

**ART AS TRANSACTION.  
THE ARTIST AS HUMAN CAPITALIST.**

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**Title:**

**Art as transaction**

The Artist as Human Capitalist



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## **Introduction**

In any dystopian story or future, there is an element of uncertainty. Not only of where society is going, but of where does it find itself. The questions of what has come before is somehow irrelevant, as the past will not matter once everything of aesthetic value has dispersed. The war on terror, may remain, as it is currently has no end in sight and simply morphs into another entity which everyone remaining is involved in as victim and suspect. In Geoff Murphy's 1985 film *The Quiet Earth*, the antagonist, Zac Hobson, enters a church and destroys a statue of Christ on the cross, with an axe. Later we discover him striking a cabinet of telecommunication cable, and rising them out with force as though pulling out the innards of a past neoliberal privatisation of public services. The next scene we discover Zac driving a heavy industrial paving machine through a supermarket. These symbols of capitalism and power (The Church, Technology conglomerates, Consumerism) being destroyed in a dystopian earth with a one person population is futile.

In that destroying these objects is pointless as there are no more elite or wealthy people around. Yet their history can be somehow altered with one fatal blow of an axe. How could Zac have achieved this expression of disgust in a time of pre-apocalypse, could he change his previous life on his own terms with an action of demonstrating his discomfort at aspects of social systems?

As the multiple financial crises of recent years have crept up to us and spread moments of discomfort in society, the artists has somehow become a representative of societies disquiet with these inequalities which effect a majority. The discourse in the art world, accompanied by the surrounding social sphere, has engaged more with capitalism and the role of art within it. As artists are not seen to be part of the global elite (except for the minority of Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons) as they suffer when a financial market crashes (cut-backs) and when it picks up with a rise in property prices and studios being repurposed, knocked down, reconstructed into luxury apartments. While the global wealthy still collect, auction, buy and sell the works of artist from the past and present.

This appreciation of creative Human Capital I will try to research and analyse from the the general contemporary discourse and activities of artists today.

In discovering the potential struggle and antipathy in society with this text I will investigate, as an art student what is the relationship between art and capitalism. I place various sources together in an endeavour to make sense of this exchange amongst art, power and money. The use of fiction sets the atmosphere with a narrative and pretext to depict the tone of detecting an insight of a social system, which cannot be expressed by an art student whom simply talks about; capitalism, neoliberal, finance and economics. Within this text I also aim to ascertain the relationship between art, money and the global wealthy 1% cannot be changed, yet it taints the connection with society and art.

## **Celebrating the first One hundred years**

As part of the centenary celebration of the Les Abattoir Museum, Toulouse, the curator of the new exhibition *Lairage*, draws from the past of the museum, in combination with the Hadron Incident of 40 years ago. Within this new text, specifically written for this event, the curator Jean Balcord, addresses the failure of societies digital archive system, accompanied by a transcript of a reading of the curators text on the memory of a video production by the curators friend, John Priest. The museum is proud to show together the works of Maria Abramovic's *Balkan Baroque* (1997), Damian Hirst's *A Thousand Years* (1990), *Loves Paradox* (2007), *Mother and Child divided* (1993), Herman Nitsch's *Maria - Conception - Action* (1969) with a collection of his splatter paintings series. Whom were referenced in the video work of John Priest. The reading transcription is then followed by a new text on the evolution of the art market and the events which led to the debasing of the economic value of all art works in the aftermath of the Hadron Incident of 2051.

In the introduction to the text for the centenary exhibition at Les Abattoir Museum Toulouse, the curator draws comparison to the uncertainty of the viewer in what they often see in a museums exhibition as viewing art with an element of fear being an experience similar to the reluctant cattle forced across a certain frontier, *"As an animal cannot verbalise its thoughts, it is inconceivable to accurately ascertain to what extent it does or does not sustain from fear, so it is certain that cattle in particular, often demonstrate an expectant reluctance to accede in to stepping forward into the slaughter chamber, and can only be apprehended by utilisation of considerable pressure"*.<sup>1</sup> The double analogy in this text, with the value of labour and cost of the artists raw material in executing their ideas set against the real economic value in the old art markets, brings attention to how art has changed in the last 50 years.

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<sup>1</sup> Les Abattoirs 100, introduction by Jean Balcord, 2091, Hermand Press.

The setting of Les Abattoirs, with its historical cleansing from slaughter chamber of cattle (utilised by Abramovic, Nitsch and Hirst) to a museum holding the collection of Anthony Denney and Daniel Cordier, both with an estimated value of 1.2 Billion YE (or 6.8 trillion euro in equivalent old money with inflation accounted for).

## **Jean Balcord's Introduction to his lecture/ performance**

My relation with the artist John Priest has been one of many collaborations. With our first meeting and working together on a project commissioned by The Community of Agglomeration of Greater Toulouse. At the time John Priests work asked the viewer to question a certain aesthetic of history and transformation in urban renewal. His visual work some would consider a cinematic marketing tool. The camera on the ground dragging slowly in the edge, of where the wall meets ground. Sometimes it stops and then jerks and spasms. The filming for this particular work is inside the abattoir at Les Abattoirs (prior to its transformation as museum). The dragging drunken subconscious, trips between memories of descriptions of artworks it sees while dragging itself along the main slaughter hall pass the lairage, the ventilation alley, doubtful cattle room, piggeries, and gut scrapping room. The description is of a cow, then we realise there is a man underneath, a kind of harking back to the ancient cinema of science fiction and empire strikes back moment where Luke cuts open his

Tauntaun and crawls inside to survive the freezing temperatures. Then the viewer becomes aware the cow is losing its ability to remember, immediately forgets what it has seen, a post-traumatic stress disorder in dealing with the scenes produced before it. Realising it is just a discardable consumable in the labour of an artist. The viewer is encouraged to move on and take the next step in this "performance".

So please, let me begin...

## **Opening scene, a work by John Priest**

The Film's opening scene, was considered an approach, unlike any other film for its time. Utilising a new technique, combining a drone camera attached to the outside of a helicopter normally used in cinema for aerial filming. Although what appears to differ here, is the frictionless forward movement of the camera when it detaches itself from the helicopter, a technique similar to a high altitude low opening in military parachuting. This method allowed the camera to follow a certain line, then suddenly detach itself and move closer to the ground, introducing an unedited continuous shot, as the scene reached closer to its objective, and moved amongst matter at ground level.

Moving slowly towards a landscape of green fields, overpassing the tiny scaled cows grazing below. The landscape alters itself as though rolling on a conveyor belt, there is a sudden awareness of being stationary as a viewer, as the camera approaches the edge of a forest. The vivid colours, apparently inspired by various paintings of old masters, where their estates now licence the colour palette painters to relational

cinema, due to recent changes in property law. The trees in particular are a mix of sycamore, sugar maples, hemlocks and oak, reaching a height of over forty-meters, the viewer is composed to extend their reach, their hand outstretched from their stationary point with finger tips touching into the midrib of leaves. There was no gauge to measure the exact vertical expanse of the trees from above, only a field of various greens, waving in the wind, desperate to reach out and grab the viewers gaze, or warning to stay away, pre-emptive of what lies ahead. Upon multiple screenings of the film, some viewers are said to notice a number of people linking hands to circle one of the trees, Priest later informed me this was intentional, to show viewers the sheer scale of the trees, where four adults linked hand-in-hand around the circumference.

With progression of the cameras position, the scene changed to a flat land, giving an idea of the scale of the trees which proceeded it, if one dared to turn their gaze from path ahead and glance behind. Where a quick turn-of-the-head, brings a shock to the body, as the camera suddenly without warning plummets

towards a road, the reflex of the viewer is to immediately bend their knees to ready for impact into the unknown as the scene has suddenly become blurred and out of focus, another intentional decision by Priest.

The camera, re-focusing, adjusts to reveal a road, straight wide, newly built to accommodate the movement of heavy goods trucks with large containers attached to their backs, appearing like fast moving beetles. The view is immediately swept right, as the camera moves towards a large building complex. The approach road to the building was aligned with trees, void of any movement, lifeless and soundless as if the surrounding area had been placed in a vacuum, the anticipated flutter of birds from the high tree branches did not arrive, if not for the assumption that tree branches altered slightly their position outside, the area would appear to be frozen in time, as though physics had decided to abandon or evacuate the surrounding space.

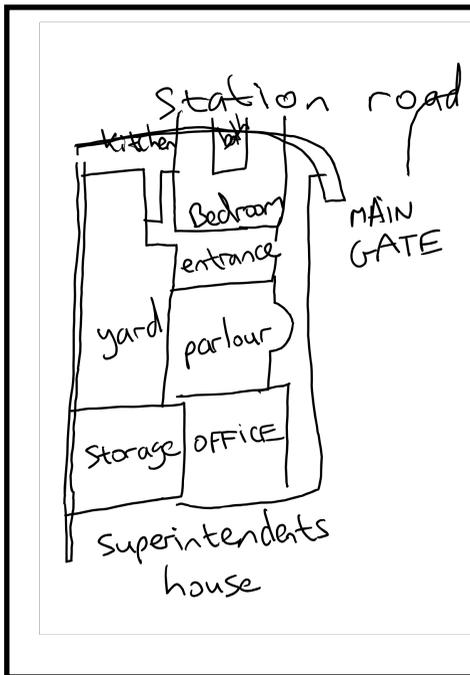
On the approach to the building itself, the facade and general construction becomes more apparent.

Composed in brickwork with Pelaw double pressed facing bricks, giving the exterior an earth coloured warm appearance. For its pre-war construction the structural thickness of the red wall, demonstrated the will of the architects and those financing their strength and belief in making such a building.

The name of the complex was Charles-de-Fitte. Built in 1823 its population reached 97,267 occupants. The number of whom were killed per annum was approximately 40,850. The architect Urbain Vitry, faced many challenges in using the original green field for construction and design, yet the site itself was well chosen. On the Northern side there was the railway, which was crossed at one single point by the cattle-lead walkway or subway bridge, allowing the population to be taken immediately from the trains to the landing docks and then lead through the subway entrance, thus avoiding the local community and borough. The area itself is approximately 4,760 square meters, or in agricultural terms closer to one acre. Within the system complex, through the underground entrance subway, block of building were separate departments for processing the population. A slight incline in the road gives-way to the main entrance to

the complex, accessible from the North Road. This access point is adjacent to the Superintendents Housing and office, with adjoining storage hall for foods and supplies.

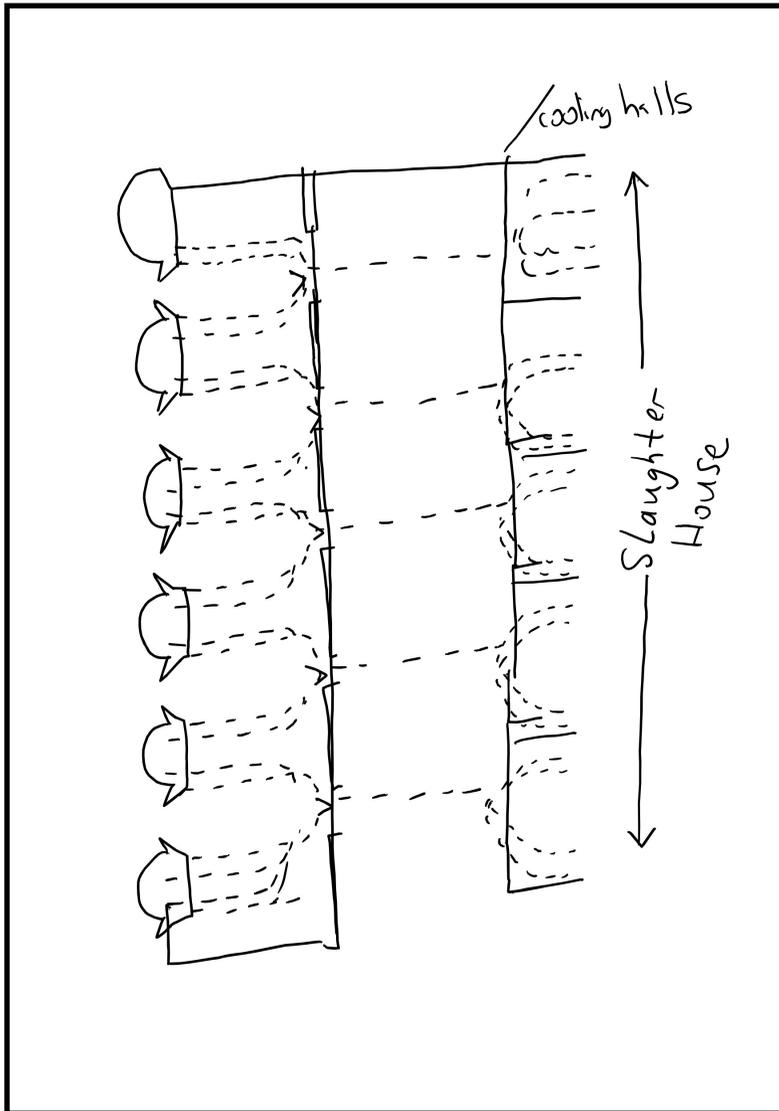
I include in this presentation a rough illustration of the housing building or Superintendents housing, from the notes of Priest.



*Illustration of The Superintendents housing, from notes of John Priest*

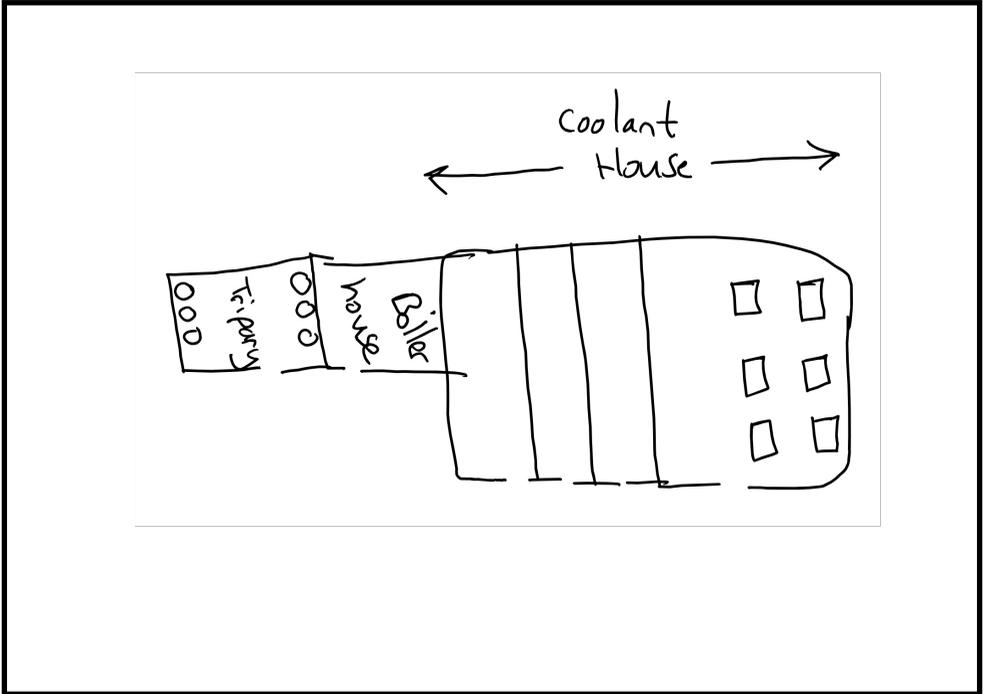
The housing building is very basic, consisting of: one office, a bedroom, a parlour (living room), bathroom, kitchen with a small yard with access to a storage room.

The next building on left hand side, consisted of red clay brick, the kiln fired redness gave the building an appropriate colour representing the activities of it interior. Known as the Cooling Hall, it is used for the storage of the processed population, it is 10 meters long by 20 meters wide and 5 meters in height, it is located at the end of the Lairage Hall. All the roofing of buildings within the complex are carried on steel principals with close boarded sarking, and covered with Dinoric slates.



*Illustration of Slaughterhouse, from notes of John Priest*

Running the full length of the complex the Lairage Hall, at 70 meters long and 20 meters wide. It consists of 7 rooms, 10 meters long (at the front when facing the door) and as it is part of the same building as the cooling hall, it is 20meters in depth. The internal of each Lairage room, is grey concrete with walls approximately one-third of a meter thick, with white glazed or brown salt-glazed brickwork, allowing the rooms to remain cool as they are lighted from the North. In all complex buildings the floors are Portland cement concrete. In the adjoining room to the cooling hall is the refrigeration plant to control the temperatures of both Lairage Hall and Cooling Hall, and the various regulated temperatures of other rooms and halls within the complex.



*Illustration of The Coolant house, from the notes of John Priest.*

The camera, ran the full length of this internal complex, and back again to the white exterior of the Superintendents housing, swooping around from left-to-right, showing the entrance to Station Road. It stopped in front of a grey building, accessible through a single metal grey door, heavily secured by two Security Flush Door Bolts, and one Door Drop Bolt (a Sliding Lock Type). There were no visible windows, and the interior was lit by two large 12,000 Lumen flood lights settled in the centre of the room, attached to a plank of wood rested on two tripods one at each end. The building itself was termed the *Doubtful Building*, not a naming convention to hide its actual existence. The block was a pavilion for processing the doubtful or diseased of the population, it was constructed similarly to the other building in the complex in that it had its own cooling hall. Two other rooms in the building consisted of a Doctors dissecting or post-mortem room with dissecting table and a small lavatory and wash basin. Adjoining the doctor's room, and immediately alongside the primary entrance, are the men's billets. Accommodation consist of a room 15

feet square, fitted with a Kitchen range, lockers, and seating. The building is for the use of staff and other workmen employed on and about the premises, and is consequently located In full view of the superintendent's office, for supervision and monitoring purposes.

Adjacent to the mens quarters is the processing house or buffeting house as referred to by the workers. This consisted of two buildings running in parallel, joined by a raised alleyway 2 meters high (so the population can be inspected undercover). The construction of the exterior of the building has been broadly made in brickwork with Pelaw double pressed facing bricks. The interior walls consisted of a white glazed brickwork, giving a distinct fabricated tactile property, and the main purpose is the fire resistivity of a ceramic tile finished brick. Amongst the ceramic bricks are Louvres used as ventilation.

At this point the camera suddenly stops to a whispering movement, as though it has decided to participate in the sudden whistling sound by allowing its sharp edges to be caressed by the wind. From one

of the Louvres, a slow mumming breeze like a draft is attempting to escape, asking for the window to be open. The viewer becomes aware of a movement against this Louvre, as the camera draws closer we realise there is a black mass draped in a canvas Tarpaulin. The outline of the form beneath slumped in a sleeping foetal position. It begins to move. The camera moves slowly towards this slumped mass, and rests upon an eye visible between the canvas sheet and ground.

Withdrawn from its normal functions the eyes slow dull movement left-right-left right, somehow expresses a pain and discomfort, with the whistling sound belching slowly from beneath the plastic sheet covering it. The camera suddenly changes perspective, and now the viewer is brought into the drunken slumping form, and we see what it sees, a blurred vision of the hall with its white ceramic brickwork. It begins to move, down, then up again, as though inside a sine wave with a frequency travelling from peak to trough. Slowly moving towards the overview 2 meter raised alleyway, the host now releases a strange unsettling sound, similar to a baby crying, high pitched. This would

cause a certain amount of angst in any viewer, the uncertainty enfolds itself on the path of this sound, making the space more uncomfortable. As it head slaps to the ground the viewer notices a white material folded in one of the corridor rooms. Draped over itself folded in half. The host (or now the viewer) begins a struggling see-saw movements, a fight against gravity, to gain a closer look.

The dark dank corridor, constructed of poured cement, which by the terms of the buildings existence, had not been cleaned in a number of years, was in contrast to the white porcelain bleached glazed walls of the Lairage . The natural build up of mould, and filthy air, added a wet-moss colouring to the walls. Walls projecting an illusion of second skin appeared to slide down from themselves, as if a newly awoken organic body knowingly spreading itself, desperate to consume the architecture which it lived and breathed in. The hall with it's modular elements joined together towards the horizon, forming an infinite darkness where no light can bounce from the walls, and all electrical lighting had ceased to involve itself in the natural spectrum. It's physics had been playing a new game.

Years of green growth, offering a measurement of time in this space, had begun a journey of itself towards the exit. As though the organic formations allowed to grow in this wind tunnel petri-dish had decided “enough-is-enough, time to get out of the horrid dampened atmosphere.

Considering the circumstances, stumbling was not such a hinderance. It was brought on by the distress of learning, some would consider a lack of knowledge of ones environment an act to cause immediate and lasting distress of being present in an unfamiliar space. A claustrophobia coupled with agoraphobia, similar to what a number of visitors have when entering a museum space. Yet, the excitement was an appropriate attempt to cloak an involuntary tremulous motion. Trembling not from fear or lacking of control, a shaking which moved the body forth, as involuntary migration of the limbs altered both the body’s physical circumstances and position.

Hence taking control and motioning the body forward through the dark pools of crude oil substance littering the hallway.

The sudden uncontrollable movement towards a closer look, brought a resounding ringing noise as matter of the head rang against the wet walls, there was a tumultuous sensation of memory absorbing this filthy pain. What filth it was, as if moving through memories forgotten for a reason, or an atlas appearing to be from another experience.

Looking from left to right, vertically horizontally, on multiple axis, one immediately displaces another. The disorientation erased as the outline of its surroundings began to focus, not that any sense was made from some form of clarity, the tremors of limbs moved feverish through its body, intentionally abating any progress. Within a number of feet, or at perhaps a distance of 2 meters, the outline of a woman took shape. With long black hair draped over the shoulders of her white robe, she held in her hands, caressing and cleaning, the bones of those which were once found everywhere in the complex, as though the act of hoarding and collecting was some way to cleanse the history of this space. The viewer now finds themselves witnessing, a re-enactment of Marina Abramović's *Balkan Baroque*.

Sluggishly it carried on, as if waiting to be suddenly transferred back to it's dank corridor at any moment. Hoping to escape the memory of this encounter.

Continuing the pain inflicted journey, the face of a man appears. Only the hopeless glance from the side of his face being visible. He lay at the entrance to the next Lairage room, in a pool of black substance with an invisible source. Beyond the lying figure a scene unravelled. If anyone here has witnessed the work of Herman Nitsch, you can begin to understand the quantity of blood spread within this Large room, and the carcasses of cattle which hung suspended, split open with front and hind legs spread in an x shape as though welcoming those whom performed below. The scene moves onwards rapidly as though in disbelief, as a form of spectrophobia launches in anticipation of what could happen next. Slightly brushing the laid figures skin fleetingly we pass, when another involuntary movement, brings the view crashing down, a soft thudding sound of a head softly blown against the concrete ground.

Remaining grounded, broken and shattered like a fallen marble statue of David, physically exhausted from witnessing the scenes recently unfolded. Involuntarily the screen goes blank, drifting off into a black space.

The struggle to waken, is often a murky distant effort, when the weight of a body is brought back into the day. A slumbering vision, of liquid, fills the viewers vision, knowingly submerged where the need to panic is offset by a feeling of floating in a stationary position. When expecting to ascend with a buoyancy, the density of fluid appears to keep the viewer submerged, captured motionless in what we soon notice as a tank of liquid. The cameras fixed point, brings into its frame the appearance of a white suit and black mask.

The person dressed in a full body chemical protective clothing, gently taps on the glass frame, as if to exert the gentle tapping would crack the glass tank which suspends both gravity and sinking force.

We become aware of the situation and circumstances, as more of the environment is shown we realise our new perspective is that of being inside the vitrine of Damien Hirst's *Mother and Child Divided*.

John Priest, the artist, had decided to re-enact these works by contemporary artists, to alter their historical context, by placing them inside the abattoir. The very place their raw material came from, and the slaughtering of cattle is used to disgust the viewer, so placed with this environment the power and impact is nulled.

In conversation with John Priest, he informs the main subject he wished to address is the commodification of a material such as a cow's carcass and parts. When it is introduced into the context of art and displayed in a museum it gains another economic value. So by placing these artists within an abattoir, Priest is subtracting the impact of these works, by removing them from the museum, a place where we would obviously expect to find such experiences and retain our association with the works.

This also brings into relevancy the labour of the artist in creating a work, if we experience the reality of the raw materials source, does it alter our perception of an artists value or human capital, did they just wander around an abattoir collecting bones to clean, jumping in the baths of blood, and submerging a carcass in formaldehyde that was just lying around, asking us to question the artist awareness of being Human Capitalists in utilising a raw material, changing its context by placing it in a museum to somehow disgust us in terms of being a work of art, leaving and the question of the future of arts survival in a pickled jar.

## **Human Capital and the labour of Art in Society**

In 2008 the artist Damien Hirst agitated the Art world by holding an auction solely for his work. Although he had run a similar project while a student at Goldsmith, where he arranged the art student exhibition *Freeze*. Continuing with the enterprise aspect within art, in 2008 Hirst had an auction, titled "Beautiful Inside My Head Forever" of his new works at Sotheby's, by bypassing the galleries, Hirst was capitalising on his very reputation and maintain his ability to inflate and control prices "for unique, expensive goods with an uncertain value such as art, auctions are the optimal price mechanism". Coincidentally both auctions were held at times of recession, one at the end of the 1980s and another commenced the same day that Lehman brothers collapsed "On Monday, Lehman Brothers had filed for bankruptcy, and Merrill Lynch, having announced \$55.2 billion in losses on subprime bond-backed CDOs, had sold itself to Bank of America"<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Lewis. *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*.

Monday the 15th of September was the day prior to Hirst's auction, becoming a new horizon in the global economy, where the markets and society knowingly aware it's directly behind, as today the aftershock is still being felt in both the art world and society. Point being Hirst's timing, had a significant amount of *laissez-faire*, of running his own market through the auction at Sotheby's, where he was more than aware of his popularity and value as an artists (or at-least aware of his works value), In a 2001 interview Hirst was asked how was he being effected by the recession, at the time the world recession lasted two years (from 2000-2001), his answer was "Not at all, what recession"<sup>3</sup>. So in 2008 as, mentioned Hirst had perhaps become invincible to the economic activity of volatile markets, "By the sale's end, on Tuesday afternoon, the entire auction brought a total of \$200.7 million, more than the auction house's high estimate of \$177.6 million"<sup>4</sup>. If the Sotheby's auction was one week later, would there have been a significant difference in the number of pieces sold, at the start of the 2008 Global financial crash and the subsequent

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<sup>3</sup> On the way to work, Damien Hirst Interview with Gordon Byrne,2001, page 33.

<sup>4</sup> Bull Market for Hirst in Sotheby's 2-Day Sale, by Carol Vogel, NYT, September 16 2008

degeneration of the world banking system. Which is described as:

“First of all let me state the simple fact that when you deposit money in a bank the bank does not put the money into a safe deposit vault. It invests your money in many different forms of credit-bonds, commercial paper, mortgages and many other kinds of loans. In other words, the bank puts your money to work to keep the wheels of industry and of agriculture turning around.

A comparatively small part of the money you put into the bank is kept in currency—an amount which in normal times is wholly sufficient to cover the cash needs of the average citizen. In other words the total amount of all the currency in the country is only a small fraction of the total deposits in all of the banks”<sup>5</sup>

The above statement is from an address by President Roosevelt, to the nation in 1933, explaining the Ins-and-outs of how a banking system operates. His public address was a method to ease the confusion of the people and subtly introduce them to the changes

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<sup>5</sup> Fireside Chat 1: On the Banking Crisis (March 12, 1933) Franklin D. Roosevelt

which were coming in regard to society and the introduction of the New Deal. Which led to the incubation of Neo-liberalism in Western society, especially generations later in the policies of Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher and their endeavour to enhance the mechanism of Capitalism, thus bringing artistic labour into the fold as a new found value which contributes as a market entity in itself?

So Why does art need capitalism? And why do we need to talk about it in the arts? What does it mean to be explained to us what a great-depression or New Deal is, when the outcome of these economic decisions are left outside the grasp or factions of society? What does it signify for a leader to perform fireside chats to keep a population panic-ridden and ensure the markets, and the world that all is in order, or there will soon exist a new order of capitalism and neoliberalism. with a clear underlying meaning to respect individual rights, which is dispensable and subject to change, at any moment through History? If investors are to deposit only a small amount into banks, where else could they horde wealth, as investment, through the arts perhaps? Which has become a signifier of class

wealth in-itself. Art becoming a new class asset, further assimilating a position as a commodity, "Liquid Rarity Exchange says it has patented a method for turning rare objects into publicly traded funds and is talking with New York investment houses about licensing that method to create a whole family of art and collectibles mutual funds".<sup>6</sup>

Why does capitalism adore the labour of artists, what opportunities does this power relation bring to art with its actor agent participants?

Capitalism or capitalisation is considered a method of understanding and organising things in society, asking what are the value of things, or specifically what is the value of an artistic piece in the visual arts, what is the value of the labour of an artist in a capitalistic system and the value both artist and their work has from a perspective of cultural production within society. How does the artist participate or engage with creating their own capital through labour, and is this intentional or merely expected of the artist? Pierre Bourdieu

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<sup>6</sup> Kathryn Tully, Forbes, Forbes: Could Fine Art And Collectibles Become A New Asset Class? (11/26/12). <http://artvest.com/Forbes-could-fine-art-and-collectibles-become-a-new-asset-class-112612/>

argues the entering into a field, whether it's of artistic or scientific discipline "It means, in short, 'investing' one's (academic, cultural, symbolic) capital in such a way as to derive maximum benefit or 'profit' from participation".<sup>7</sup> Through this participation the artist as worker self-regulates and becomes a smorgasbord of her own labour, Foucault discussed in his Collège de France lectures of 1978-1979; "the worker appears himself as a sort of enterprise". This possession of the artist representing themselves as a "working model identity" is a far stretch from the past, where artists worked for patrons of the court, controlled by guilds to ensure quality as representation of "the craft". The future being certainly uncertain, will the value of the field of artistic labour diminish as a recognised commodity or asset investment?

A return to the situation auction houses faced in the seventeenth century "The guilds, in turn, attempted to prohibit these auctions in order to prevent the market from becoming flooded with paintings of lower quality"<sup>8</sup>. Could art retune to its more guided classical

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<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, page 10.

<sup>8</sup> Olav Velthuis, *Damien's Dangerous Idea, The worth of goods*, 2011, page 12

environment, when the number of art works produced and sold was prohibited, Although an approach to be frowned upon by the commercial art market, the number of artists would certainly be reduced, as guild members would rule supreme, and become a demarcation point, or institute in selling and creating works of art. If there is such control in the output of artistic labour, could the labelling of art as commodity be removed.

As a commodity perhaps this is not the case, with various agents of capitalism embracing the artist as an enterprise and bring them into the folds of capitalism amongst the businesses and startup incubator projects of today. Then who takes the place of the artist once they have dissolved into this. Yet it is of vital importance that artists are knowledgeable and involved in both how capitalism works and its development or when the great onto-power switches on its old Nilfisk vacuum-Hoover to clean things up a bit; the artist is not amongst those sucked into the inner-bounds of its iron body.

The artists maintain's its agency, of involvement in a market of commodities being bought and sold. Free to move further up within the dominant class, "Economic capital increases and one moves from the dominated to the dominant fractions"<sup>9</sup>, altering its history with their involvement. While the aspect of the guild supplies the wealthy, auction houses and market with a controlled substance for their consumption.

If these elements are what can be used to describe the relationship of capitalism and art as a consumable. Then perhaps there is no refined definition of the relationship with capitalism and art over time. Where the value of money is becoming more abstract as more of it is made by the same faction of people, the rich obtain wealth and learn to maintain, it becomes somehow insignificant, especially to an artist. Where information and social reach and relation, it is acceptable to place oneself in its memory where the artist jumps in at a point in capitalism history.

Is this satisfaction enough to maintain a course within the field? Capitalism embracing art the entrepreneur,

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<sup>99</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, page 28

allows a commodity of art to exist, with the labour of the artist as Human Capital or the Artist as Human Capitalist, whom is aware of the market and its demands in what sells as an art piece.

Although to refer to the labour of an artist as such, is coining the term of Becker, where the term itself was once demeaning "*The very concept of human capital was alleged to be demeaning because it treated people as machines*"<sup>10</sup>, whereas Foucault terms the machine and person are inseparable "*that capitalism transforms the worker into a machine and alienates him as a result*"<sup>11</sup>, in terms of production many artists could be considered cultural productive machines, where the output of their labour is extensively documented, in both quantity and price, more so than those whom work in various other fields, raising thresholds along the lines of; What did the artists produce, how much did the works sell for, and what are they worth now, and possibly in the future? In talking of the future, then all artists take pre-emptive measures to ensure their wealth by deciding on their

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<sup>10</sup> Gary S. Becker, Nobel acceptance speech, 1992

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, the birth of Biopolitics, lectures at the college de France, 1979, page 224

point of entry to education. The expected rate of return from an artists investment in their education is relative to a monetary value, their forecasted income across their full career “the higher earnings of more educated persons for the fact that they are abler: they have higher IQs”. So the higher an education an artists ascends, the greater a wage they make.

Since the captured organisation of art schools, in the 1960s and 1970s, accompanied by the rise of neoliberalism, level of art school education has been further labelled as professional education with a curriculum time frame, placing the artist in a situation where they must contribute to society with a preference towards tax contribution . This neoliberal turn towards human capital also recognised the possibility of art being an economic system to be somehow exploited “giving a strictly economic interpretation of a whole domain previously thought to be non-economic”<sup>12</sup>

This non-economic domain, in the 1960s, with significant exchanges in society also brought along the action for artists, away from the traditional labour of

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<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, the birth of Biopolitics, lectures at the college de France, 1979, page 219

art, into an ultra-conceptual arena “as more and more work is designed in the studio, but executed elsewhere by craftsmen”<sup>13</sup>. Signifying the artist stepping into a field of entrepreneur, where they provide some form of capital for the production of works (be it their own money or that of a gallery/museum/funding) or in the case of some public art being funded by private investors (see Anish Kapoor’s Cloud Gate). Where the pure economy of labour is then reduced to time. Which is what the conceptual artists must then become; a manager of time in terms of production; the time to generate an idea; time to outsource it manufacture to craftsmen such as MDM Props in London; to time of exhibition in a gallery or even right to the hands of a collector?

Defining art as a commodity to be economically analysed, where the artist is then aware of their reputation, and value of works is determined by their popularity at the time, *“He sells his labor power for a certain time against a wage established on the basis of a given situation of the market corresponding to the*

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<sup>13</sup> page 255, *The dematerialisation of art*, Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, 1971, Dutton press

*balance between the supply and demand of labor power*"<sup>14</sup>.

What is the role of the artist in a capital or financial system, are they used by art investors to raise more capital and bring a return on investment based on their skills and labour, *"In regular finance, if you have insider information about a stock, it is illegal to invest in that stock? In the art world, it is not only legal, it is done regularly."*<sup>15</sup>.

As with all money, its existence is for a transaction of commodities for currency, where a suspended disbelief occurs, bringing quite the spectacle in terms of art that sells, the disbelief contains a form of discredit in society or at-least amongst artists, whom would turn in disgust at the idea of giving their work being used to satisfy those far more financially secure than artists themselves, such as the case of Mark Rothko and his relationship with his Seagrams Mural commission in that he wanted to create "something that will ruin the appetite of every son-of-a-bitch who ever eats in that

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<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, the birth of biopolitics, lectures at the college de France, 1979, page 221

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.villagevoice.com/arts/arts-dirty-big-secret-7186340>, Christian Viveros-Faune, January 2014

room” once he discovered his paintings were to be installed in the restaurant of the new Van De Rohe designed four season building in New York. Where the labour of an artist is commodified, made solid in society.

The modus apparatus of the auction is a home for art prices to play their part in the spectacle of those whom deem themselves worthy of holding a priceless work of art, as a show of power and money, “That for unique, expensive goods with an uncertain value such as art, auctions are the optimal price mechanism”<sup>16</sup>. Yet the auction has been a place to alter the future of an artist, and raise funds for artists to travel “In 1891, Gauguin auctioned off his own works in order to quickly generate cash to travel to Polynesia”<sup>17</sup>.

This transformation of art into something that money can engage with, where the agreement between money and art exists asymmetrically, there is a misalignment between the value of the art and the labour of the artist. Does a real value of an art piece

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<sup>16</sup> Olav Velthuis, *Damien's Dangerous Idea, The worth of goods*, 2011

<sup>17</sup> Olav Velthuis, *Damien's Dangerous Idea, The worth of goods*, 2011

exist, one separate from the name and social history of an artists? Where it is solely valued for its aesthetic and skill, not the labour of the artist themselves nor their reputation, as the works they produce are limited to their lifetime and career. It is this asymmetry between labour and the cultural value of art as a capital investment. These values strained upon art are both real and unreal in the sense the art itself is not reality, only the artist representation of it, and the reality is the commercial value of an art piece. As though owning a certain artwork gives a means of control in terms of a show of power and status. Certainly the prices that art is auctioned at, furthers the grasp of certain individuals not living in their own hardwired space anymore, *"To me, art collecting is primarily a process of learning about art, First you must be fond of the art. Then you can have an understanding of it."*<sup>18</sup>.

The above quote comes from the Chinese art collector and owner of the Long Museum in Shanghai, whom in 2015 paid record prices at auction for Amedeo Modigliani's "Nu Couché" (1917-18). So it is not only

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<sup>18</sup> Chinese Taxi Driver Turned Billionaire Bought Modigliani Painting, AMY QIN. NOV. 10, 2015. The New York Times.

detrimental to the art work itself but also to the prices paid for an artwork, there is no consideration of the artist and his labour, only to be fond of the artwork to place it into the list of histories most expensive art works sold at auction (preceded by; Gauguin, Picasso, Rothko, Cezanne, Rembrandt). The resulting effect is the demand for a particular artist work becoming more popular, and the monetary value of an artist increasing.

If we are to be only fond of art work with its role in capitalism through the exposure of its value in the media, there is no other approach as the art work is now seen with its reputation of value. Making the art work more unreal as a social value to those whom are not collectors with funds to spend in the hundreds of millions, where the elasticity of expenditure and capital is not about power it is power.

So the artwork then enters into a social game or exchange of being a powerful commodity. As in Liu's purchasing of *Nu Couce* has confirmed, a situation occurs of multiple personalities in those whom have acquired capital through embracing capitalism at it's

early stages (in a point of being first to exploit a market, such as property or stocks) , his movement from taxi driver to investment billionaire , has given this nouveau-riche to be the best at capitalism and demonstrate this internal power struggle "The schizophrenic deliberately seeks out the very limit of capitalism"<sup>19</sup>. This desire of another person production, while hiding behind the excuse of art collecting as a process of learning , and creativity, is from the desire of production itself. The person knows they are somehow indebted to production (a means to profiteer), as they have embraced capitalism, yet they are lacking in having actually produced anything creatively themselves.

Their reality of what capitalism has brought is not real, they have not produced anything in accumulating wealth, it is their debt to the mechanism of capitalism they feel towards, not the artists nor his/her work. It is the unreality of a price paid for a work of art, which gives a freedom for a publicly to say; "I have been involved in a creative process, and learned".

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<sup>19</sup> Gilles Deleuze Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia, page 63.

The indebtedness this approach depicts is one owned by those whom are guided by the planning of auctions "In recent years, however, a troubling element of this meticulous planning has emerged. Frequently, it involves rounding up specific artworks to meet collectors' particular demands"<sup>20</sup> .The lure of finding-owning an artwork that one is fond of, involves the purchasing of labour with a socially recognised value. the approach is of this auction as a selling spectacle is aligned with a collector saying: *This is a creation of humanity, laboured with time, which is a most recognisable piece, a whole human capital is poured into it, and I whom is fond of it, now own it.* The wave of production which is not mechanical, and which did not begin as part of the mechanism of capitalism, well it is now.

It has been acquired by those whom benefit from the Human Capital and life value of others, as mentioned previously by dealing in the stock market and speculating in property. Are they simply seeking a later return on investment or playing society into letting people believe they too are part of this cultural

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<sup>20</sup> How Auction Houses Orchestrate Sales for Maximum Drama JUDITH H. DOBRZYNSKI. OCT. 28, 2015, The New York Times

spectacle when they visit the newly purchased art work in the privately owned museum?

Acquisitions of artistic Human Capital, for collections in private museums has increased in recent years in parallel with the rise of income inequality. In the case of Liu Yiqian, whom purchased Amedeo Modigliani's *Nu Couche*, for his Long Room museum in Shanghai, whom his wife is head curator of. The cultural grabbing of paintings into private hands, is a trophy for the rich collector whom can afford to pay for art pieces at an auction by credit card. Which is somewhat ironical, or cynical of collector, as though posting a finger at society with the wealth they can afford to own using credit? As if the art work is not framing art as an investment, and more of a display of wealth, and power in affording an item that is in limited supply and of a high-status value.

Where the artist is no more a concern in relation to being a monopolist, as their opportunity to benefit directly from such sales of their work, at auction, has long passed. The collector has perhaps been informed by an agent, or third party about the historical and

social importance of the artist, there are no there works of the artist in their collection, so a collectors current art possessions do not benefit from positive price increases of the price in an artists work and may only concern themselves, if the piece is only an investment and the artists value decreases, then there is need of concern; "*collectors and other members of the art world may infer from these lower prices that the artist has a reputation in decline*"<sup>21</sup>. Liu Yiqian is active as a high spender on art, even amid the recent corruption crackdowns by Chinese authorities, not only on those of part membership to the governing party, but also among the wealthy benefactors of China's economic growth miracle.

What is to say the crackdown will not reach further into the private realm of corporations and the wealthy? What would it mean to a painting which held such high value at auction to be taken out of a private museum and passed through inner circles, or placed in storage for this symbolic meanings it holds. "No cultural object

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<sup>21</sup> Olav Velthuis, Damien's Dangerous Idea, page 12, The worth of goods, 2011

can retain its power when there are no longer new eyes to see it".<sup>22</sup>

What are the mechanism of art in capitalism, and of course capitalism in art. Do artists produce to sell to buyers, or do buyers go with the flow of what to spend their money on, what will bring greater prestige or cultural inheritance, or is art something that nobody wants to escape from the grasp of potential investment as a class asset.

It simply must belong to it. Everything has a value and is therefore consumable in society. Then where does this place the works of arts which are outside the reach of global markets, namely those in the collections of museums . Which artist counter-produce, as in the works they make, do or perform cannot be bought, and there is only a social value, then how do these artists support themselves. Are they playing a game with the capital aspects of society or merely using the platform to assist society?

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<sup>22</sup> page 10, Mark Fisher Capitalist realism is there no alternative, zero books publication, 2009

Let us first take a look at art from capitalist perspective, as it being almost a tool in tidying up group or corporate's image and how creativity is captured in society. The area or field we are referring is termed as cultural capital. How is cultural capital measured, what does it consist of, or how it is perceived and dealt with? The former UK shadow Secretary of Culture, Chris Byrant, highlighted the crises of culture as capital in diverse societies where it is now becoming a field only for the upper privileged classes, 'We can't just have a culture dominated by Eddie Redmayne and James Blunt and their ilk,' . Although this elitism is reference to the performing arts, there is significant movement of those whom already are heavily invested in capitalism, as in they are already serious stakeholders in money such as the efforts of the Louis Vuitton Foundation for Creation, even though it is deemed a separate entity to its parent company (LVMH). Bernard Arnault, it's CEO fills his Frank Gehry designed gallery with his own private collection of works by; Picasso Warhol, Klein and Moore <sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> made up of works belonging to the Foundation and Bernard Arnault's personal collection, <http://www.lvmh.com/group/lvmh-commitments/art-culture/fondation-louis-vuitton/>

If we are to believe culture will someday be a production of those with more capitalistic influences, how does art represent various factors of society, or has it found itself handcuffed, and finally given up to those of the privileged classes who come across art as a format to be more openly accepted by society, in terms of exhibiting in private museums, or a simply as a cultural capital to be exploited (for tax purposes). Where those of born-into-money may continue the neoliberal agenda, of arts is assimilation into the thorns of branches where the centre is dense.

Perhaps this is in someways the making of the artist, the ultimate package to sell, such is the impact of advertising. Art has been so well marketed and manipulated to fulfil needs of neoliberalism in terms of those whom refuse to find career in industry or business. Everyone with a creative promise to themselves wishes to be involved in the Arts, has something to say or is blindingly skilled in an artistic discipline . Albeit irrelevant as it is now, their actions or voices of aesthetic beauty will go unheard in the museums and galleries occupied by the one percent.

This diversion brings us back to the role of art in society, that people do not simply attend art school to make money, it goes hand-in-hand with art and the teachings of art schools, there is no commercial reward or grandeur thought within it's walls. There is only art, art only for the sake of art. But when the artist leaves the domain, with Diploma in hand, this is where a working class background is perhaps of an advantage, having not yet accosted to money prior to art school, the artist can survive based on a heritage of never being privileged. On the flip side there is also the increasing trend of those coming from family backgrounds who can afford to send their kids to art school and only wish the best for their offsprings pursuits.

Then does this aspect of art also appeal to certain classes, the dreamy struggle, or the social imagination of the struggling artist, where an individual can hide their persona, faults and ego. In the Panic survey of 2015 (in association with Goldsmiths), persons working in the creative cultural industry in the UK, shared their background, education and affordable property in the United Kingdom (an industry that is

estimated at £76.9 Billion or €109 Billion). Even to venture on such a survey or track is to give emphasis on the fact culture should be a revenue generating entity, which is at the core of cultural disfiguration in neoliberalism; making art into a commodity.

Where art, or the visual arts is a subsection of the cultural production industry aligned with sub-sectors such as: Music, Performing and Visual Arts, Film and TV, and Museums, Libraries and Galleries, making these entities into categorised employers or business articles “are significant employers and contribute to the UK’s reputation as a world leader in standards of cultural production”<sup>24</sup>. Whereas before the visual arts, was known as art, with its own subsection, not formally recognised as subsections, and remained just as mediums within art, consisting of; ceramics; drawing; painting; sculpture; printmaking, design, crafts; photography; video, architecture. The list of art forms is dense, so why the need to plague the arts into one needy social epidemic as a creative industry?

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<sup>24</sup> The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value

The neoliberal needs to ensure all aspects of society are indebted by default, as though a biblical original sin, it must pay for itself, and all those involved in the arts are of an equal status, hence the shift from arts into the business startup as a middle class pursuit, allowing the privileged to hold the visual arts closer to money. The intervention of the 'invisible hand' is an art market which produces the greater value, indirectly bringing an added value to the creative or cultural production, promoting an ideal in society wishing for what constitutes art production "mainstream Western art also functions increasingly in the mode of ideological propaganda"<sup>25</sup>. Systematic coupling of enterprise and visual culture into an ideological propaganda, consists of those whom cannot afford art and should be atomically pleased and blessed to view it, and those whom know it has economic value. In the instance of collectors purchasing art to show in their 'public' museums (Arnault, Liu Yiqian), all see art as being embraced by capitalism as not a mere hobby, but as both an investment and to remind society they're having an enterprising skill set "The homo oeconomicus sought after is not the man of exchange

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<sup>25</sup> Boris Groys, *Art Power*, page 15, MIT Press, 2008

or man the consumer; he is the man of enterprise and production". A new industry is born of creativity.

These new Princes of industry, both holders and producers of this spectacle, act in similar to the courts of historical monarchies, who invited artists to paint at court "Princes increasingly opened their treasures to the public in order to strengthen an element of iconological propaganda"<sup>26</sup>. The new monarchs of enterprise, have reintroduced an older order within cultural production and the arts. Reverting to the panic survey and cultural productions contribution to the UK economy, there are elements of the artist being fully aware and involved in the mass propaganda of the visual arts and as commodity or value of Human Capital.

Though actively participating in such survey, they agree to demonstrate they too are part of this enterprise production. Furthering the argument of the artist as user of Human Capital within the realms of producing their own work for sale in a market environment. Thus making the invisible hand more

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<sup>26</sup> page 108, Klaus von Beyme, On Political Culture, Cultural Policy, Art and Politics, Springer Press, 2014

obscure, as it now hides behind many guises and its behaviour is acceptable. To counter this many artists would argue, that art should not be a commodity, not necessarily meaning it cannot be collected, otherwise it goes into the collection of a museum to remain priceless.

The works of art in private collections often discover themselves on new shores late in their history, such as the works of Stuart Davis (1892-1964), who was a client of the lawyer Milton Loweenthal. Davis work was cited to the Brooklyn museum. If the art work is perhaps gifted for services, an exchange occurs, purifying the collectors conscious and eliminating the element of power, is an action of the invisible hand benefiting society indirectly when the piece enters a public museum collection.

These charitable means of the collection as enterprise becomes an accepted standard of cleansing and combining both Philanthropy and Art by investing in art, and building an ark of art. Thus preserving cultural capital for society "*Investing in art can be highly positive on a broader social level if the collector is*

*willing to act as a custodian to the item and share it as a cultural treasure with a much wider audience"*<sup>27</sup>.

Then how is art used in this new Philanthrocapitalism? As it always has been, a form of evading tax, on a significant level the philanthrocapitalist such as Arnault, by investing in art and building museums, their contributions to taxable income, money that is used by governments to fund programs, is reduced (or deductible). They get to spend or send their money wherever their focus or likes might be. Attracted to art as an investment, there is market awareness on the analysis of price and value of an artworks profitability, such in the instance of a painting by Roy Lichtenstein which sold for USD\$40million In 2011.

The owner of the artwork had purchased the work for USD\$2million in 1998, not necessarily an investment, as a painting always just sits there being insured, until the day comes to game it at auction for profit, twist the commodity of art into a mere speculative treasure, for it to be found and sold as a collectible. Where extreme caution is advised to collectors taking

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<sup>27</sup> Wealth Insights [https://wealth.barclays.com/content/dam/bwpublic/americas/documents/wealth\\_management/US\\_Wealth\\_Insights\\_15\\_FINAL.pdf](https://wealth.barclays.com/content/dam/bwpublic/americas/documents/wealth_management/US_Wealth_Insights_15_FINAL.pdf)

a measure of selling their collectable investment unless “the cost and financial risk of treasure are irrelevant given the intellectual stimulation and aesthetic pleasure it brings to them”<sup>28</sup>.

This pleasure of art as a cultural capital collective, is shrouded by an excuses of emotion and social benefit. Where the insole hand pays for an artwork, placing it in a private museum which is tax exempt. In the case of the Brant Foundation Arts Centre in Greenwich Connecticut, the use of private museums close to a collectors home, to similar as Arnault’s museum being of close proximity in Paris, on the outskirts of the city, it’s still a short journey to visit a collection all in one space, as opposed to being on view in separate urban institutes.

The Brant Foundation, designed by another famous art museum architect Richard Gluckman, for its creator Peter M. Brant is a tax exempt art space, operated by a non-profit charitable foundation set up by Brant to house his collection of art (he once commissioned Andy Warhol to paint portraits of his dog Ginger).

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<sup>28</sup> Wealth Insights, Profit or Pleasure, Barclays Bank report by Ledbury Research 2012

A space which holds regular exhibitions, when having checked its website on 9 December 2015. True to the behaviour of an individual collecting precious items, the works at the museum are for public viewing with restricted viewing hours by appointment only. Obviously the hiding of art works, with restricted visiting hours highlights the inequalities in tax exemptions on art and the responsibilities of the collector, withholding art from the public and refusing to incorporate research and education programs within an institution, is a cynical ploy to accumulate cultural capital with results in the ridiculous “an unnamed collector who placed sculptures near his pool and said they were open for public viewing, indicates an attempt to control and limit the size and timing of groups visiting the property.”<sup>29</sup>.

The action of hoarding, artificially highlights the worth of an art piece, or the ability of a collector to utilise a culture to avoid taxes. In the interest of market and capitalism does anyone really consider art important, holding a spiritual value in society, if it truly made a

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/business/art-collectors-gain-tax-benefits-from-private-museums.html>

difference in people's lives, why collect only to hide, why use art to hide behind an insincerity of tax avoidance and wealth management. The policy of governments allowing those to collect and write-off their taxes, with promises of sharing treasurable art in spaces accessible to the public.

Then what of those whom create culture, is it viable for an artists to maintain tax exemptions on pieces they create, as when they are sold and constantly change hands, the artists maintains a tax exemption or tax credits, being a percentage of what the collector is receiving. In addition to the returns of selling an art piece that increases in value, morally should we allow such behaviour on culture, yet even to refer art as cultural capital what need do we really have of it. For those collectors whom pay extortionate prices to access the \$100million art collectors club (those few who pay in excess of 100 million dollars for an art piece), would debasing cultural capital have an emotional knee-jerk reaction from collectors, an uproar, outpouring of contained feelings of attachment for a particular painting "There is more enjoyment in

displaying art on your wall than in displaying stock certificates.”<sup>30</sup>.

Trending in emotional capitalism, is perhaps the new function or aesthetic in art as cultural capital. The artists awareness of this factor and the financial gain of creating an emotional work for the lure of the big spender.

The combination of tax exemptions obviously offsets the emotional attachment of a collector to an art work. Emotional tax, on a work could be a way to demonstrate to society those who can pay high prices for an artwork are not involved for money saving reasons, they are involved emotionally, there is no debt greater than payment in emotions, something that is immeasurable, how can we say that someone is not emotionally attached to a piece of work and retain an opinion towards others obtaining tax breaks because they can afford such a method to express their emotions.

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<sup>30</sup> WEALTH INSIGHTS VOLUME 15 PROFIT OR PLEASURE? EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND TREASURE TRENDS, Barclays Research 2012

The emotional weight and burden of art is insupportable by society for the collector, who hides art in their vaulted museum, where the art works emotional power is removed, for the false pretence of its self preservation from society. As though the proletariat maintain a small quantity of knowledge and the ability to become indebted both financially and emotionally. Where the privileged indebtedness of those busy with their middle-class consuming are not aware of the favour the collector is doing for them. In preserving societies cultural capital it allows the collector, to remain in control of both capital and humanity expressing their emotions or ego through the purchasing of art.

The proletariat have no concern of factions within society whom dodge paying taxes, or asking why they are allowed to do so, allowing them to focus more on capitalistic pursuit of becoming homo oeconomicus, and in the future becoming a collector themselves with riches gained through their own self-made enterprise, and perhaps later personal pursuits in art education.

Within the arena of art, art education, and art market and this self-made entity. The transformation of an artist as human capitalist, their own self and their production leads them into the folds of self-made. Which further signifies the loss of emotion, as they know to survive there has to be a financial goal or gain in their field "artists are monopolists; they only have a relatively small number of units to sell"<sup>31</sup>. The knowledge an individual must possess to play this game, does not come from what they have learned in an educational facility, rather the possession of their actual labour and its presentation to the outside world, or market. To profit from the field the artist must maximise their participation, *"In short, 'investing' one's (academic, cultural, symbolic) capital in such a way as to derive maximum benefit or 'profit' from participation"*.<sup>32</sup>

Which is this form of emotional detachment, to see their labour as a means to profit, such as the case of Gauguin auctioning his works to fund his journey. The emotion of labour in the field of the arts, exists in a

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<sup>31</sup> Olav Velthuis, *Worth of goods: Damians Dangerous idea*, page 11, Oxford University press, 2011

<sup>32</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The field of cultural production*, Columbia University Press, 1993. Page 8, Editors introduction.

large capacity as part of an artist skills as homo economics, and emotion being a skill, placed into the work, expressed as a skill in the ability to allow others to experience this captured emotion in a work. Part of the attraction to a collector, in achieving an emotional attachment to an object they neither created an explicit mental state.

The selling of pure emotion, through art, is the artists acceptance in a capitalist environment or market, achieving a culmination point of their academic studies and life skills, being able to sell this to a collector whom themselves have been devoid of a language. In their own field, and pursuit of being a legitimate player, an artist must find themselves detached from a certain self in the chase to become self-made. As a collector their judgement of art and ability to afford high priced pieces, is the final stage of achievement, *"The fact that enjoyment is such an important motivation supports a view that treasure should be regarded as part of an individual's personal holdings rather than as a separate asset class within their investment portfolio"*<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Barclays report on Wealth Insights, volume 15, Chapter: Types of emotional motivations, 2012

Where emotion and money join, and the moral responsibility or lack of, through tax avoidance, is repressed by an involvement in a market for art and the power to purchase an emotion. Whereas the artist has decided what is done is done, a pinnacle in their skills has been reached, their field has been conquered, and now it is time to move on, making more art and money in their process as exploiting their own human capital.

Such as the market creates these scenarios, there eventually reaches a time, where the strain of constantly creating to sell, or creating a point of sale for an artists work stretches too far. The elasticity of cultural capital is no longer returning to its original recognisable form, the stress and strain, although consistent, has taken its toll on the art world. The market has learned how to sell, so the artists must alter their field and adept a skill-set which counters market behaviour, where their output becomes more political, and can no longer be grasped by homo oeconomicus.

An art form with no market value, and cannot be sold nor captured alters the role of the museum or institute which can only now facilitate a project or work, and cannot physically retain it for archival purposes, nor give it a tangible value when compared to other works in a collection or auction. The pursuit of a collector, faces a new challenge or venture in how to hold this particular type of work.

How can the capitalist behaviour alter the financially unaccountable work, to add to their collection or portfolio. Make it a possession, this furthering their range in taste of art. Claiming a hold on this would excite a collector whether they are directly involved as a buyer or source of funding or they sit on the board of an institution. Another aspect of capitalistic involvement is do they commence to buy an artists studio or renting spaces to artists, where the artist must agree a certain percentage of their work, no matter what they produce belongs to a collector. Owning another person as a source of human capital, or investment is foregone and inevitable. With museums belonging to private equities and individuals,

properties where artists work become the new commodity.

The artists role in a new form of production line. Which is a point of neo-liberalist ideals to commodify private entities, and control not only the bricks and mortar, but to consume and mine its actual aura. In attaining the romantic version of a studio, the collector furthers their cause to emotionally connect to a form of creativity or authorship.

This in turn brings the artist into a greater role of indebtedness, why should they have a creative individual aspect to their working environment when they can have a production section, where they produce for the collector, such as Damien Hirst. The artists which have embraced methods of working to produce for a market, and create a market for their own works, demonstrate their acceptance as a genuine player in their field of art as commodity and become the self-made private enterprise in society, Via a joint venture of art academy, network, self awareness and marketability.

Within beginning of such a venture, the approach of a relationship between neoliberalism and education has been how do we synchronise the ideals of a society with economy and privatisation at heart. Like many artists whom, such as Hirst, are recognised as being from the top end of tiered art academy rankings, as what Chris Byrant referred to above as “cultural domination”. As though each artists whom attends school is either indebted financially through student loans, or emotionally to society as an artist. Upon graduation they have to contribute in a manner of creating a self-made environment for themselves to justify having gone to art school in the first place “I applied to St. Martins straight out of foundation, and didn't get in”<sup>34</sup>. Within the educational institutes freedom is not necessarily a given, the results of one’s own final school exams accompanied by portfolio skills cannot define entrance to an academy. Judgement and opinion play a large part in the selective process stage of art and creative education.

Within the text and wording of 2015 Warwick Report, it states the inequalities in society towards creativity as

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<sup>34</sup> On the way back to work, Gordon Burn interviews Damien Hirst, 2001, Faber & Faber

a human universal right, and to obtain such a privilege, people must be allowed equal access to a rich cultural education and to live such a life, immediately the association is then made and summarised with the statement in which Governments can comprehend — the people in this education must contribute and be good for business. Sticking with the infinite idea of anyone can be artists, yet that which separates those from the can be and can not, the human right to education “Everyone has the right to education”<sup>35</sup>. Yet with this contributes to an individual indebtedness, everyone has the right to be indebted for the duration of their lives, due to the belief in the right to be educated, unless they cannot afford it. Artistic educational pursuit allows a fulfilment of making it yourself (such a Hirst) becoming the self-made man, contributing to society in a creative manner, and possibly avoid paying tax in the process of creating a career path.

The possession of knowledge and active involvement in adding worth or value of Human Capital is measured in this model economy where all that is required is a

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<sup>35</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26. United Nations.

little knowledge, social skills and market pricing awareness; “One must also possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge, or skill, or 'talent' to be accepted as a legitimate player”, as the truth is often revealed post-education in society, with the success of an artist measured through the pricing of art. This unravels the emotions of how people really feel towards creativity and in particular art as a treasure for the wealthy.

Contributing as a tool of Governments, who use tax money to protect heritage and keep it in their domain, as highlighted by administrative incidents as the Warwick report on Government practice; “*The market determines that a good government is no longer quite simply one that is just*”.<sup>36</sup>

This representation is an interaction in society, once the market and Government has met, a culture of Business is understood on creative industry, and the rush begins for institute seats where people may gain the knowledge and skills in art school. Entering this field an artists is reminded of their obligation to

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<sup>36</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, LECTURES AT THE COLLÈGE DE FRANCE, 1978–79. Page 32.

contribute to a National democratic GDP (gross national product per capita), this indebtedness is mandatory for a member of society to be educated and have a reasonable standard of living in any democracy; *"This measure of national achievement has for decades been the standard one used by development economists around the world"*<sup>37</sup>.

Then what becomes of art within a Democracy monetising cultural capital and the creative fields. We begin to recognise this is what it is, embrace our debt to art, and create to unfold a meaning of what art is, and the emotion money brings to it, or learn, be knowledgeable and critical of our debt to art and money as Damien Hirst put it, in answering Gordon Burns question on; What is art? *"art is about life, and the art world is about money"*. If the art world is about money, are we closer to the truth of what our society and Governments deem important and truthful, that skills are discarded in a turn for profit, that art can be anything, even a field where no skills are required, as this can easily be outsourced to third parties. A diluting of the arts in progress is an

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<sup>37</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, Not for Profit, Princeton University Press, 2010. Page 33

orientation towards profit, and the artists embracing of this take on art, is of no consequence to our humanities and freedom of thinking in a democracy *"liberal arts thought—are also losing ground as nations prefer to pursue short-term profit by the cultivation of the useful and highly applied skills suited to profit-making"*<sup>38</sup>.

A freedom which once revolved around an immunity of thinking, becomes a freedom of market, where the obsession is to make money in a relationship of mutual enrichment. The wealth of one person benefits their neighbour (the poor artist). What is the equilibrium of power going forward, is art merely a spin-off of politics and the extraneous elements that utilise it?

Can Art have autonomous power , and survive the future, or does society tolerate the edges of art as a commercial value, and so this is its power relationship in society; *"All these value judgments, criteria, and rules are, of course, not autonomous. Rather, they reflect the dominant social conventions and power*

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<sup>38</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, Princeton University Press, 2010. Page 21

*structures*<sup>39</sup>. In his book *Art and Power* Boris Groys talks about the difference between art and politics as being one of recognition, the arena of politics is where individuals desire acknowledgement, artist hope for recognition of individual artistic forms and procedures. Then art has to suit itself as the antagonistic against the commodification of art itself, and be self-reflective, and learn to differentiate from the power of trade good and markets. Producing an output art that cannot be consumed nor sold, a method to betroth the art market on recognising what art is or could be; *"the art world is entirely occupied by various commercial interests that dictate the criteria of inclusion and exclusion that shape the art world."*<sup>40</sup>.

Bringing into the discussion the art which has no art market value, and has merit outside the art world. A sweeping dive into the political, further distorting the politics of the art world, venturing any discourse onto new land. Even away from the smog of art market and the talk of its commodification, releasing it from the power of art as commodity, eliminating a possibility of

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<sup>39</sup> Boris Groys, *Art Power*, page 20, MIT Press, 2008

<sup>40</sup> Boris Groys, *Art Power*, page 13, MIT Press, 2008

being sucked into the mixed relationship of art, money and market.

If art is removed from the art world market, is it still art, if it cannot be commodified, captured and maintained in the capacity of museum or private collection, a friction is created against what is traditionally termed art and the political. Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, may have turned the readymade into the avant-garde, it also released the art work from the political, unless porcelain urinal manufacturers became disgruntled with their products becoming collector items in a museum. Artists whom today do enter the political, such as Tania Bruguera's *Consummated Revolution* (2008), where she had blind people dress in a military garb stood on the streets soliciting sex, or Kateřina Šedá inviting the local population of a small Czech village to follow her actions.

This art that can only be experienced during the activity or briefly through its documentation, it's considered a self reflective form of the artist within a community (the active involvement of a group),

"Community, collectivity and revolution are sufficient to indicate a critical distance towards the neoliberal new world order"<sup>41</sup>. As Claire Bishop discusses, individualism is deemed a suspect, producer of art as commodity fodder for art markets, borrowing from the communal, socially testing arts autonomy, art funded by an institute cannot be removed. Case in point is the 2011 work of Brugurea *Immigration movement International*, who's local community project stopped when the funding (from Queens museum of New York) ran out. Socially engaging and selective works of art which stop, cease to exist, and cannot be sold, permitting the artist to be self-reflective through their community based efforts, removing the art piece from economic value.

At the same time using an art museums public funding as a method to engage art and community on a social level involves the artists invisible hand moulding a supposed autonomy and their career path, as leading political artists. Folding self-reflection and the artists indirect involvement with commodity and spending of public funds of an art institution as a method of

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<sup>41</sup> Page 12, ARTIFICIAL HELLS Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. Claire Bishop. Verso 2012.

recognition "*Art and politics are initially connected in one fundamental respect: both are realms in which a struggle for recognition is being waged*"<sup>42</sup>. Once where the art market factored into the self-awareness of the artists success, the commodity of political art is the social recognition of the artist with their work as an individual form measured with a number of virtual symbols of agreement on social media.

If the artist cannot create and use the traditional market-preferred selling commodities of establishing; painting, sculpture, photograph et al. and if they are to be included in society as a successful artist, the recognition of the local community is paramount. In the area of Bruguera's work, as an example of an artist giving briefly to society by establishing a temporary flexible community space, what remains is the memory by the community of the art work temporarily benefiting them.

Is there no follow up or support mechanism to further assist those who were active participants. Is the artist using the community in a political art work,

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<sup>42</sup> Boris Groys, *Art Power*, page 21, MIT Press, 2008

highlighting the attitude of society to those involved, then as soon as the artist has completed their social self-reflective recognition program, it will no longer be art work, funding will stop, and all community members return home.

Which elements can the participants take from communal art, does it become a burden to neoliberal based society where people whom are demonstrated an activity which enhanced their daily lives, are more aware, therefore demand it implemented into their community programs.

The artist has not just created a political work, they have educated both community and institute with a systematic approach counter intuitive of a capitalistic pat by using an institutes funding to establish a learning space in a community which benefits the local population on being active and the relationship and potential with city institutes (such as Queens museum which is funded by the New York State and various private funds).

This direction leads funding away from the possibility of an artists creating a work which has understandable market value accompanied by a new community awareness, or goodwill, on the prospect of being indebted to a local institute supported by groups with neoliberal aims in society.

Claire Bishop refers to these neoliberal alterations as *"To be included and participate in society means to conform to full employment, have a disposable income, and be self-sufficient"*. This self sufficiency is the self-made within our economically driven society, and obsession that everything; must add value, can be charged for and has a cost and price value. The adoption of this approach by artists is to highlight the expectation Western society has on others.

Thus some artists then steer into the obvious, the level of exploitation in a number of artists work is self-relevant in terms of the artists achieving their thesis, in the case of Marten Renzo, whom similar to Bruguera involves themselves within a community. With Renzo it is the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Both artists are referring to the arts in a manner of

themselves being artists, so automatically their engaged works is deemed to be art, as it is the labour of the artists no matter what their terms and conditions be, their production is regarded as art as it fits to the expectations and criteria of socially engaging for both museum curator and audience. *"Martens' knowingly gauche persona does not alter the fact that Episode III... exploits art audiences' desires for work that demonstrates 'authentic' political engagement"*<sup>43</sup>. as their will always be a view of the artist exploiting, and benefitting people and communities they engage with.

The condition of arts autonomy can be addressed further in terms of providing a service to a community, where the elements of exploitation/benefit are lessened, and the other aspect of engaging art, is groups such as Assemble, the 2015 Turner prize winning group whom work with architects to engage with community and work in a broad creative social domain *"their work shows a revulsion for the excesses of the art market, and a turn away from the creation of objects for that market"*.

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<sup>43</sup> Dan Fox , Frieze Magazine, Issue 122 April 2009

The interventional ideas behind a group can also confuse a community, as the expectations of a local municipality is artists are there to help and assist society, at a cost of providing services the Government should give, which is in line with the conservative approach of London Legacy Development Corporation the board which fund a majority of Assembles projects (headed by London mayor Boris Johnson), also referred to as their collaborators<sup>44</sup>. This form of representation in politics gives the artist an area to engage with society, and avoid the art market, and perform or behave in a similar manner to property developers whom often upheave artists once their role of gentrifying is achieved. The use of public funds in the form of public funds from a museum or public body to inject development into a local community.

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<sup>44</sup> [http://assemblestudio.co.uk/?page\\_id=11](http://assemblestudio.co.uk/?page_id=11)

## **Conclusion**

In order to go back to our starting point on talking about art and capitalism how do the ventures mentioned above bring value to this discussion, or is it a false representation. A diversion on talking about the actual artists themselves, whom have used animal carcasses and ensuing fluids as works of art (Hirst, Kitchin, Abramovic) whose base material is valued in 2016 at \$800 for a living cow (in the case of Hirst \$400 for half a cow) and the community engagement programs (Bruguera, Renzo, Assemble). In the circumstances of an artist going to auction, or creating works for an auction, is based on the uncertain value of their works. In the case of Hirst, it had worked before with the patronage of Charles Saatchi, so an artists popularity and relationship with a patron is a

method of creating an aura, marketing and selling peddling their works to the right audience of spenders whom see themselves as patrons of the arts and following trends in collecting.

The conditions capitalism sets for art raises the question of where do wealthy individuals obtain their fortunes to spend on art. And is that in itself a game where the player chooses a field, learns and become experts of the affinity with collecting culture, where the artists is seen as the social entrepreneur they adhere to be, "Bidding for the most coveted artists has been driving much of the surge in auctions"<sup>45</sup>. The collecting of coveted art pieces is a drive aligned with the neoliberal breakdown of social entities, such as telecommunications, and the auctioning of state services into private hands for example health care (private sectors involvement in public structures).

As a result of changes in the gauging of art work prices in the 1980s, where previously painting by classical masters were ever only sold at auctions, in

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<sup>45</sup> Billionaires Chasing Warhol's Fuel \$16 Billion Art Sales, Mary Romano , December 31, 2014, [bloomberg.com](http://bloomberg.com)

1987, Vincent Van Gogh *Vase with fifteen flowers*, 1887 became one of the first modern paintings to be sold at auction.

This signalling of successful selling of paintings reintroduced the commodity and pricing decisions back to the auction room. Where Gauguin sold his works to fund his travel expenses the auction of collected works in private hands was to benefit the seller and auction house. In the case of Damien Hirst, his endeavours to shock the art world by selling new works through auction, repeated the success of Gauguin, in that he directly benefited from selling his own works, knowing demand was there and ensuring supply was plentiful. Although there is the element of planning and artificially inflating his works by keeping unsold pieces in stock at Gagosian galleries<sup>46</sup>.

The use of artistic labour brings into authority the knowledge of a collector for a piece of art, Hirst is known to use his assistants to paint his works, such as his spot paintings *Lysergic Acid Diethylamide*. Or emphasis on the popularity of an artist at auction,

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.artquest.org.uk/articles/view/beautiful-inside-my-head-forever1>

where a measure of labour and emotional attachment is insignificant to a collector.

As mentioned in the beginning of this analysis, the rise of Philanthrocapitalism has become a compelling facet of politics and art.

Not only those whom spend large sums of money on art using art for reason of avoiding tax payment, there is also the political agenda of those in powerful positions who are patrons and financial contributors/ investors towards the arts, participating board directors of museums such as David Koch, the executive vice president of Koch Industries, one of the largest privately held company in the United States<sup>47</sup>. Koch's net worth, as of January 2016, was \$42.2 Billion.

David Koch donated \$65million to the renovation of the plaza at the metropolitan museum of art, at the unveiling in 2014 Koch described himself as a "person who wanted to make the world a better place." David Koch and his brother have contributed over \$100million dollars to their foundations which support

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/profile/david-koch/>

their libertarian agenda. Another example is Ken Giffin the founder of Citadel global investment fund, with a net worth of net worth of \$6.6 billion he sits on the board of the Whitney museum, The Art Institute, and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Leon Black, another founder of a global management company, he is owner of one of Munch's *The Scream*, which he paid \$119 million for in 2012. He is also a board member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Asia Society and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The relationship between these wealthy individuals is the political stance they have acquired. The number of wealthiest art collectors are the largest financial contributors to the GOP political Republican party. As in the start of this paper, Roosevelt's addressing of the people in 1933, he was the first President to avail of PACs when the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) raised money for his re-election.

Their donations to PAC contributions are to support and influence an opposition to President Obamas

administration efforts around taxing the 1%. The main purpose of change is related to the United States tax deduction system to benefit the middle class, in closing a loopholes that included allowing heirs to avoid a big tax bill on property transferred at death. In 2013 these tax breaks exceeded \$200 Billion all benefiting the 1% whom saw their after-tax income increase by 6%. In terms of art and its representation we could say, these wealthy individuals obviously hold the most valuable treasures of our cultural capital. Do they represent our beliefs in society on culture and terms of tax evasion, just because the hold these trophies. Which others have created, and they have obtained through wealth only in self interest and not for the public. A frontier we must all come to terms with, and learn to cross.

As much as artists show a willingness to address this issue of money, through social interaction and community engagement. There is no current path to create a full schism and create a formal division between art being wealth status trophies for the 1%. As Mark Fisher discusses in his introduction to his book; *"not only is capitalism the only viable political*

*and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it".*

Although there might not be an alternative to capitalism. Partially artists have the opportunity to change its relationship with art, in society and the value of their Human Capital and activity as Human Capitalist. To allow art to survive or become more absorbed in society as an object of pure economy for Homo economics to exploit. Perhaps for the sake of art and its autonomy its best to remain where it is.



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