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Arts management beyond eventification

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Abstract

Looking for cultural remedies between the opposite perspectives of marketisation and culturalisation of the arts, is equivalent to trying new logics between instrumental (Benjamin 1936; Bourdieu 1979) and communicative logics (Habermas 1981). This engagement includes the consideration of the arts management, that nowadays copes much more with design of the contents and dramaturgy of events, planning and production scheduling, marketing processes of the specific event, communication and promotion of the event than with a critic conceptualisation of the forced relation between arts and instrumental thinking. In a new perspective of a cultural and social role of the arts, autonomously and not only instrumentally/economically conceived (i.e. the so called cultural deposits) the aims and core of a necessary reconceptualisation of the relation between the arts and management could concern a struggle against the 'eventification' of the arts management: to requalify the relationship between arts and aesthetics in the frame of the need of new categories but the solid of

modernity; to develop awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for individual, social and economic development; getting closer to communities; taking advantage of the new technologies; attracting new audiences; to stimulate education and research; to promote and bolster policy debate on art issues; to disseminate good practices (Chong, Gibbons, 1997).

Key words: reconceptualisation of relation arts/aesthetics, new categories of post-instrumental thinking, cultural perspectives and aims, beyond 'eventification'.

1. Introduction. Rationalisation or the dictatorship of the market

The analysis of the relationship between culture, market and society occupies, from Karl Marx onwards, a large part of the studies on capitalism, its essence and the evolution of systems inspired by it. The current trend, generated by a late-Western vision, is bent on orientating every aspect of culture and its expressions towards the market, in a convulsive *crescendo* that culminated in the recent and macroscopic crisis of the mechanisms of reification of culture, set up and adopted, all through the 20th century, by the triumphalist paradigms of relentless growth. Hence the process of reification of culture inclined to consider all cultural product both as an object for the market and as means for its development. And so it is that all societies, in various degree, become market societies where everything is an object for exchange. Not only goods and money, but also credit and services. In the classical vision of Karl Marx money becomes goods, capital being the result of repeated expropriation of the plus value of goods. Admittedly, the philosopher's vision is that of a society qualified, in its cultural and still more social expressions, by an economic infrastructure: so all forms of thought and action refer to the underlying mechanism of class that generates it. Money remains, in the end, the one and plausible purpose of the exchange. K. Marx's obstinate neglect of the social and cultural character of capitalism is reversed by Max Weber right through the study of the originally social and cultural character of that phenomenon, whose source is traced up to the Protestant ethic and to mundane ascesis. Then, capitalistic accumulating takes on the shape of a spiritual exercise for renouncing enjoyment and consumption to conquer ethic value, thus clearly showing how a cultural structure may produce capital.

Within the material civilisation, studied in the Thirties by the French *École des Annales*, the view of Fernand Braudel identifies in some cities of the 14th and 15th century the epicentre of the subsequent capitalistic form. In such market towns as Venice, Siena and Florence, capitalism is one and the same thing with the state, even if it does not yet similarly mould every aspect of material life. It is not before the end of the twentieth century that this process is carried out in full, but only until the abrupt crisis which occurred towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, when Karl Polanyi's (2000) interpretation of it became enlightening, no longer focusing on the causes of capitalism as on its effects: they are now political systems that revolve around the financial capital to promote world trade flows, for the further development of the capitalist system right in the form of market society. In Karl Polanyi's view, the market appears a something socially determined and, at the same time, politically established, just because we conceive society as contained in the economy rather than vice versa; and to us, it seems to be purely natural instead of the result of a series of political choices that favoured aggregate economic growth instead of a broader definition of human prosperity. Therefore, from this point of view, the modern market is not natural, it rather appears to be the reversal of the relationship with the social, placing the society in the market and achieving social consensus by means of sanctifying the principle of autonomy of the individual. The process described by K. Polanyi can be interpreted as the outcome of processes of social construction of the use and meaning of the market, also based on cultural options. So they could be conceived as processes of negotiation of the significance of the market itself, by synecdoche risen to symbol of the square in which all the market services take place, the causes of the transformation of the symbolic meaning of the market.

2. Art and market. To produce or to communicate

2.1. Rationalisation of the management of art

Within these frames of reference, speaking today of rationalisation of the management of art and culture means to refer to practices that entrust economy with

the management of the same (with all limits and constraints implied in the above choice) rather than to practices aimed at making the market more open to culture. Where as processes of rationalisation of life, in Max Weber times, tended to transform themselves from means to absolute aims, and so to become irrational, by promoting the world's disenchantment; we must also acknowledge that the Weberian cage has so far kept very strong bars. As a matter of fact, capitalism, in its contemporary version, maintains its supporting over structures thanks to rigorous and emotionally detached experts. Labour organisation in any case demands, no less than a century ago, its own sacrificial victims: individuals deviating from the average, individual cases of non-adjustment to labour rationalisation, that is to logical efficiency mistaken for the very sense of modernity. So a number of thinkers of the 20th engaged themselves with finding breaches in the bars of that steel cage. Furthermore against mechanism inherent to the processes of rationalization, the prestigious voice of Antonio Gramsci stands strong. Among the concepts that he treats, in his 'Quaderni del carcere' (1935) we remember in particular that of hegemony, in relation to the function of the new organic intellectual. The cultural hegemony, therefore, indicates that, through the ability to direct the thinking, symbolic elaboration, lifestyles and languages of 'national-popular mass', 'management teams' establish 'more intimate relations' with it. In other words, consolidate and stabilize their supremacy. Cultural hegemony is thus the arterial system of political hegemony, but it is only one aspect, though unavoidable. Cultural hegemony means, then, 'intellectual and moral direction'; i.e. creativity of power and ability of those who exercise it to satisfy basic, material and spiritual needs of the nation-people.

Ludwig Wittgenstein himself (1922) had previously reconsidered his theories of language, redefining his former formulation, originally built in rather ontological and essentialist terms - and so rigidly rationalising - only to set out towards a conception of linguistic plays somewhat linked with particular - and therefore variable - practices. With the second L. Wittgenstein (1953) an analysis of language unveils itself, stretched towards the comprehension (again: *Verstehen*) of social reality in its changes sooner than in its static aspects (*Erklären*). After Charles Sanders Peirce and Gottlieb Frege, after the theory of symbolic forms of Ernst Cassirer, after Bertrand

Russell and the Circle of Vienna, until Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Umberto Eco, Jürgen Habermas (1981) is the one who particularly recovered, in the sixties, the concept of 'social rationalisation'. Its purpose must be to produce 'shared interpretations' of situations by means of a dialectic which expresses itself in situations of 'communicative acting'. Starting from a single rationalisation, dialectics is reached among three different forms of rationalisation: economic, technical, and social. However, J. Habermas' horizon of analysis does not quite cover the instances of individual freedom and the contradictions represented by the body within a social and economic system.

2.2. The resistible ascent of reification

A scholar that over the last twenty years had the credit of dealing with the issue of rationality using new categories is Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize for economics. An unorthodox economist, A. Sen does not adopt the theories of rational choices; his methodological approach to economic analysis takes into due consideration the motivational complexity of individuals, and consequently also that they represent a single indivisible whole of mind and body. In its own way, A. Sen's view is near to that dialectic among three forms of different rationalisation (economic, technical, social) as much fostered by J. Habermas as they stand far from all ideological rigidities. By trying to overtake the limitations of traditional economic analyses, A. Sen (2000) outlines a new concept of development which differs from that of growth: economic development no longer coincides with increased income, but with increased quality of life. The concept of *capabilities* indicates ability of doing things, that is, the sets of alternative combinations of functioning that a promoting person can realise. Sen believes that economic development depends on the expansion of *capabilities*; it goes without saying that such development is wholly eco-sustainable, according to a new model of rationality, not forgetting the existence of the subject (as Georg Simmel wished) even in the vast world of work.

Beyond the world of work, the subject, understood as a body, populates other social worlds, including that of art, considered the deputy space to the free expression of the principle of pleasure through creativity. Re-analysed from this side of

studies and practices, the point of view of Jürgen Habermas on the forms of rationalisation urges to reconsider the old idea of Georges Bataille (1955), which in the art recognises a moment of transition between technical-instrumental imagination that creates tools for everyday life and a moment of expression, that brings forth the language of the transposition on the symbolic-communicative of what you see. A kind of art, therefore, capable of becoming language and of reflecting on itself, against the processes of reification implemented by the market, together with the feast, the game, the sacrifice, the prohibition and transgression.

I still insist upon the feeling of surprise that one experiences in Lascaux. This extraordinary cave will never cease to bewilder; it'll never cease to correspond with that longing for miracle which is, in art as in passion, the most deeply felt yearning of life. What we deem worthy to be loved is always what in some way surprises us: it's the un-hoped for, the beyond expectation. It's as if, paradoxically, our essence were made up with longing for attaining what we thought unattainable (Bataille 1955).

Just in this impossibility Jeffrey Alexander, with Georges Bataille, identifies the very condition of transgression, which 'rather than risking the conventional morality [...] underlines and revives it' (Alexander 2006: 184). But do we still believe in G. Bataille's words, do we still nurse that extraordinary longing for miracle, in spite of our globalised culture? And, in the affirmative case, what is it that, half a century after G. Bataille's writings, so transformed our artistic imaginary, so upset our categories? Maybe the end of the expressive dimension of art and the final success of the instrumental one, mightily riveted by mechanisms of rationalisation of global markets as well as by the games in the web? The end of wonder and the death of the body, hushed up because too much present (above all as a mistaken communicative instrument)? Or perhaps the dimensions finished making war (sociologically and even aesthetically) and are now looking for forms of co-possibility?

2.3. 'Art after the end of art'

That which came to the surface is not, after all, as it might seem, the end of art. Arthur Danto (1997) called it, in an undoubtedly more agreeable but also not altogether final way, 'art after the end of art'. Still if, as Jorge Luis Borges (1963) main-

tained, the whole sense of art lies in the imminence of a revelation that does not occur, then contemporary art is safe: Twentieth century art, relieved from being useful, frees itself from that Kantian aesthetics i.e. from the duty of pleasing and from all other modern paraphernalia. Nowadays, as Marcel Duchamp liked it, everything can be art, providing that it is acknowledged as such. Art has no longer duties, does no longer answer to canons like beauty, harmony, truthfulness (the *kalò kai agathò* of the ancient), perfection, but it finds on auto-reflection its identity, its ontological presence. It's secret doesn't lie in the beauty of its separation or in its separated beauty; sooner in the separation of its frame of comprehension. A very good sample of it are M. Duchamp 'celibate machines', at the time of the avant-gardes of the early 20th, or Bruno Munari's 'useless machines' ('aesthetically operating'), towards the half of the century. There is also, much humbler, the sample of the Indian Navajo weaver who leaves, in the weft of her carpet, a little break, a sign of unfinished, as Emilio Cecchi (1985) calls it, in order that her soul doesn't get imprisoned inside her work. Besides, many Italian artists provide to proclaim the death of the beautiful and the battle against the pretty: among them Carlo Carrà, Giorgio De Chirico and Alberto Savinio (1916) with his *Anti-grazioso* (anti-graceful), set to music by Alfredo Casella. The body notices all these changes and just incorporates them. Following the strong program, Jeffrey Alexander interprets culture as a whole of narrative and talk active structures, supported by signs and symbols organised in definite patterns, useful to convey the sense of social actions. The body's task is just that of constructing symbols and patterns through their incorporation. In the West, for instance, because of the Cartesian philosophy which set man against things and hence against machine, the latest is seen as a 'monster', an enemy to demolish, the same way as money in Georg Simmel's vision, where money is considered a source of alienation, and of prevalence of objective spirit upon the subjective (Simmel 1900). On this subject, the Japanese scholar Junji Tsuchiya (2014) maintains that nothing could be imagined more far away from Japanese imaginary in which, vice versa, machine represents a means to help man in its daily toil. The resulting idea is so that of a body which becomes friend of the machine and collaborates with it, in a vision that inclines to culturalise, that is to say to invest the technical image of machine with cultural meanings, rather

than to go on to consider it antagonist of our humanity or instrument of its annihilation through the market. But now it'll be opportune to take in close consideration the figure that socially seems today the most involved in – and/or responsible for – the processes of reification and marketisation of culture, and upon which to focus for a at least partial project of over turning its functions. I'm obviously referring to the manager of culture and arts.

3. From arts management to a new model of economic rationality

3.1. Role of arts management

Considered as the main responsible of the processes of marketisation of culture, the Manager of the arts and culture offers vocational and technical skills to plan and design, to manage and promote cultural activities in the fields of arts and entertainment. Visual arts, spectacle, historical and artistic heritage, cultural industries (publishing, music, cinema, radio and television, new media) and more general areas of creativity (architecture, design, communication, food) constitute a 'creative heritage' that moves a considerable part of the economy and are an important resource for the development of each country. At the same time, the area of Arts Management is very sensitive, because it is the realm of emotions, creativity, ideas and artistic performances. The role of arts management is paramount in providing successful artistic careers and performances. The Arts Managers' portrait is conceived on their financial and administrative tasks. At the same time, the administrative and financial aspects of arts management (DiMaggio 1987) are particularly at the core of the sociological research on the profession. The curator in his or her recent profession is at the interface of social fields or subsystems with their contradictory objectives. Thus, it is impossible to regard the arts manager (in the contemporary art field) as detached from aesthetic and curatorial issues, and purely focused on managerial ones. The legitimation and evaluation of arts managers in this field is based on both, aesthetic as well as managerial competence. The Arts Managers have great influence on the core aspects of the artistic work they deal with, that is on the contents and on the ways of producing, performing, and presenting art to the audiences.

The analysis of the arts managers' activity copes with two main and quite opposite tasks, that are the financial (managing the production, organisation, distribution, and marketing of the arts) and artistic ones, and deals with both at the same time. So the Arts Managers can be considered as human interfaces and connection between social fields as art and economy. So they can let artists free of financial concerns.

The theoretical concept of functional differentiation (Luhmann 1997) and Pierre Bourdieu's (1992) field concept can both be quoted with regard to the double task of the arts manager. In the field of artistic and cultural sectors and of creative industries, increasingly considered as driver for the economic growth, creativity, art and culture are not only key strategic assets for improving competitiveness in the knowledge based economy, but they have also a multiplicity of social and political functions, that is our main concern. More about what is at the core of our interest, Jane Franklin (2014) reminds that neo-liberalism is a set of ideas and values 'translated into taken for granted realities, where the market appears a natural process and inequality is seen as the inevitable consequence of individual choice'. One of its achievements was to dissolve politics into economics, so that citizens cease to be political subjects and become items of economic utility, even in the case of the arts. 'In this process, the public sphere is stripped of the functions of civil society, of dynamic contestation and debate, becoming instead the location of market and community activity'. As J. Franklin points out, politics is not necessarily partisan but concerns power relations: 'It is through politics that the diversity of social and economic interests can be negotiated and organised'. Like democracy, it is not a good in itself, but 'provides an arena where it is possible to question how things are, so as to change how things are'. Of course we need evidence and moral values. But politics as economics is not neutral: it's partisan. It's neoliberal, according to Eliane Glaser's analysis, both Right and Left claim to be ideology-free, but it's the Left that really has a problem with it. If anyone accuses the Right of being ideological, the response is that they are simply dealing in hard truths. If the Left are accused of being ideological, it hits a nerve. Because traditionally, it's the Left that's been regarded as ideological, dreaming of pie-in-the-sky Marxist utopias. In response, the Left has resorted to

data and facts. So in an unfortunate irony, the Right pretends to deal only in facts, but is actually thoroughly ideological, using facts to suit its purposes at the time. The Left is too nervous to have an ideology, so it sticks to facts, failing to come up with an alternative narrative. All sides disavow ideology, but the Right does so on the offensive; the Left on the defensive. But it's also important to resist the neoliberal prioritising of economics over politics (Glaser 2014). Anyway, if economics and politics cannot be neutral but always partisan, it is a politics' task to negotiate social and economic interests through cultural values at stake. On the opposite side of the question, regarding the relationship between the arts and Arts Management, we must remind that arts are free, i.e. not driven by economic nor utilitarian principles (instrumental thinking, according to J. Habermas (1981) and outside the everyday experience (J. Habermas' *Lebenswelt*, where not the instrumental rationality and agency but the communicative ones are dominant) but, rather, linked to policy indications. This is the case of linkages between arts and human rights, arts and environment sustainability, all built beyond utilitarian principles but representing the choice to be politically useful, according to a peculiar system of dominant values. It is not so rare the case of artists and arts managers that can have the same tasks (functions of art production, art management, and art distribution) but are not aware of the theoretical underpinnings of their practices and field, so they aim to efficacy and success in arts management as managing the production, organisation, distribution, and marketing of the arts. In fact, over the last twenty years, the mainstream of arts management literature has tried to apply general themes and techniques from business administration and management studies. So we frequently find references to arts-marketing/sponsoring/project management. It has been only on rare occasion that authors have radically questioned the appropriation of managerial tools from the business sector into arts management, and if such tools are suitable for arts institutions such as theatres, opera houses, museums or festivals. The main question regards the possibility of managing an artistically driven production process, such as creating an opera, concert, or theatrical representation using business-centric managerial tools, which simply refer to linear logic and production processes. Another question refers first to Art Organisations that have different aims, and therefore op-

erate with a different and differently operative logic and secondly to how art administrators cope with this altered logic in theory and practice.

3.2. Sociological perspectives: eventification

One can maintain that a new view to consider arts management is coming from a sociological perspective rather than from business administration. From the same perspective, we have to focus on the effects of using the arts management tools, particularly referring to the gap existing between the artistic invention (creators) and the public of consumers. This gap is what the intermediate organisations (Arts management) try to arrange by means of capital investments, that produce economic constraints (Hirsch 2000). It is so that cultural and artistic products must satisfy the consumers and market demand, and so that cultural products are treated as mere utilitarian objects. And it is from here that a process of what I dare to call 'eventification' or transformation of cultural/artistic products into commodified objects begins. Here, every kind of idea and work is immediately introduced into some showiness logic, aimed at produce visibility without any added value related to cultural growth. In fact, the relationship between artist and public follows a precise sequence of events: (1) a competition between the artistic product and all the others for selection and promotion of entrepreneurial organisations; (2) mediatic coverage, as reviews (of books, exhibitions, music and theatrical spectacles etc.); (3) promotion of the authorial work by means of all the media (cf. Hirsch 2000). In this case, media can be interpreted as the gatekeepers and institutional rulers of any innovation, with limits often indicated by and connected to technology. Summing up, if mass-media constitute the sub-system of the cultural industries system, arts management can represent the sub-system of mass-media, with the peculiar task to spread styles and make them imitated.

4. From eventification to evaluation of cultural differences

Cultural and artistic objects become un-interpretable outside the frame of a set of shared commodified symbols and values, constructed by cultural and artistic

management. In the world of the art exhibitions organisations, commodification is a condition more than a possible perspective or frame, to make events with cultural and artistic objects. The phenomenon of eventification involves quite all cultural products and, therefore, their aesthetic values, that become not understandable after the de-aurisation (loss of *aura*) effected by the technical reproducibility of the works of art (Benjamin 1936). While aesthetics tools are first of all normative and theoretical, sociological ones are distinguished for their empirical disposition to non-linear and recursive logics, and to an approach more oriented to a 'knowledge of' (propositional) than to a 'knowledge that' (prescriptive). Management logic, otherwise, remain only business-oriented and therefore not able to privilege anything but a managerial point of view, excluding the aesthetic and sociological ones. According to Tomaso Montanari's (2014) interpretation, 'we must remove culture from the dynamics of the market. Privates should be pulled out of the field of cultural and artistic heritage. They are doing damage. In Florence, for example, in the Uffizi, they get 4,000 people when it was determined that for security reasons the museum cannot hold so much. And the entrance you pay is expensive. The museum is thus treated as luxury. Instead it should be free for all'.

Towards a re-conceptualisation of the relation between arts and arts management, I wish now to remind a good suggestion by Eric Demey (2010), who calls the creative economy an oxymoronic formula: while it tries to build a bridge between culture and economy, he maintains, it also suggests a new model of private funding (by means of fiscal devices linked to donations would be possible to de-fiscalise the 66% of the amount paid as donation). Instead, he suggests an economically creative action, opposite to creative economy and able to go beyond the mere status of consumers, to collaborate and create social linkage around cultural actions. It is quite clear that this prospect is opposite to that of the creative economy, as also Elsa Vivant (2009) argues: 'La créativité ne se planifie ni ne se programme. Elle surgit de l'impromptu et de l'inattendu; elle naît là où on ne l'attend pas'. So, management logic needs new categories but the solid of modernity, to develop awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for individual, social and economic development. Quoting now a good suggestion from Michel Maffesoli (in Tyldesley 2013:

108-113) one can refer to tacit acceptance of values that have been developed throughout modernity (what É. Durkheim called logical conformism). The latter author points out that 'it is a question of going beyond the representations characterising the various different modern analytic systems, and of settling for a presentation of things. So one may transcend the lie that has reached the point where, in fact, we cease to see ourselves lying' (quoting Marcel Proust: 'It is lying to others and ourselves that leads us to forget we are lying').

5. Inclusion and innovation: case studies

On the other side, the new economic rationality consists of the appreciation of differences. The standardisation of processes that characterised the international industry over the past two centuries is gone. The rigidity in personnel management and in guidance of the companies to the market, which has been soaked in an economy oriented towards Fordism and Taylorism, has given way to a form more advanced - supple and soft, sleek and resilient - of corporate identity based on the combination of inclusion and innovation. According to Andrea Notarnicola (2014), who refers to best practices case studies (for IKEA, Citi, IBM, Telecom Italy, Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, Clifford Chance, Barilla, Consoft Systems, Deutsche Bank, Lexellent, Lilly, Roche, Linklaters, Costa, Newton and others) the new paradigm based on global inclusion represents the development of policies for equal opportunities, based on quotas for women, and corporate social responsibility. It is a global approach, leading each company, inside and outside, to consider the reasons for diversity such as the new, fundamental competitive leverage. This paradigm considers the processes of citizenship and participation that make the company stronger on the markets: the so-called diversity is therefore no longer understood as a theme of equal opportunity but as a business strategy. At the same time, social capital is considered as another important issue in the appreciation of differences, as it facilitates entrepreneurship (Chong, Gibbons, 1997).

6. Conclusions. Towards a less liquid aurisation of arts.

Difficulties in the culturalisation of markets

Anyway, diversity copes, also in the markets, with the aurisation of the artistic objects, notwithstanding the arts aura was considered dead from Walter Benjamin (1936), for the well known effects of technical reproducibility and of massification. But anyhow the aura returns in the auspices of a new type of man who will not let himself to be modified by the machines, but who himself will modify them. Chopped by historic avant-gardes, determined to de-sacralise and to demolish classic art (together with modern art), the aura of uniqueness was already considered unquestionable. As a matter of fact, it was constructionism that saw to give back to it both strength and consistence, justifying the lasting un-justifiability (in roughly rationalistic terms) of many phenomena of the market and of the imaginary of art. Obviously, the social construction of reality also involves art and its related imaginary: the great opportunity even today afforded by this theory is that of offering a *sitz im Leben* (Dilthey 1988) to all aspects of reality, to enable us to understand it when seen within a frame, making of it a sort of finite province of meaning (Schutz 1979) or habitat of meaning (Hannerz 2001). Province or habitat, anyway, that are able to modify themselves, to expand or to shrink according to the shapes from time to time assumed by culture. Besides, within them aura acts as a sub-habitat, built inside a particular artistic imaginary which allows critics, dealers and curators to create and make use of it. In other words, aura is no longer constitutively or ontologically, once and forever assigned to an object, as with aesthetics. Nowadays it is a thousand times built and demolished. This, along with the changes of the 'forms of attention' (those by Frank Kermode 1989) linked to the perceptual dis-habits might give the reason for the fortunes and misfortunes of art of past and present times. Anyway, killing the beautiful, according to M. Duchamp, does not mean to suppress the aura of uniqueness linked to a great share of the art of past and present times. The *Gioconda* remains the *Gioconda*, Dante remains Dante, etc. And yet each referent can change its sign, being so exposed to unceasing re-interpretations, which just imply new negotiations on account of cultural values at all times subject to transformation. We are in a ford, to run

back to the well known metaphor by Zygmunt Bauman. Quoting Angela Vettese (2005: 144) one more and more recurs to the 'negotiation, practicable utopia, solidarity, participation as a way toward development, meeting point among cultures of different countries; from the artistic point of view, the relation of authority between work of art and spectator overturned itself and became interlocutory'. Very much liquid, as said.

In the way, as always, realistic and teasing Jean Baudrillard's reading (1991: 24-25), at this point 'the only benefit afforded by a Campbell's can by Andy Warhol (but it's an enormous benefit) is that the question of beautiful and ugly, of real and unreal, of transcendence or immanence is definitely overcome'. That is why 'aurisation is a problematic process', as Alessandro Dal Lago (2006: 201) recalls us: 'because it consists in a continuous redefinition of what is - and what is not - art'. So even the statute of work of art or of applied art is subject to negotiation, whereas the former is bound to the unicity and exclusivity of the object and to its distance from usability. By means of demolishing and re-construing the aura, we demolish or re-construe our own imaginary, move the objects from their pedestals and lift them to the rank of fetishes, of totems protective of our symbolic universes. By removing the fixed points from her cultural horizon, contemporary art gets the artist to put on stage the overcoming of his own work (Dal Lago 2006: 41). What counts is no longer the work, but the idea: everything can be art, practices and talks meet and last in our imaginary as long as the public and the critics, that is to say the promoters and the subjects of distribution and consumption, do decide it. In a state of dictatorship of the public (so recited the title of a past Venetian Biennale) nothing is created and nothing destroyed). The main risk is that of entrusting the market and its recurrent oscillations with all aesthetic criteria, not to mention that, once the aesthetic value buried, what counts is nothing but the value in exchange of the work. To a more attentive consideration, these decisional processes, appointed for distribution and consumption of works of art, can be comprehended among those practices of cannibalisation performed by the market upon senses, objects and individuals active in the art world. All of them share the common aim: to de-aurise works of a past and of a history only known to the insiders, and vice versa to re-aurise all that is more convenient for the

market. The upsetting of the frames of significance and of methods at the root of narrations and constructions of the artistic reality was completed in less than two decennia, with manifest profit of the new frames of aurisation of contemporary art, and to utter damage of those for a culturalisation of the market. Still more to the advantage of the new frames of aurisation of contemporary art and of the continuous processes of definition of the same on the side of the consuming public and of critics, there is the enormous amplification in the web. 'It's the idea of web, an idea which distorts the hierarchic organisation of both sciences and world, and that introduces the concept of the absence of a centre within the contemporary cognitive grille. The new conception, 'holistic' and 'systemic', returns importance to the relations whilst reducing weight to single objects' (Chini 2008: 2). The unreal and at the same time too real world of the web 'spreads a feeling of total un-decidability, of generalised scepticism. It is impossible to answer the question about what is - or is not - part of the real world. We are beyond the principles of veracity and falsity, it is a paradoxical situation, where this enormous uncertainty is due to the excess of positivity, of technical and scientific luminescence' (*ibidem*). In this condition of un-decidability we can, however, intervene so that economy can not always make the louder voice, in such a way as to degrade the enormous and variegated wealth of artistic culture to the level of a market dictatorship.

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