptaite's opera production of "Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" by Sondheim in Vilnius, which depicts cannibalism? Or

manifesto by Marina Abramovic, and her concept 'Art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful' in 1975? This leads to the second question: as soon as the first appearance of the ads intended to promote the performance (using the image of the Salvator Mundi by Antonello da Messina), one of the influential political group in Lithuania immediately decided to take advantage of the situation and proclaimed the initiative to condemn the performance so as to prevent the effective front line in advanced pre-election position. The use of the art for political reasons is still a question of heated debates in Post-Totalitarian countries.

Moreover, after the performance, along with the political campaign, the protesters' voices immediately ceased. This is question three: was it a public relations campaign that succeeded perfectly, or a conflict situation that needed professional management; and if the latter is 'yes', why the control over the situation seemed to be totally lost? Only two months later, independent theater creators, in cooperation with the National Drama Theatre (Vilnius, Lithuania) presented a reading (a parody) on the event called "On the Lithuanian Parliament resolution on the performance, disparaging Christian symbols", where they clearly declared their civic position supporting the free artistic expression.

In addition, the fourth issue arises: for the first time since our country's Independence the longing for censorship came back to the place. Ironically, it came out of people who fought for freedom and even spent years in the Soviet prison. An issue of artistic freedom all of a sudden became a buzzword. This was the situation unthinkable even twenty years ago, when just a hint about restrictions on freedom of speech of politicians and intellectuals would have caused an outrageous storm (NB: remember the time when Russian writer A. Solzhenitsyn was condemned). So the hypothesis is: the society is tired by the incapability of living in democracy and is longing for a 'strong' fist?

The situation also demonstrates the fifth trend: alienation between the members of the society. A bucket of feces, this is apparently enough to hurt Post-Soviet people's feelings. The Catholic priest J. Sasnauskas said having met those who collected signatures for a petition demanding to ban the Romeo Castellucci's performance, and he was shocked by their shining eyes, ecstatic by the fact that signatures' number reached nine hundred collected with the help of modern technology. Does that mean that all the iconoclast performances, concerts, exhibitions, or press should be tracked in advance to forestall evil by default?

The research methodology is based on the examination of substantial amount of media items from the various news channels, including in-depth-interviews, along with the opinions of experts on the issue of arts censorship.

Keywords: censorship, elections, artistic freedom, PR, art and communication

INTRODUCTION

Lithuanian theatre scene has been experiencing its rebirth since the LIFE festival in 1991, when the renowned American producer Bernard Sahlins helped Lithuanian theatre critic Ruta Vanagaite organize the first international theatre festival. Since then the Lithuanian audience is used to the pieces of newly produced thought-provoking theatre and the worldly-acclaimed international names, without the state control, which was the case in the Soviet times. However, although upon the regained Independence our country re-opened to the world, our public is not always capable to conform to the liberally-minded content of the global productions.

In the early October 2012, the Lithuanian Parliament devoted more attention to a single performance by director Romeo Castelluci than to the whole theater system over the last term. NB: the word in Lithuanian means the 'sirens'. The show 'On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God' had not been known by any of the 141 member of the Parliament by that time, subsequently was the 'hot' topic of the three consecutive sessions of this national legislature body, and was questioning the production of the Socìetas Raffaello Sanzio and the decision of the festival to host it by the special Resolution aiming at closure of the show. The campaign coincided with the coming election to the Lithuanian Parliament in 2012. The main objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the reasons why rather random performances chosen for touring from abroad to Lithuania cause an eruption effect;
2. What relation is there (if any) between the political climate in the Post-Totalitarian country and the governmental decisions regarding ‚uncomfortable' art censorship;
3. What is the role of the media in conflict management in the area of the arts;

4. Are the art agencies (international festivals) ready for the encounter with the provoking artworks and are familiar with conflict management, with regards to realia of the societal life;
5. Is the artist community aware of and efficient in giving response and demonstrating solidarity upon emergence of provoking art?

The author has chosen a case study as a model for the research. Followed by the infamous article in one of the leading newspapers of rather radical character the week before the Italian director Romeo Castellucci showed the play, impressive public debate and outraging tide of hatred as an avalanche fell on the heads of public, including the press, television and the Internet later said to be reflected by more than a couple of hundreds posts, articles, and various public comments. The article intends to examine the context and the essence of the incident.

The following hypotheses and research questions were raised in the research: during the festival all the society divided into two parts: the supporters and antagonists of the thought-provoking show. The rather mundane plot of the show – a helpless old father and a son patiently taking care of him – reveals one of the eternal themes of art, but the shocking naturalistic imagery (feces and the smell) grew into vast generalizations, and the company using Christian symbols was named an iconoclast and provoked inadequate reaction of the audience and cost additional moneys to the festival to hire police and security. To intrigue more: not all national security agencies agreed to co-operate with the festival!

The first hypothesis is that since Mr. Castellucci discusses our heavy human obligation to take care of each other, and the play is very short, the sudden transition from 'profanation' level to metaphysical heights paradoxically seems shocking to many spectators of the Catholic Lithuania (which is actually a secular state!).

However, nothing had happened in the same country during the screenings of P. P. Pasollini or L.Cavani films or dozens of other provocative art works even in the Soviet times. Or what about Dalia Ibelhauptaite's opera production of "Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" by Sondheim in Vilnius, which depicts cannibalism? Or manifesto by Marina Abramovic, and her concept 'Art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful' in 1975? This leads to the second question: as soon as the first appearance of the ads intended to promote the performance (using the image of the Salvator Mundi by Antonello da Messina), one of the influential political group in Lithuania immediately grabbed the advantage to benefit from the situation and proclaimed the initiative to condemn the performance to advance in their pre-election campaign. The use of the art for political reasons is still a an issue for heated debates in Post-Totalitarian countries, which Lithuania still is, whatever sorry we feel about it.

Moreover, after the performance, along with the political campaign, the protesters' voices immediately ceased. This is our question three: was it a public relations campaign that succeeded perfectly, or a conflict situation that needed professional management and failed, and if the latter is 'yes', why the control over the situation seemed to be totally lost? Only two months later, independent theater creators, in cooperation with the National Drama Theatre (Vilnius, Lithuania) presented a reading (a parody) on the event called "On the Lithuanian Parliament resolution on the performance, disparaging Christian symbols", where they clearly declared their civic position, supporting the freedom of artistic expression.

In addition, the fourth issue arises: for the first time since country's Independence the longing for censorship came back to the place. Ironically, it came out of people who fought for freedom and even spent years in the Soviet prison. An issue of artistic freedom all of a sudden became a buzzword. This was the situation unthinkable twenty years ago, when even a hint about restrictions on freedom of speech of politicians and intellectuals would have caused an outrageous storm (NB: remember the time when Russian writer A. Solzhenitsyn was condemned). The so called Glavlit (the Soviet political structure controlling the cultural productions of every kind on their political purity) was sometimes milder than this infuriated 'Catholic' crowd with the banners saying that "Castellucci is a Satanist". So the hypothesis is: the society is tired by the incapability of living in democracy and is longing for a 'strong' fist.

The situation also demonstrates the fifth trend: alienation and fragmentation between the members of the society. A bucket of feces against the Christ's face becomes just a safety fuse (aka Bickford rope) to inflame the Post-Soviet people's feelings. The Catholic priest J. Sasnauskas said having met those 'activists' who collected signatures for a petition demanding to ban Romeo Castellucci's performance, and he was shocked by their shining eyes, ecstatic by the fact that signatures' number reached nine hundred collected with the help of

modern technology. Does that mean that all the thought provoking performances, concerts, exhibitions, or press should be tracked in advance to forestall evil by default? In the recent history of Lithuania it is the second mega-event when the cultural project is used to manipulate people's feelings and influence the nation by politicians: I mean the European Capital of Culture in Vilnius in 2009, which is widely described in the book by Elona Lubyte called the incident an 'impeachment' of the project (Lubyte, 2011).
The research methodology is based on a substantial amount of media items from the various news channels, including in-depth-interviews, along with the opinions of experts on the issue of arts censorship or the longing for the Big Brother.

Theorethical insights

We can find a lot of witness on the impact of politics on culture in the human history. Belfiore and Bennet suggest in their volume (Belfiore, Bennet, 2010, p.146) that although we might not entirely follow the Orwellian idea that 'all art is to some extent propaganda', we have to face it: there are certain links between art and politics apparent throughout history, as well as the use of art for propaganda purposes is not a phenomenon born in 21st century. Belfiore and Bennet envision the opposite: it can be traced even back to the ancient culture: *"since the time of Classical Greece, the theatre has been considered a privileged forum for the debate and complex political and ethical issues. The very nature of the performing arts, by bringing people together in a communal aesthetic experience, lends itself to this role as a site of communication and questioning. It is the intrinsically public and communal nature of theatre that is seen as preserving its potential for political influence in the era of the mass media."* (Belfiore, Bennet, 2010, p.162).

The case of Castellucci in Lithuania has uncovered the inner conflict in the society between the opressed masses and the artists who played here a role of a scapegoat. The suppression of the inner festers in the society (for instance, a recent case of paedophilia in Kaunas district) demonstrated eruption of the outbreak of hatred, although the naked truth was revealed: the addressee was chosen wrongly, and Castellucii here is just a coincidence.

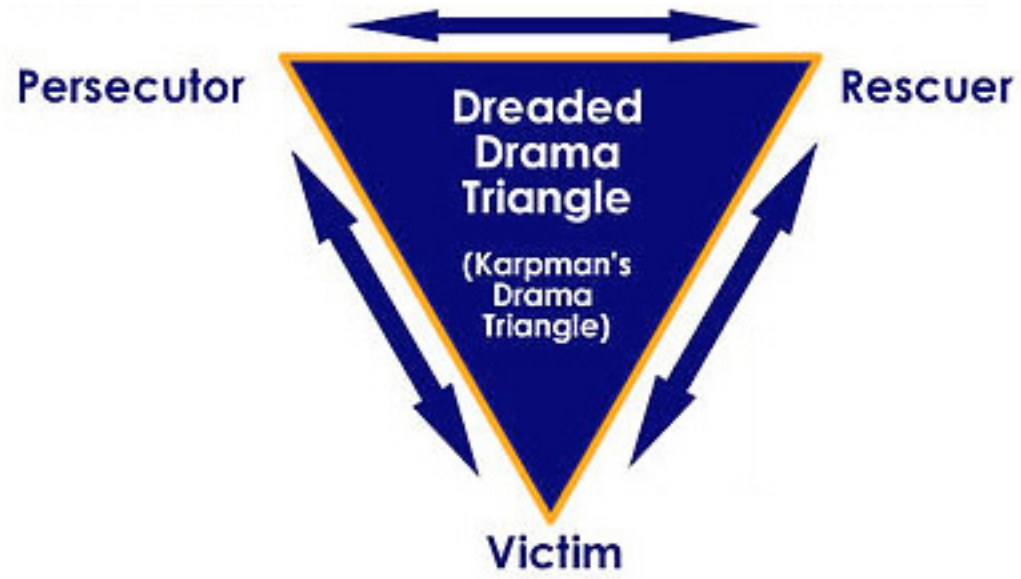
Let us then examine the issue of conflict itself. Ohlendorf (2001) calls a conflict „a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position which is incompatible with the wishes of the other." Conflict therefore is viewed as a cycle. To understand conflict further, the situation must include elements of interdependence, emotions, perceptions, and behaviors.

Conflict can be constructive and healthy for an organization, Ohlendorf thinks. It can bring about underlying issues which are hidden in the everyday routines. Constructive conflict occurs when people change and grow personally from the conflict, involvement of the individuals affected by the conflict is increased, cohesiveness is formed among team members, and a solution to the problem is found. In the situation of the Castellucci show in Vilnius, the first weakness I envision is the incapability of the artistic agency to control the situation because of the infirmity of the team of the festival. It should play a lesson since this case that the festival that has a mission to present provocative art should have a special preparation for the public behavior. Otherwise, as Ohlendorf witnesses, 'if conflict is not managed properly, it can be detrimental to an organization by threatening organizational unity, business partnerships, team relationships, and interpersonal connections' (Ohlendorf, 2001)

In nowadays Lithuania there are many talks about conspiracy theories, and the political panorama is full of the events where one can apply any of the theories that you like. There are opinions that the festival was experiencing the results of the act called 'wag the dog', where the real conflict rest somewhere behind the scenes.

Destructive conflict has a pattern known as the Drama Triangle.

Figure 1. Karpman's drama triangle. (Karpman, 1968).



"There is no drama unless there is a switch in the roles"; Karpman says. It is proved by transaction theories and experiments that by learning how to effectively handle each role player, managers can prevent some conflicts from occurring and resolve those that do. These are the known three roles in Karpman's triangle:

Persecutor. This role is played by a person who uses aggression against another person, The character's actions deliver a message that you are wrong in what you think or do, 'while making the persecutor feel righteous and superior'.

Victim. This role is attributed to a person who demonstrates hesitant behavior that makes others consider him or her as 'wrong'. This pattern prompts to either rescue or persecute the victim. The stress is the main attribute of the victim, and diminishes their self-esteem and provokes defense.

Rescuer. This role is given to a person who uses 'assume the responsibility of solving the victim's problem'. The rest of the drama participants consider the role of the rescuer as attempts to demonstrate superiority over the victim.

The theorists say that these roles are learned in early childhood and remain relevant during the whole life of a human being. Therefore, researchers insist on a project manager's efforts to understand the dynamics of conflict before being able to resolve it. My suspicion is that the crew of the festival was totally out of control when confronted the inadequate reaction of the MP, as there was no evidence of the real 'threat' to the festival, as no minister can stop a demonstration of a show without investigation which takes time, and the panicky behavior of the festival showed certain lack of practices appropriate in similar cases.

In the dramatic triangle 'persecutor-victim-rescuer' during the 'Sirenos' festival three agents were acting: MP – the Castellucci – the festival. Later, the roles were switched, as eventually, Mr. Castellucci in a way became the prosecutor of the society, Mrs. Abramikiene lost it, along with her election campaign, and the festival crew won the game. However, the role of the media did not contribute to the peaceful solution of the conflict in any of the stages of the drama. In the contrary, all possible PR alliance was trying to boost the scandal, and I think there are certain reasons why this could have happened. We will return to this in the next part of the text.

The main lessons that can be learned from the theories and the practices are that conflict in project management is not necessarily obstructive when properly managed. Among the advantages that conflicts bring upon researchers mention increasing personal growth and morale, improved communication, and helping solve the arising issues. Sometimes, for instance, especially, in the case of Castellucci's incident, the conflict depicts certain decline of an organization as the company is not prepared for the adequate response. This makes us revisit to the idea that while training future managers it is critical to teach them strategic management and the scenarios of organizational behaviour.

The scenario and the stakeholders

Researcher Varbanova depicts the stakeholders of arts organizations by the 'map' below.

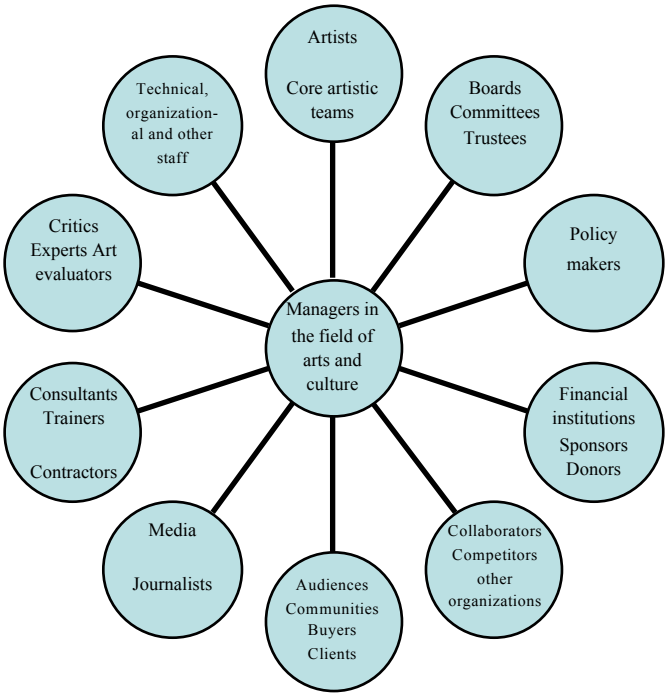


Figure 2. Arts and culture managers: balancing the tensions (Varbanova, p. 15)

Brian Ellis provides 10 basic rules of crisis management, where these stakeholders can easily meet (Ellis, 2010).
1. Being unprepared is no excuse. The author confesses how amazed he was by the fact of 'how many companies are totally unprepared to deal with a real crisis'. Ellis seems to be right when stating that leaving their crisis plans to the day they will occur, is a huge mistake made by organizations. 'They say it takes a lifetime to build a reputation and only a few hours to destroy it', Ellis says. The organizations often risk losing the support of even the most faithful clients by challenging their reputations, and – talking about the theatre festivals – its audiences.
2. You know the threats – get ready for them. Ellis recommends organizations completion of their SWOT analysis, asking to identify the 'top five threats facing their company'. Having the list of the threats, the theatre festival with a certain mission should help itself dramatically. The following is what we can find in the 'Sirenos' webpage: *"Initially the festival aimed to present the generation of European directors who reached their artistic maturity after the fall of the Berlin Wall and thus have become a bridge between two different worlds. The festival has been following this direction during all the years of its existence."* If the crew of the festival claims to be the visionaries of the contemporary European theatre, they should be ready to foresee the events. As it is explained in the Ries and Trout's 'Marketing Warfare' (Ries, Trout, 2006), an organization should build the Strategic square, which should include the following options:

Table 1. The Strategic square according to Ries and Trout (Ries and Trout, 2006)

Defensive marketing warfare is for market leaders	Flanking marketing is for smaller companies
Offensive marketing is for No.2 companies	Guerrilla marketing warfare is for local or regional companies.

If we follow the suggestions by Ries and Trout, the Sirenos festival has chosen inadequate strategy to conquer the market. The authors recommend by taking a defensive warfare do the following:
Only the market leader should consider playing defense;
The best defensive strategy is the courage to attack yourself;
Strong competitive moves should always be blocked.
While writing this article, the author conducted a mini – research, asking the most popular art critics and journalists in Lithuania, what actions would they have undertaken to react to the accusations of the MP, if they had been in the festival crew's shoes. Surprisingly, the dominating answer was: *none*.
3. Know what you want to say before they ask. The first step in getting ready for any crisis is identifying your worst nightmare questions, Brian Ellis believes. And he is true: the questions in the discussed case have arisen very quickly: after the first announcement on the show. The press-release "Theatre Festival's 'Sirenos' position: the freedom of art is unquestionable" could be considered as the 'defense' strategy (www.sirenos.lt). Why we consider this strategy as 'defensive', and why we envision this 'defense' is a mistake? First of all, we assume that the Festival, while applying for the financial support from the Ministry of Culture (The Fund for Culture Support), had clearly proclaimed in their application form the value and the reputation of the invited performers. Besides, the festival from its very beginning wore the brand of a siren, which had many connotations. Among the most famous understandings of the sirens there is the one that can be attributed to the concept of the Festival: the call about danger. Therefore, the repertoire of the Festival supposes to present art works that are signs for the societal threats. And this was the case with Mr. Castellucci. And then – if there was a need to explain someone in what ways this piece of art is a real danger to the society, the addressee was not the public, and the press release was not the appropriate measure for the situation. The respondents of our research state that it would have been more reasonable to reply to the Minister of Culture, explaining the responsibility of the Festival, rather than entangle into the dispute with politicians. Sadly enough, the fear of the political powers, or 'governmentalism' (M. Foucault) made the creative staff of the festival to get a scare, especially because of the financial responsibilities. What the Festival could have done though, and they did so somewhat later, was the publication of the explanatory texts among the supporting communities and persons, as well as building of partisan platforms (Facebook pages and letters of artists community), which, according to Ries and Trout's Strategic Square corresponds with guerrilla marketing warfare, thus proving that the Festival overestimated its role in the market, considering themselves as a Company No. 1. Interestingly enough, today (April 2013) the National Drama theatre is playing far more challenging interpretation of the Lithuanian playwright by director Oskaras Korsunovas; however no one is protesting against the rather radical reading of the character of Bishop Masalskis, a real historical figure in Lithuania. Let us leave the reasons for other articles on the issue.
4. Admit that you are wing-it-challenged. Author Ohlendorf is convinced that 'the vast majority of us, or 0.998 percent to be more precise, are wing-it-challenged.' What does it mean to us? Quoting Ohlendorf, it could mean 'that you have to prepare before you choose to stand in front of reporters whose job it is to tear you apart.' (...) 'Before you face the cameras, have your colleagues fire some difficult questions at you. You will find that it's much easier if you have already heard the questions before.' How can this knowledge be applied to the Castellucci's case in Lithuania? Probably, the crew of the Festival could have prepared the whole set of statements and materials to support their productions' quality. I would ask myself a quite different question: 'what justification for such phenomena as Lady Gaga, Marilyn Manson or other provocative artists I would have?' Or what stories would I tell to the famished mob of media to articulate our message?' To my mind, the 'Sirenos' message was rather spontaneous and alarmed. 'We are freaked out'; the unspoken message was transmitted to the society.
5. Three key messages for every crisis. Crisis management theory lobbies the rule of three. Ohlendorf confesses: 'there are three key messages you can depend on in the first 48 hours of any crisis. It doesn't matter what the crisis is, these messages apply: having a plan; showing empathy, and commitment to investigation and further facilitation of the scenario.
The greatest challenge is that someone has to back the plan up with actions. I would probably invite some politicians to the screening night and during the screening of the works of Castellucci in the improvised demonstration night, with the help of art critics and experts would attempt educating the interested politicians on the topic of Castellucci's art. Secondly, I'd try to discuss the topic on the national radio, inviting some influential public figures, medical doctors, sociologists or clergy representatives to talk on-air on the relevant topic. I would finish the rule of three as the combination of the first two and the final: possibility for the people to express their opinions openly to better understand what scares or infuriates them. This chance was missed, I suppose.
6. Beware of the court of public opinion. We have already quoted Mr. Ohlendorf on the crisis management greatly. And let him continue: 'Lawyers play a very important part in any crisis. (...) However, there are two courts in this world, and the court of public opinion is just as powerful as the court of law.' (...) The real question that needs to

be addressed is quite simple – what is the smartest thing I can do to protect my brand? Let us face it: the lawyers' comments would have been invaluable at the time of the Castellucci's scandal: Lithuania does not support censorship on art! The art does not belong 'to the masses', as once Lenin proclaimed. The art and the artist have no obligation 'to be beautiful'. The lack of legal knowledge and use of well-known symbols (Face of God) can cause crises.

7. You've got 48 hours. They say that first 48 hours of any crisis is a crunch time. (...) When something happens, a communications void is created, or as we put it – a pace for miscommunication occurs. If we don't fill it, someone definitely will, and the information that will be distributed will often be inaccurate or incomplete. The role of the 'Sirens' was to react with lightning speed. This was not so speedy. However, it was quite a speedy decision to apply a 'milder' version of the show and eliminate the 'smell' effect from the show, as the news about the feces thrown at God's face was proliferating as in a famous Albert Camus novel.

8. Divide and conquer. A common mistake researchers notice during the companies managing crisis is the concept of team decisions. However, the truth is that once the team agrees on a direction and the key messages, then all the departments should start taking responsibility independently. I think the most critical time for the 'Sirenos' was the beginning of the crisis when the team was rather wrong-footed and their efforts were scattered. Only when other stakeholders got involved into the scenario, the balance was achieved. We will approach this in the next part of the text.

9. Get outside help. Theorists advise that when a crisis strikes, seeking an outsider's perspective is paramount. The internal biases might be an obstacle for those directly involved in the scenario. Bringing help from outside means that the company recognizes their weaknesses and are capable of stronger affirmation. I think this part of the scenario was the most successful in the go of the Castellucci case. The Festival 'Sirenos' managed to collect substantial amount of signatures in their 'Letter to the Lithuanian politicians, clergymen, artists and all society' (October 4, 2012, and creation of the Facebook page 'Don't Let Them Shush the Sirens' managed to collect an impressive number of 'likes' overnight (htts://www.facebook.com/NeleiskimeNutildytiSirenu).

Figure 2. Facebook page dedicated to the campaign in favour of the play 'On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God'.

10. Every crisis is an opportunity. One of the producers, when asked to respond to my question regarding the scandal shared his feelings: "if I had been acting on behalf of the 'Sirenos' festival, I would have felt enormously happy because my brand got all possible coverage in the media during the period of the festival!" "I would agree on giving additional performance, if there was a chance, or I would negotiate the possibility to broadcast the show directly from the stage so they everybody could see themselves what the truth was"; said the other arts manager. The management of the Lithuanian National Drama Theatre organized a TV press conference on the topic, trying to explain the essence of the incident; and this was an extra chance for the theatre to demonstrate their position. Finally, the show and the story shadowing the show provided a brilliant chance for the society to see how huge the gap between the thought-provoking art and the 'statistical spectator' was. It means that

theatre education is still a very important issue in the society which for decades was considered as one of the most mature theatrical republics in the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, the case of the Castellucci's show proved to the society that we have a great potential of civic consciousness because many people dared seeing the show, The Inquisition is not the case in modern Lithuania, and we do not burn theatre directors for their shows. The festival 'Sirenos' can be proud of having completed the mission 'possible': they managed to tackle the task of rescuing the piece of provocative art.

The article is being discussed under the angle of product and brand management. It is important to note that this case of the theatre performance involved many stakeholders, and if we had reduced their number, the configuration of the drama would have changed. As Herwig Pöschl once said: „we should evaluate project management techniques with the viewpoint on what really works in the cultural sector (...) , protagonists, stakeholders and the audience." (http://www.labforculture.org)

CONCLUSIONS

Among the main conclusions one strikes our attention first: the artistic freedom of expression is being questioned in our society. Lack of moral values and solidarity in people reveal the conflict between the not-so-educated demos and the artist, his or her decency and professionalism. On the other hand, consideration, sensitivity to each other's spiritual vibrations should be achieved not by picketing, but by meetings, talks, and communication. The Post-Totalitarian society lacks cohesion, which was demonstrated by Lithuanians back in 1990, while fighting for the Independence.

The second conclusion is the evident role of media on the artistic life. There is something hilarious in this story and the whole situation. Scandal sparked and fueled by nothing else but a few newspapers, in which some radical Catholics regularly curse and keep naming artists, which is a reflection of the unmanaged crisis. Media takes over the word of God?
Witch-hunting becomes a satellite to elections. Some people become violent defenders of holiness, whereas the others pray for freedom and democracy. Many of the clergy confess failing to see of how the concept of Jesus' face was blemished. The director himself in all his comments did not demonstrate a vestige of blasphemy about the Christian faith or the sacred symbols, and the scene with the kids throwing grenades at the 'Salvator Mundi' imposes just innocent confrontation of simplicity and wisdom.

What is more, should we desperately look for a conspiracy theory suspecting that the theatre director lies and demonstrates hypocrisy, intentionally desiring to lose viewers with insidious anti-Christian provocation or diagnose the political insinuation? The entire theatrical West should then to be blamed for being so narrow-minded that no longer notices the profanity. Most probably the answer rests in the need of political power and manipulation so well known to our compatriot.

Finally, as suggested by one author, the image of the naked and doddering old man's body releasing dung that cannot be stopped by the brilliant modern invention – pampers, causes stomach belch. Especially this works when you have recently been visiting homes for the elderly, the author says. Just inhale into your nostrils the hitting stench of urine and stool, and confront the encounter with the still alive, but already decaying human body, and you will feel the sense of the tragedy. The eyes of Christ painted by Antonello da Messina, although smudged by reality, say: the Lithuanian audience can feel safe: the Lord is their shepherd, not the abuser. Moreover, Castellucci is their friend, not the profane. But whose word is the ultimate: the word of God, the 'word of mouth', or the 'word of mouse'?

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