

## **Abstract**

### **Habilitation Thesis**

#### ***Current Approaches to Art and Everyday Life: Aesthetics and Arts Policy Analysis***

**Dan Eugen Rațiu, PhD, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University**

Cluj-Napoca, January 2014

My habilitation thesis in Philosophy presents, according to the legal requirements and *CNATDCU Guide*, the already published “scientific, professional and academic achievements on disciplinary or interdisciplinary thematic directions” and “development plans of the own professional, scientific and academic career” in the context of current achievements in the subfields of specialization, i.e. Aesthetics/Philosophy of art and Philosophy of culture.

The first section of the habilitation thesis presents the results of major research directions explored after obtaining the title of Doctor of Philosophy (1998, Babeș-Bolyai University, 2005, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), that is approaching art both from the disciplinary perspective of philosophical aesthetics and in alliance with cultural policy analysis (in particular arts policy). This dual focus is motivated by a conception of aesthetics/philosophy of art as having to account for both their analytical and conceptual tradition and art as “world”, thus contributing – in alliance with other social and humanistic disciplines as art history and sociology of art – to a thoroughgoing reflection on art and culture as forms of (social) life.

My projects in both research directions were evaluated by committees of experts, supported by individual and collective grants won by national and international competitions, and have resulted in original and relevant achievements, with significant impact on the academic community. Among them were the four research programs led as project director in the subfields of Aesthetics/Philosophy of art and Philosophy of culture. Their results were integrated into the new courses taught (since 2007) to Master of Philosophy and Doctoral School of Philosophy (2009-2011). All these have proven my ability to develop independent research and academic career and to guide doctoral students.

The following among these achievements have been included in the habilitation thesis, within the limits of available space:

- questioning the current status of aesthetics and opening new ways of thinking about how aesthetics can maintain its relevance for both contemporary art and everyday life; this includes highlighting the interaction between artistic critique and social change (Rațiu 2010, Rațiu 2011a, Rațiu 2013a, Rațiu 2013b).
- interpretation and understanding of contemporary art practices in broader frameworks of culture and cultural policy, and assessing their impact on society and human life; the perspective set forth in studies associating philosophy of art and arts policy analysis aimed to pave the way for new methodological and conceptual approaches in order to understand the factors that influence the art world, artistic practices and creativity, focusing on arts policy in post-communist Romania (Rațiu 2007a, Rațiu 2009, Rațiu 2011b, Rațiu 2011c).

These scientific contributions have proved their impact, relevance and visibility by gaining acceptance at prestigious international conferences and being published in journals from the main international flux; the prizes awarded to me and other forms of international recognition, such as the election in directing boards of prestigious professional societies and international research networks – The European Society for Aesthetics (ESA), The European Sociological Association - Research Network Sociology of the Arts (ESA-RN2) –, are also significant proofs.

The second section of the habilitation thesis presents the career development plans, including research directions. My research activity will be guided by the interest in aesthetics seen as practical philosophy and in developing an appropriate methodology. For their implementation, I will use research grants in progress and will apply for other international financing. I will also continue to participate in international research networks and professional societies and to organize national and international conferences (the European Conference *Art and Its Contexts: Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue*, 4-6 September 2014, Babeş-Bolyai University, the National Conference *Aesthetics and Theories of art*, third edition, Babeş-Bolyai University, September 2014).

The main project that I am considering at this level aims to develop a *practical aesthetics*, action-oriented. The coming years I will coordinate a research project financed by the PN-II-IDEI program, *Renewing Aesthetics: from Art to Everyday Life*, as director of a team of PhD students and postdoctoral researchers. The main aims of the project are to review the core concepts and methods of philosophical aesthetics and to expand its scope towards areas that were neglected by traditional or analytic approaches, such as the everyday life, in order to respond to challenges from both artistic and social practices that have undergone fundamental changes in last decades.

On the other hand, regarding contemporary artistic practices, I will focus on analyzing the validity of different disciplinary approaches and developing new methodologies, by investigating the tense but promising relationships between aesthetics and sociology of art. The main hypothesis is that the (hybrid) nature of contemporary art practices and experiences as well as the necessary cumulativeness of knowledge – which is distinct from the mere accumulation – require a novel (hybrid) conceptual-and-methodological framework beyond the conventional disciplinary division of tasks. This hypothesis will be supported by a threefold argumentation trying to overcome the tension between the inclusive logic toward hybridization that drives contemporary art and the specificity-driven development of aesthetics and sociology of art. The main moves towards this novel framework consist of: 1) defending an *aesthetic* account of contemporary art practices and experiences, although a hybrid one; 2) situating aesthetic considerations within sociological analysis; and 3) defining and dealing with a “virtual scientific object” common to both disciplines.

Research results will be further integrated into courses taught in Master of Philosophy and Doctoral School of Philosophy. Obtaining the certificate of Habilitation in Philosophy, specializations Aesthetics/Philosophy of art and Philosophy culture, will help to foster the research group that I currently coordinate within the Center for Applied Philosophy (CFA), including through international collaboration which could involve joint doctorates.

The third section of the habilitation thesis presents as required “the references associated to the content of the first two sections”.