

Artistic associations in Spain have been going through very hard times since the beginning of the economic crisis, to such an extent that some of the historical and most important ones, like the Catalonia association, disappeared, and a brand new one had to be created. The one in Madrid has undergone a process of exhaustion that has taken to the executive director's withdrawal, and is currently being run by a group of young artists who are revitalizing it. But there are other associations like that of Aragon that has totally disappeared. This situation has not been alien to the UAAV (Union of Visual Artists' Associations), which suffered a seizure of properties, its website was cancelled, lost its premises, technical assistance, agreement, came to conflict with different entities... all due to the decline and abandonment of its main responsible. When the last chairwoman resigned, the UAAV was intended to disappear, but thanks to a great effort and taking many risks, after some very hard years, the UAAV has been rescued and is now totally up to date with payments and has renewed its legal status. It has changed its name to UNIÓN AC (Union of Contemporary Artists of Spain) and has solved some fundamental problems such as the inclusion of the geographical denomination, including the word Spain in its name, which previously did not appear in it. It is also incorporating in its statutes not only those regional associations but also thematic ones, which allows contemporary artists working with different media such as action or sound art to join the UNIÓN AC, in a way that responds to the reality of contemporary art.

During this time, it has not only been possible to have its website active again, to repay the debts and to solve all legal problems, but the UNIÓN AC's managers have promoted the creation of new associations in regions where there had never been before, such as Extremadura, and to reestablish some lost ones, like the one in Galicia. They have also participated in the creation of the Sectorial Committee of Contemporary Art in Spain, its inclusion in the agenda of the Ministry of Culture, etc.

Further steps have been taken towards the professionalization of the sector, and for this purpose, the publication of the research on the economic activity of artists in Spain, by Marta Pérez Ibáñez and the president of UNIÓN AC Isidro López-Aparicio was fundamental. It is a primary source in which over 1000 artists have participated, and it allows us to highlight the precariousness in which artists live in Spain, becoming the main argument on which our claims are built.

Now we are engaged in the elaboration of the statute of the artist (we have already participated in a plenary session at the Congress of Deputies), the definition of a new internal regulation of operations, the establishment of working committees, etc. Our resources are scarce but, at the same time, we do not want to lose the capacity of creating a sustainable and realistic structure that learns from the mistakes of past times, and allows maintaining a legitimate and solid interlocution at national and international levels in the defense of the professionalization of contemporary artists in Spain.

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