November 13, 2016

Trump for president. Who would have thought so. More people than you think. The dichotomy in the US is stronger than we wanted to acknowledge. Alie Hochschild wrote a wonderful book about it:. Strangers in Their own country a divide between the high and low educated, between haves and have-nots, between those who benefit from globalization and those who suffer. Between those who live in constant uncertainty about their future and those who will prosper. Those who can get along with all the changes and those who feel passed over in their own country.

And now the parallel with the art world. Which consists mainly of people who are leftish inclined with a cosmopolitan mindset, who prove at least lip service to feminism and anti-racism and for equal rights for LGHBT-people. Almost all lived in the bubble that this mendacious, uncontrolled, anti-feminist, racist Trump could (and should) never win. People who have little contact with the other half, the people who feel passed over at home.

One can see that many in the art world long for the time when the political elite naturally protected the arts, who assume that the budget cuts should be repaired in the arts and that world would become the same as before.

That era is gone. The current elite can not and will not protect the arts anymore. Populism has become too strong. And the art world has situated itself too far away from the rest of the people.

What can the art world do to bridge that gap? That should be the main topic of the debate. It is necessary, but not nearly enough to tackle social issues in the theaters of this country. But there those who are passed over, are not there. Of course, the classics remain necessary, the experiment remains necessary. But we need a much broader movement than now to leave the theatres and concert buildings of today and move into the neighborhoods. It starts with listening to the why of the (political) choices of those Trump believers and enter the discussion with art. Not to propose the cosmopolitan point of view, but by starting from their questions and feelings. It is time that the art world does not go into the streets to ask for repairing the budget cuts grants, but to enrich the lives of those who feel passed over.

There are many artists who already do, by all means, but they are only drops in the ocean. The largest part of the art world does not participate there. And it will have to. It is the only real answer from the art world at Trump.