

Presentation of the Batuz-Miłosz Portfolio: No más fronteras
May 3rd, Organization of American States, Washington D.C

Speech of Mr. Ischinger

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in the USA.

“If you want to change the world you need, above all else, two things: a vision and great determination. When I first met Batuz two years ago at an event hosted by the National Gallery in his honor, it did not take me long to understand that he was a man who wouldn’t take a “no” for an answer: great determination. I think I understood that after the first ten or fifteen minutes. It took me a little longer to understand the vision, but I think (*now addressing to Batuz directly*) you have both in a very impressive way: the vision and the determination.

And it is not often that people who are not in the profession of politics, but in the arts, succeed as well as you in changing the world, and what’s even more, changing the way people think about things such as borders.

Transcending borders, as it has already been explained by other speakers tonight, it’s his fundamental idea.

Thinking of a border not as a dividing line but as a potential link. Eliminating borders while it’s possible and using them to bring people, nations, languages, countries, and ethnic groups close together.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there are not many nations today that have experienced as many negative things with borders as the German nation. And recently, the dividing line, the border through our nation, through its heart, divided not only that nation but also the continental unity not only geographically but also politically. And I am happy to say that this is really why I thought that it is an appropriate moment for me to say a few words here today. Today’s event is coming two days after the enlargement of the European Union. It’s, at least to me and I hope to all of you, an extremely meaningful event. It seems to me that in a way, Batuz, (*now addressing to Batuz directly*) your vision has actually been celebrated two days ago in Europe, when the river which you covered with colorful... people dressed up in various colors some years ago, when you still considered it as an artistic vision, this vision became real. That river is now no longer a border that divides East- from Western Europe, it is now a border that links together two nations that have been neighbors for so long.

So, I am really proud to say that Batuz has built truly a place not far from the Polish border, his work place and his home, the Working Center Alzella, where he, with great determination and through many projects, visualized the idea of the Société Imaginaire.

And I think that you have actually helped by doing what you've done, explaining to us why keeping the determination in driving forward the process of integration of Europe, driving forward the process of overcoming the dividing frontiers in Europe.

I am also proud to say as a German that the Batuz-Miłosz portfolio which is exposed in this place today, has been presented to the National Gallery in a ceremony at the German Embassy in Washington D.C. that I was very happy to host about a year ago and I just want to express once again my deep appreciation for the help that we've been given at that time by the American-German corporation Daimler-Chrysler who made that event possible.

I would like to join the other speakers in wishing the greatest success to your new project "No más fronteras". I'm sure that with your vision and with your determination and with so many supporters (*pointing to the public*), you will be able to do the same thing: touch people's hearts and their minds. And then by changing the world, changing the way we think about ourselves in the exactly same way that you've done so successfully in Europe.

I would like to thank the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and its director, Franz Josef Reuter, for having been a standup supporter of your work and last and but not least, let me conclude by thanking the Secretary General for lending this wonderful space to this really wonderful occasion today. Thank for your patience, thank you".

Applause.