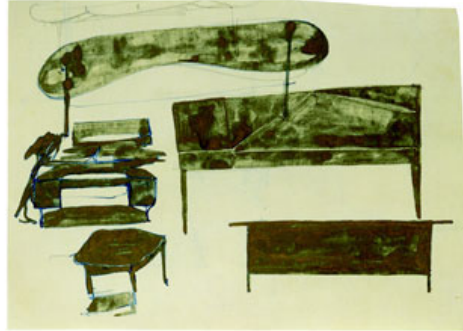


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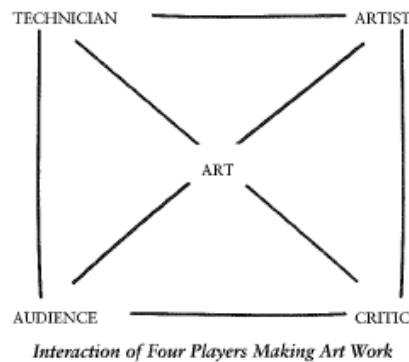
THE ARTS AS INSPIRATION FOR INNOVATIVE SOCIAL CHANGE



Summary of Presentation made by Professor Pierre Guillet de Monthoux
at **CSEND Dialogue Forum**, Geneva,
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Art as Inspiration for innovative social change

Different ways to look at society and organisations from an artistic and aesthetic point of view have been suggested by different economists, philosophers and writers but also by artists themselves whose aim is to highlight the role that art could play as inspiration for innovative social change. In fact, artistic work about giving new perspectives on human experiences offers fresh ways of thinking and new intervention strategies for social and economic development. By linking social management and art, different approaches have been explored in order to network the players involved in the process of an artwork such as the audience, the technician, the critic or the artist himself.



But first, it might be relevant to grasp linkage between art, economics and social issues. Adam Smith is certainly one of the forerunners of the so-called socio-economic movement. In his *Wealth of Nations*'s book, he formulates a Theory of Moral Sentiments, which emphasize the dimension of values and extensively the role that Law should play in human societies. As a result of these inquiries he addresses this central question: How and why do people constitute societies? Smith noticed that sometimes societies might come off in a friendly way. Something special must obviously link those persons together. According to him, aesthetic value is a crucial component in societies for pushing up individuals to live in social communities rather than by themselves. However a question remains: how to define this aesthetic value?

“ (...) the same love of system, the same regard to the beauty of order, of art and contrivance, frequently serves to recommend those institutions which tend to promote public welfare...They make part of the great system of government, and the wheels of political machines seem to move with more harmony and ease by means of them.”

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral sentiments*

Beuys's aesthetic management of social sculpture

In the 20th century, many artists and scholars focused on aesthetic management. Artist Joseph Beuys is one of them. One of his wishes would be for example to extend art as capital. He referred to himself as a *fluxus artist* and emphasized that art should be a source of such convergence. In line with Beuys's belief, creativity has an important role to play for human being. Connected to Beuys's artwork, this creativity should always belong to matter. In this sense, he sees himself as materialist but not “in the sense of

materialism” alleging that he don’t want to “abuse matter, wounded it, made it sick and brought it to extinction”. At the opposite, he emphasizes the self-defined materialist as someone who is able to think together with matter through a moral dimension. Beuys as an art activist obviously wishes to bring together societies and art. According to him art serves necessarily for generating life-giving aesthetic energy.

“Only the expanded concept of art is fit to become a useful instrument, an appropriate tool, for a revolutionary-evolutionary process of system change...The point of expanding the concept is to provide room for the human being...The expanded concept is thus not limited to the actions of those we today use to call artists: the painter, the sculptor, the dancer, the actor, the poet and so forth. Provided one turns the concept of art into an anthropological concept it will work as the tool or the vehicle for changing the organization of society.”

Joseph Beuys, *Kunst=Kapital*

Beuys stresses that art could definitely be used as a tool for social organisational change. For this reason he uses provocative expressions highlighting this rethinking of art along social lines. For instance, he opened up the iron that always separates art and capital assessing that art is equal to capital. For the same reason, he firmly thinks that everyone should be seen as an artist and that an artwork must be seen as a “social invisible sculpture”. This make of Beuys acting and speaking as a brand manager and a concept developer that embrace a renewed economy with the human being in its center performing as a real piece of art. According to him, art mission is definitely to reassure its classical aesthetic and generate an energy flux reforming society. Focusing on the art works audience will be the most helpful way to give rise to concrete action and reaction. After Beuys passed away, Johannes Stüttgens, one of his former student and disciple, replaced the master regarding social activism assessing that his expanded concept of art is actually identical to the extended concept of economy.

In earlier times, Georg Simmel saw the world as an artwork. According to him, aesthetics had definitely a major role to play in the society. Simmel statement underscores society as a self-organised aesthetic unit. Social order is a temporary synthesis achieved by individuals exerting what he calls “synthesizing”. At this very point, Simmel introduced his concept of “social form,” which coincides with Beuys’s idea of a society envisioned to the same degree as an invisible social sculpture.

Kant’s heritage: the audience

Friedrich Schiller was in financial trouble during his whole life. Becoming professor, he quickly took a one year off for scholarship with the aim of analyzing Emmanuel Kant’s *Third Critic* book. As a result he established that no art work exist without the interpretation of different power fields. One interpretation might be given by a technician, another one by a critic or a manager and so forth. Schiller summarized the *Third Critic* describing Kant’s aesthetics as a way of doing strategic art management. According to Schiller, freedom would be triumphant from the time when a clear strategy for an aesthetics freedom of enterprise is set up. He further assesses that in their day-to-day life humans are irremediably attracted by two forces, *Formtrieb* and *Stofftrieb*, which means the form and the substance. The two alternatives are then to submit to the extreme

tyranny of morality or to give into the canal barbarity of superficial materialism. Fortunately, there is a third way, *Spieltrieb*, meaning the Lust to play. This way out has to be seen as a bridge between form and substance aesthetic escape. Kant assesses that “true purpose of art is to be an instrument for free playfulness.” Distraction is helpful for getting out from material and form obsession. Schiller defines artist as a worker to put us in a distraction. Conclusively, artist’s role is to secure the play.

“No privilege, no autocracy of any kind, is tolerated where taste rules, and the realm of aesthetic semblance extends its sway. This realm stretches upwards to the point where reason govern with unconditioned necessity, and all that is mere matter cease to be. It stretches downwards to the point where natural impulse reigns with blind compulsion, and forms has not yet begun to appear.”

Friedrich Schiller, *On the aesthetic Education of Man*

Kant perceives additionally aesthetics as an enlightenment. The human ability to cooperate socially and organize themselves is, according to him, the result of our capacity to transcend the bounds of our own narrow ego. In place of pseudoreligions, Kant suggests that modern art could contribute to constitute an enlightened audience and its public space. To make something public is equal to building an audience. Investigating the power of judgment and aesthetic energy as a way of connecting a public audience with art.

Nietzsche as a Wagnerian technician

In his *Birth of Tragedy*’s book, Friedrich Nietzsche assesses that Dionysian celebration was a kind of intoxicating speed. The Dionysian aesthetic play gives opportunity for experiencing life. He talks about the dionysian idea of Raub and the speed dynamic of an aesthetics process. From the dionysian celebration analysis derived Nietzsche’s own pendulum.

In accordance with art and management, Nietzsche agree to the view of a technician mostly because of Wagners influence. Hence he sees the compositor as “a general waging war on his aesthetics battlefield, that he was calculating, planning and negotiating his own business without much consideration for the creativity and sentiments of others”.

Dewey and art in the light of the critic

To philosopher John Dewey, the manager really responsible for making artwork is a philosophical educator playing the part of an art critic who “further this work, performed by the object of art”. Dewey sees art in the light of the critic. According to him, the task of art critics as art managers is to open the ball to the public and invite the audience to dance surrounded by artwork.

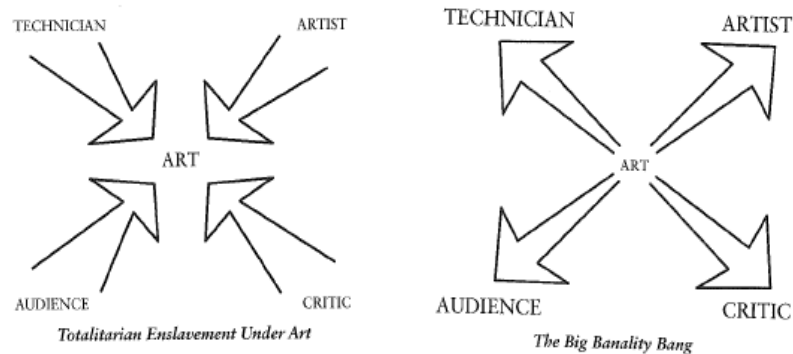
“Art is a quality of doing and what is done. Only outwardly then, can it be designated by a noun substantive. Since it adheres to the manner and content of doing, it is adjectival in nature... The product in art -temple, painting, statue and poem- is not the work of art. The work take place when a human being cooperate with the product so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed because of its liberating an ordered properties.”

John Dewey, *Art as experience*

Imploding and exploding art work

In his *La société du spectacle*'s book in 1967, Guy Debors assesses that there is no room for art. According to him, at his time, the choice between Eastern totalitarianism and Western banality is choice between cholera and plague.

Sometimes artist is not able any more to shape the society as it normally would. Totalitarianism has taken out aesthetics. Humankind implodes in a totalitarian way. When in 1934, Stalin ordered to the artists to become “ the engineers of the human soul”. Since then they were the servants of the state artwork. In this case, art is not made primarily to be looked or admired by any kind of audience. The artist himself is completely mobilized and must obey to what the State dictates. The technician is not playing a role in the pendulum movement. The *Schwung* of free stops. Finally, the totalitarian art manager only role is to frame art.



At the opposite, banality leads to exploding artwork. Artists Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol's projects were to dissolve art in the aesthetic play. For instance, Warhol and his cans of soup are in a way celebrating consumption. The artist makes business art. Accordingly artists are passive observers of a lifelong hazel and gazing project. Art is out work. “It has exploded, delivering no content...only context gossip and relation opportunities”. Nowadays galleries serve mainly as places for show off where the tittle-tattle is more important than the paintings, the exhibition and the painter himself.

“(...)the artist is nothing more than a topic of conversation. The critic is a gossip columnist, the audience is made up of narcissists, and the technician is an event manager. Everyone talks about everyone else. Anyone who can have an exhibition catalogue printed is an artist.”

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, *The Art Firm*

The art firm: aesthetic management for innovative social change

To Carl Hegemann, the creative challenge for an artist as well for entrepreneur is to produce in the market and not for the market. In 1993, the painter Michelangelo Pistoletto got the idea of transforming the concept of art into that of an art firm. In Biella, a small

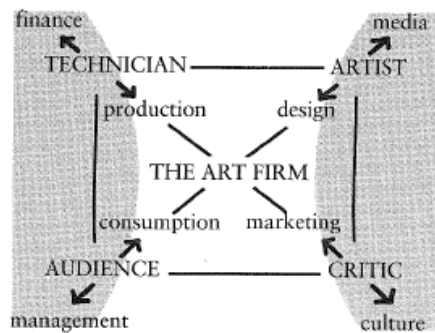
Italian city formerly dedicated to manufacture, Pistoletto has created UNIDEE in an old factory to which he gave the name of Cittadelarte. UNIDE is a university for ideas in which the art students are selected on the basis of a presentation of a socially responsible art project. Pistoletto's final purpose for funding Cittadellarte was about concrete action for a new kind of socially responsible art.

"People come to me like a witch or magician. They want me to tell them the future. I tell them that I know the future. I am a magician who does not like to manipulate his clients like a cheap consultant. I want to share my trick with people, so I ask them to sit down at my table. Ok, you want to know the future. It's easy because the future is what we decide together."

Michelangelo Pistoletto

Visiting him a few years ago, Professor Guillet de Monthoux asked Pistoletto whether UNIDEE was a way to make artists develop art into an open space his thoughts being beyond doubt inclined to Kant's and Schiller's role of art as a tool for enlightening audience and public space.

The Pistoletto's Art Firm helped Professor Guillet de Monthoux to further his line regarding art as a great tool for innovative social change, rethinking "businesses strategic use of art firms to widen their scope from a micro world of material production to a macro atmosphere of micro-finance." Looking to the different players network surrounding art, he imagined a new economic embeddedness of the art firm and its aesthetic players. In this renewed interaction model, marketing that "might leave a stick product placement perspective and develop into a new kind of critic with the ability to maintain this focus and not evaporate into a general commercial culture". According to



Economic Embeddedness of the Art Firm and its Aesthetic Players

Professor Guillet de Monthoux, this development would have good support when marketing departments of business schools become increasingly interested in art. He adds that this is probably going to be the case in the near future since most popular courses for higher education at the turn of the Millenium will be related to aesthetics and art. Extensively Professor Guillet de Monthoux emphasizes the role that art might play in societies in the future assessing that art firms will unavoidably lead the way for this social change to which the Professor himself might contribute.

"(...)consumers might be transformed into philosophizing audiences while managers might escape the pressure of finance, finding relief in art spaces taking on traits of the old family firm complete with its aesthetic-ethic vision. (...)And art firms might conceivably serve as models for helping firms generate aesthetics energy by simulating technician, artists, critics, and audiences to maintain Schwung in Aesthetic play. With this in view, I myself was instrumental in launching a new international education for turning curators into such aesthetic organizational change agents."

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, *The Art Firm*

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