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Dragan Klaic (1950 - 2011) - In Memoriam

"Cultures do not dialogue with each other. They compete, clash, fight, interact and mutually influence each other."

This comment came from **Dragan Klaic** for the General Assembly of the **European Forum for Arts and Heritage** in 2006, in a critique as he tried to make sense of the forthcoming 2008 Year of Intercultural

Dialogue in Europe. As a true provocateur and brilliant analyst of the cultural sector in Europe, he often pointed straight to the heart of issues we do not question or analyse enough.

"More than just a dialogue, we, citizens of Europe, need more than Intercultural Dialogue. We need major engagement in the build up of intercultural competences instead of identity towers. We need more opportunities for the intercultural, creative engagements (across the borders, but also in vicinity, from own neighbourhood to the national state) instead of promotional actions of national governments in the international area."

His words were not there to please the listener, but they inspired and will continue to inspire thousands of us working in the cultural sector. As eloquent as he was, Dragan was not just about words. He left a tremendous legacy behind in a variety of forms too many to name and on too many topics to list but with a true passion for theatre, international cooperation, cultural policy... He was an amazing cultural centipede, a true believer and advocate of the power of culture.

‘Critically Speaking’ was the September 2005 **Asia-Europe Colloquium on Contemporary Performing Arts** in Singapore, where **Dragan Klaic** was invited by ASEF and IETM as a speaker. It was his first trip to Asia. A few more trips followed to Japan, China and India...but not enough. We would have liked to invite him as a moderator for ASEF's new programme for cultural policy in Asia and Europe. As he said *"to orchestrate a meaningful multilateral dialogue is more complicated. The prerequisites are a clear topic, a dramaturgy/format accepted by the participants, some common referential framework and a skilful moderation"*.

‘Critical thinking’ was Dragan’s trademark and it came along with a very generous sharing of knowledge and a deep belief in the power of culture in society.

We are thankful for Dragan's contributions to this world and send our sincere condolences to his family.

Katelijan Verstraete, ASEF (Asia-Europe Foundation) Assistant Director of Cultural Exchange

[Quotations on Intercultural Dialogue from: <http://www.budobs.org/dragan-klaic-seeking-to-make-sense-of-intercultural-dialogue-year-2008.html>]

Photo: Bernd Uhlig

IN MEMORIAM

He spoke nine languages and was unmistakably himself in all of them. On 25th August 2011, **Dragan Klaic** left this world and entered into another where he will quickly learn the language, assess the situation, draw out the ideas of others, share his opinion, and create a loyal crowd of friends and admirers. Down here, we will miss him terribly.

A theatre scholar, cultural analyst, commentator, public speaker, educator and trainer, Dragan’s expertise covered contemporary performing arts, European cultural policies, cultural development, international cultural cooperation, interculturalism and cultural memory. He led complex international research projects, conceptualized many conferences and symposia, written and edited publications. He was the author of several books and hundreds of articles.

Born in 1950, Dragan Klaic was educated in dramaturgy in Belgrade, held a doctorate in theater history and dramatic criticism from Yale University (1977) worked as a theater critic and dramaturg, held professorships at the University of Arts Belgrade (1978-1991) and University of Amsterdam (1998-2003) and has lately been teaching Arts and Cultural Policy at the University of Leiden and at the Central European University. He is a Permanent Fellow of Felix Meritis Foundation in Amsterdam.

Dragan co-founded the European Theater Quarterly Euomaske (1990-91) and led the Theater Instituut Nederland (1992-2001). He served as the President of the European Network of Information Centres for the Performing Arts (ENICPA) and of the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH).

He was an active member and Board member of IETM, since its very early years, shaping its policy, ensuring its openness to the countries of east, central and southeast Europe, moderating working sessions, giving keynote speeches, keeping a watchful eye and generally inspiring both old and new generations.

Moderator of the Reflection Group of the European Cultural Foundation (2002-2004) and author of its final report Europe as a Cultural Project (Amsterdam: ECF 2005, www.eurocult.org). In 2005 he studied the emerging alternative cultural infrastructure in Istanbul (www.labforculture.org). In 2007, he was a Research Fellow of Collegium Budapest and in 2009 of Interarts, Barcelona. In 2003 and again in 2008 he worked with the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) on the cultural dimension of its policies.

Chair of the European Festival Research Project, Dragan was advisor of the Polish city of Lublin in the preparation of its candidacy for the European Cultural Capital 2016.

Among his books several works were published in the former Yugoslavia before 1991, and also in the UK, USA, Netherlands and Norway. His articles and columns appeared in many periodicals in several languages. Klaic was a Contributing Editor of the Theater magazine (USA) and member of several advisory boards in Budapest, Brussels, Stockholm and The Hague. His latest published work was “Mobility of Imagination, A Companion Guide to International Cultural Cooperation” and a new title, “Resetting the Stage: Public Theatre Between the Market and Democracy” has been announced for 2012, to be published by Intellect, Bristol.

We send our sincerest condolences to his wife Julia and daughter Nora.

In Memoriam published by [IETM](http://www.ietsm.org)

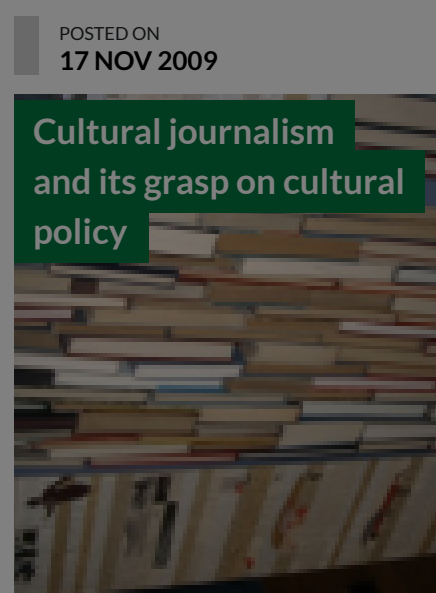
Read: [On Cultural Advocacy](#) by [Dragan Klaic](#) (for forthcoming [European Culture Congress](#), Poland)

Read about the [memorial gathering for Dragan Klaic](#) in Stockholm, September 1st, organised by Intercult

Articles by Dragan Klaic for C360 and on China:

- <https://culture360.asef.org/magazine/bangalore-asian-cultural-actors-connect/>
- http://www.iias.nl/nl/44/IIAS_NL44_1819.pdf

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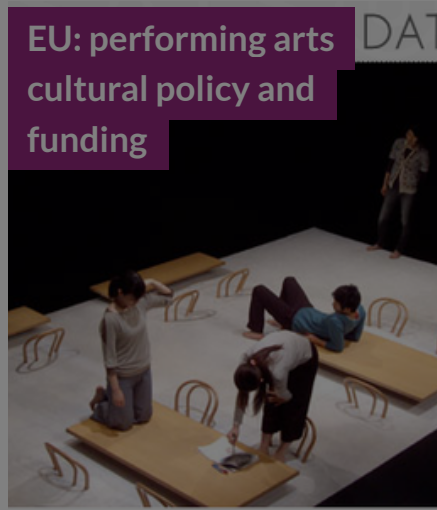
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