



Call for papers

Art and money: the socio-aesthetic implications of arts funding

The current economic climate is hardly propitious for contemporary artistic funding. Politicians have one obsession: “the crisis.” And as a – possible – remedy, cuts in arts funding are evoked, which implies a handover from the public to the private sector. Patrons, in the form of private entrepreneurs, such as Leo Castelli, Charles Saatchi, François Pinault, and Françoise and Jean-Philippe Billarant, Betty Freeman, among many others, have never been more present in the media.

However, patronage in a larger sense, and its implications and influence, is not the subject of empirical study to the extent one might expect, even though it is essential for the production of artistic work in today’s world. Without patronage, be it institutional or individual, state-funded or private, contemporary creation would not play the role it does in contemporary society. Funding also requires mobility: artists move from one institutional context to another to find the funding necessary for their projects. This means that comparative work is helpful for understanding our, often national, research objects, and shows us that national borders, relevant though they may be, should not limit us.

This conference therefore aims to look at the different forms and figures of patrons today, in order to develop a cartography of art worlds and to understand the impact funding has on aesthetic production. To this end, we hope to look at the arts in all their diversity (architecture, music, visual arts, theater, dance, literature, etc.), compared through an interdisciplinary lens (art history, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, economics, etc.), in order to look at the impact of different funding mechanisms on artistic creation.

“Follow the money:” such is the byline of this event – follow it and its traces, to see what is revealed about the construction of art worlds. We propose to look at the operations of these worlds by inquiring into how aesthetic decisions are influenced by the funding available. The organizers particularly welcome proposals that combine an aesthetic analysis with a social, political, or economic analysis of an artistic world or worlds. The proposed panels are the following:

- **A comparative political economy of arts funding:** cultural policy reverberates within art worlds and inevitably modifies them. What are the implications of direct state subsidy versus indirect aid (in the form of tax credits, for example) for artistic creation, whether avant-garde or popular? Is it possible to identify causal links between funding sources and aesthetic trends? How do artists navigate between different systems? What are the short- or long-term economic effects of cultural policies, and how do they influence the aesthetics of artistic production?
- **Arts funding in the age of new technologies:** funding and distribution opportunities have changed radically in the internet age (*cf.* the exponential growth of crowd funding). What are the implications for the socio-aesthetic reality of art worlds?
- **Historical comparison:** how have artists changed their strategies when faced with different funding opportunities? For example, a “festivalization” and/or “biennialization” of different art worlds has been observed over recent years. What are the sources and consequences of these developments?
- **Commissions:** commissions are emblematic and desirable in a project-based funding system. In what ways do they open aesthetic possibilities for artists, and in what ways are they restrictive? What forms do commissions take, and how do they influence creative work?
- **Redefine markets?** The contemporary art market manifests itself as the artistic market par excellence, but art markets, in a larger sense, take on different forms and benefit from government support in diverse ways. For example, public authorities can choose to provide a salary directly to

artists, with no results required, or can fund specific projects. What impact, especially in aesthetic terms, do these different market structures have on artists and their work? How do artistic markets differ from other markets, and how can they help us refine our understanding of markets more generally?

The conference will take place in French and English on the 20th and 21st of May 2016 in the Furet amphitheater at the EHESS, 105 bd Raspail, 75006 Paris. We are delighted to welcome Olav Velthuis (University of Amsterdam) for the keynote lecture.

A subsequent call for articles will be made for a publication related to the conference, with publication decisions being made after review by a scientific committee with additional members.

We welcome proposals in English or in French of 300 words with a short bibliography and a CV (max. 200 words) – to be sent to art.argent.2016@gmail.com. Deadline: 15 January 2016. Please indicate for which panel your proposal should be considered. Proposals will be evaluated by members of the scientific committee, and decisions will be rendered by the 15th of February.

Organizing committee:

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Annelies Fryberger, PhD candidate (CRAL et IRCAM)

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Scientific committee:

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