

Art in Context 2013–2014
in collaboration with
the Cobra Museum of Modern Art

Art in Context is an extracurricular program of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. The program offers to students a chance to place their work within particular social contexts and to generate knowledge and experience in addressing specific social issues. This enables students to prepare for their post-academic practice — they are invited to use their work as a means for questioning and re-imagining the state of social and political affairs.

This publication appears on the occasion of the exhibition *Public Relations* at the Cobra Museum for Modern Art May–June 2014, as a part of the Art in Context program of 2013–2014.

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Public Relations
Art in Context

2014

To Edward Bernays

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The Business of Public

Saša Karalić

David Letterman. Doctor, please tell me again what are we dealing here with. You are the father of Public Relations.

Edward Bernays. What we are dealing with really is the concept that people will believe me more if you call me doctor.

Edward L. Bernays on *Late Night with David Letterman*, 1984.

Art in Context, an extracurricular program of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, focused this year on PR — Public Relations. The group of students and their tutors addressed the development, internal logics and contemporary relevance of this topic and tried to understand how it became one of the main orientation points for self-perception of our society. The topic was approached from different perspectives — PR in art practice, PR in the political sphere and PR in the commercial world. In what way does the attempt to reach the audience influences the art practice? Who is its audience? Can an honest political campaign exist? Why to sell anything to anyone?

Edward Bernays, the man who coined the term 'Public Relations', starts his book *Propaganda* from 1928 by saying: "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate these unseen mechanisms of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country"¹.

In order to understand Bernays better, we turned to the basic definitions of propaganda — the term that precedes Public Relations — and studied *Propaganda and Persuasion* by Jowett & O'Donnell. In the first chapter of the book, Jowett & O'Donnell state:

Whether it is a government agency attempting to instill a massive wave of patriotism in a national audience to support a war effort, a terrorist network enlisting followers in a jihad, a military leader trying to frighten the enemy by exaggerating the strength of its army, a corporation pursuing a credible image to maintain its legitimacy among its clientele, or a company seeking to malign a rival to deter competition for its product, a careful and predetermined plan of prefabricated symbol manipulation is used to communicate an objective to an audience. That objective endeavors to reinforce or modify the attitudes, the behavior, or both of an audience.¹

Terms implying propaganda that have gained popularity today are 'spin' and 'news management', referring to a coordinated strategy to minimize negative information and present in a favorable light a story that could be damaging to self-interests. Spin is often used with reference to the manipulation of

political information; therefore, press secretaries and public relations officers are referred to as 'spin doctors' when they attempt to launder the news. It was Bernays himself who coined the term 'Public Relations' after the World War I in order to clear the term 'propaganda' from its negative connotations. Once its name was changed, propaganda was successfully applied in the time of peace, mainly for business purposes. In the text by Ken Rooney that appears in this publication, the Nike PR agent says: "At Nike, we no longer refer to the function as 'PR' which is often associated with the more traditional (and less desirable) aspects of the field. We reference the function as Communications. [...] our mission as a Communications function is to create powerful and authentic connects that allow us to tell premium, innovative brand stories".



Stamp of sacred congregation for propagating the faith of the Roman Catholic church (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide), XVII century.

Thus, today's business of dealing with the public is an immersive and sophisticated affair. During our visit to the PR agency *Total Identity*, we learned that it's often not the customer who approaches the agency but the agency that studies the customer's needs, detects problems and proposes solutions. Instead of using 'the old-fashioned way' of satisfying the customer through daring and bold PR designs, agencies are taking 'a social turn' and starting to model the social fabric in order to fit their ambitions and agenda.

Through the privatization of the social sector, the new customers emerged — where before there were only shoes, soda and car makers needing a smart public image, now we have hospitals, daycare centers and fire brigades standing in the line. This allows the PR agencies not only to take the social but also a seemingly ethical and pragmatic turn in which their influence on the working of the society is becoming far more direct than ever before.

In this publication, we include the 'Discussion Document' produced by *Total Identity* on the request of Art in Context in order to have our 'strengths & weaknesses' assessed by PR professionals and to observe how PR could influence self-perception in art making. The discussion document is the way Total Identity approaches its customers — through exchange of information and content, the customer can desire how it wants to be seen and the agency can judge the organization and, thus, propose a better solution to the eventual problem. The document we are publishing here is merely an example of such a process.

In the end of the introduction to the 2005 edition of Edward Bernays' book *Propaganda*, Mark Crispin Miller writes: "That

propaganda easily seduces even those whom it most horrifies is a paradox that Bernays grasped completely, and it is one that we must try at last to understand, if we want to change the world that Edward Bernays, among others made for us”³.

Collaboration with the Cobra Museum

This year’s topic was explored in collaboration with the Cobra Museum of Modern Art. This is a continuation of a three years collaboration between the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and the Cobra Museum. Art in Context students visited the Cobra Museum on a regular basis; researched its archive, worked with the museum curators and attended lectures at the museum. While researching its archive, students mainly focused on the attitudes and social position of Cobra artists from the 1940’s and 1950’s, on hidden or clearly marked ideology in their activities and involved institutions. This allowed students to make a comparison to their own art practice and the social context in which they are placing their work today.

The perception, self-perception and social position of artists has dramatically changed in relation to the 1940’s and 1950’s and, as Hilde de Bruijn points out in her text included in this publication: “their main skills to master nowadays are of a rather ‘entrepreneurial’ character, and consist among others of a considerable amount of networking, self-promotion and dealing with the press”.

Realizing their own desires or rejections towards public visibility was for the students one of the important points in this part of the research. Besides this, students looked into how PR works within an art institution and used the Cobra Museum as

a testing ground. The collaboration with the Cobra Museum resulted in an exhibition at their venue in May-June 2014. We wish to thank the staff of Cobra Museum for their dedication and kindness, especially to director Katja Weittering and curators Els Drummen and Hilde de Bruijn, who offered their expertise and guidance to our students in conducting their research and producing their works.

Notes

1. Edward Bernays: *Propaganda*, Ig Publishing, 2005, Originally published: New York, H. Liverlight, 1928.
2. Gareth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell: *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Sage Publications 1992.
3. Mark Crispin Miller: 'Introduction' to Edward Bernays' *Propaganda*, Ig Publishing, 2005.

Mutual Ground

Katja Weitering

Art in Context and the Cobra Museum

The exchange of knowledge, information and experience between the Cobra Museum and the Rietveld Academy is unique in the Netherlands. Never before have a museum and an art school worked intensively together in this way, resulting in both a publication and a museum presentation. In 2012, the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and the Cobra Museum of Modern Art began working together on a new honors program for Rietveld Academy students.

The initial program had the enticing title, *Cracking Cobra*, and was under the guidance of Alexandra Landré. Students were invited to investigate the material and immaterial heritage of Cobra and create links between it and their own artistic practices. The results were presented at the Cobra Museum.

The following year, the collaboration became part of the Rietveld's extracurricular Art in Context honors program, initiated by Saša Karalić and coordinated by Karalić and Jouke Kleerebezem. Art in Context challenges students to place

their work within specific social contexts. It thereby increases their knowledge and experience of the interactions and confrontations between art and society.

In his introduction to the 2012-2013 edition of *Art in Context — Charity*, Saša Karalić described the underlying philosophy and the objectives of the program. Perceptions of art in today's society demand new strategies that lead to an open, independent, equally-informed practice of art, one that is engaged within its social context. Karalić notes the claim of the French social philosopher Felix Guattari that every work of art has to carry a 'double finality':

*Firstly to insert itself into a social network which will either appropriate or reject it, and secondly to celebrate, once again, the universe of art as such, precisely because it is always in danger of collapsing.*¹

Each edition, to create a mutual ground between art and social sphere, *Art in Context* focuses on a specific starting point for that year's program. The theme for the 2013-2014 academic year has been *Public Relations*. Participating students have been addressing the subject of *Public Relations* from various perspectives.

The collaboration between the Rietveld Academy and the Cobra Museum, which receives the support of the Mondriaan Fund, gives the museum the opportunity to work together with the youngest generation of today's artists. It is also a signal to the outside world that the museum is firmly anchored in society, that an art museum today must assume a pioneering role. In short, for us, our collaboration with the Rietveld

Academy is an outstanding tool for the museum's own public relations.

Appropriation of Counter Culture

There is of course another story that underlies this appealing exterior. As a museum, we very much need the academy and its students. The Cobra Museum is devoted to a mid-20th-century movement of artists from several different countries. The work of these rebellious, young, primarily male artists has in the ensuing years been overtaken by developments in society and has meanwhile become neatly embedded in the art historical canon. The Cobra counterculture now has its own museum, where its diverse visual expressions have become a legacy for our society today. To speak in Guattari's terms, the Cobra art of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when Cobra was founded, was initially vehemently rejected, while today, it has been appropriated by its own social network.

The generation that created Cobra, and the generations that grew up with the repercussions of Cobra in the 1970s and 1980s, are dying out or moving on. As an institute that preserves an historical legacy, a museum devoted to a period in 20th-century, avant-garde art that has now passed can all too easily become a rather defunct institute. For our world today, contemporary critical reflection on the material and the immaterial legacy of Cobra, and on the ways by which we research, present and apply art, is imperative. For the Cobra Museum, our project with the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and its students is an invaluable exchange. It gives us an exciting opportunity to keep the ideas of Cobra, once considered

so extreme and shocking, alive and fresh in today's world, a world where these same ideas have once again become highly relevant and poignant.

The *Public Relations* theme is a challenging choice on the part of the coordinators of the Art in Context program. Public relations are all about telling convincing stories and engaging the public. PR has become an indispensable survival strategy in a society focused on performance and consumerism. As a theme, it is broad enough to be approached from multiple angles.

In one example, the participating students met with Daniel van der Velden and Vinca Kruk, founders of the *Metahaven* design collective, winners of the 2013 Cobra Art Prize, who discussed their own professional practice. Metahaven have an innovative approach to visual identity. They research branding and identity as geopolitical phenomena.

This publication includes an essay on Asger Jorn, one of the founders of Cobra, by Hilde de Bruijn, curator at the Cobra Museum. Asger Jorn was acutely aware of the role of artists as public figures. In De Bruijn's interview with Helle Brøns, an expert on Asger Jorn, they spoke about the phenomenon of the 'Boho Dance', a satirical term coined by the American writer and art critic, Tom Wolfe. The Boho Dance refers to a kind of mating ritual between the artist and the cultural elite. The results of this ritual dance of attraction and rejection largely determine whether an artist is accepted by the public or not. Asger Jorn was a consummate boho dancer; he understood PR.

Cobra and PR

So how did the Cobra artists see public relations, and what did they do about it? Cobra was founded in 1948, an age of typewriters and handwritten letters. It was a time when the concept of reproducing visual images was an important topic of discussion. Twelve years earlier, in 1936, Walter Benjamin published his famous essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, about the application of modern techniques in order to mass produce copies of masterpieces for the public at large. From the very beginning, the Cobra artists were very concerned with actively distributing and communicating their work. When Cobra was founded, it was immediately decided that there would be a publication, a platform through which both the work and the theoretical ideas of the group could be expressed in and beyond national borders.

Cobra Magazine, and its predecessor, *Reflex*, the publication of the Experimental Group in Holland, greatly contributed to the image of Cobra, as a rebellious, experimental and politically engaged group of artists. Both magazines published manifestoes with which members of the group, notably Constant and Asger Jorn, made their theoretical aspirations known in provocative and imaginative terms. The fourth issue of *Cobra Magazine* (November 1948) was moreover an exhibition catalogue for the first major Cobra exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. On the cover was a protruding tongue — a decidedly provocative image that did not escape the largely conservative public and press. It was with visual expressions of this kind that Cobra developed a PR machine *avant la lettre*.

The exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum and the shocked response to the innovative, spontaneous work of the Cobra artists generated angry public reactions and scathing reviews. These too contributed to the radical Cobra image. During the 1950s, when the judgement of this unconventional art was certainly not being based on its actual merits, the public's ideas about Cobra led several Dutch artists to leave their home country for Paris.

In late 1951, Cobra succumbed to internal tensions. These were not theoretical or artistic in nature, but personal and practical. The individual artists were gradually moving on, taking with them the inspiration of their rich artistic exchange. Despite their joint publications and various exhibitions and events, Cobra was something of a multi-headed creature, without a single philosophy and with many faces. In time, the creation of the Cobra myth certainly played its part, a process to which both art historians and artists contributed, not in the least of whom was Christian Dotremont. For the rest of his career, Dotremont would continue to publish texts and statements about the meaning of Cobra: "Cobra was a distinctive visual language"; "Cobra was just a phase"; "Cobra never ended", and so on².

No Art without PR

Cobra blossomed long before the arrival of color television and mass advertising. People were as yet unaware of the 'hidden persuaders' analyzed by Vance Packard in 1957, in his book of the same name. By 1967, the increasingly ubiquitous presence of advertising and PR ultimately resulted in

what Guy Debord described as the ‘Society of the Spectacle’, in which production and consumption had become the ultimate goals of modern society.

In the years immediately following World War II, it is striking that the Cobra artists were so conscious of communicating their work to an international and widespread audience. The theme of *Public Relations* in this year’s Art in Context program invites us to take a critical look at the way in which the Cobra artists themselves influenced the group’s public image, and to investigate the widely varying reactions to Cobra through the years. This theme also invites us to investigate the subject from the perspective of today’s realities and the specific artistic practices and ambitions of the participating students.

In 2014, no one can imagine an art world without its PR. I have, for example, just been invited to a workshop called ‘Lobbying for Museum Directors’. To quote the invitation: “The training includes both a theoretical foundation and practical tools to optimally direct your lobby. [...] You learn how to emphasize the value of your museum to society. You learn how to set up a lobbying plan, with the best approach. We explain why lobbying is a continual process and — importantly — how to analyze, attract and employ your stakeholders”.

The Art in Context program challenges all of us to look into such contemporary phenomena as this and to create our own mutual ground between art and social sphere.

This collaboration between the *Gerrit Rietveld Academy* and the *Cobra Museum of Modern Art* would not have been possible without the generous support and engagement of Tijmen van Grootheest, Ben Zegers, Saša Karalić, Jouke Kleerebezem,

Hilde de Bruijn, Els Drummen, the Mondriaan Fund and —
most of all — the participating students.

Notes

1. Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, Indiana University Press, 1995, as cited in 'Art in Context Publication 2012/2013 Charity', pp. 2–3.
2. See Christian Dotremont: 'Cobra, What is That?', in *In Celebration of 30 Years of Cobra*, catalogue for the exhibition of logograms by Dotremont at the Lefebvre Gallery in New York, January 1979.

Art as Context When Art Becomes the Condition for Everything Else

Jouke Kleerebezem

Don't we recognize art as having become the preferred context for any cultural, social, commercial and political display today? Has not the visual rhetoric of any of these endeavors of man become global media's prime concern? The image of 'art' and the 'artist', the image of 'sociality', the image of 'commerce', the image of 'technology', the image of 'science', the image of 'politics' and so on, and so on — images have become the core product of above activities. Meanwhile images do no longer *represent*, but *direct* the roles which their protagonists fulfill. Art, sociality, commerce, technology, science and politics have achieved their ultimate *artificiality* vis-à-vis their histories. 'Art' has become man's prime concern.

If artists are to claim any exceptional proficiency in image fabrication and display, they might have to abandon the *representation* of man's endeavors. Rather their work should liberate itself to *be* sociality etcetera proper, or apply the ruling mechanisms and strategies in order to come close to *replacing* any of these communicational and organizational expressions.

Such would finalize the project of dis-identification, in which art progressively (in consecutive avant-garde movements) has allowed itself to frame any thing and any activity of the artist *as art*, to the point of leaving depiction and representation in favor of intervention and action. To delete the ‘art’ label altogether would radically conclude that project. Make it happily disappear into what once upon a time used to be the ‘context’ of society — if only temporarily, as an early 21st century *reality check*.



The Hague Gemeentemuseum’s director Benno Tempel with US president Barack Obama, stating ‘This is a fabulous one’, with Piet Mondriaan’s last painting *Victory Boogie Woogie* (1944), during the Holland promotional side program of the Nuclear Security Summit 2014 (photo Gemeentemuseum Den Haag).

Through *mediatization* everything increasingly renders itself as art, simply by applying the media reference and template, without any specialized artistic intervention. Addressed is a largely uneducated, disinformed audience, only slowly bringing itself up in media literacy. The product of mediatization prefers mass media channels for its distribution, as it aims at a maximal penetration of its content. Here, art makers and managers find before them a global consumer, or 'petty bourgeois', that only Giorgio Agamben has seen glimpses of political redemption for¹. Through the parallel important media project of *informatization*, content is dispersed that is not aimed at the largest of audiences, but at the most interested parties, which can possibly contribute to the creation, annotation or evaluation of content, and certainly does conduct its dissemination². In these two communication projects art finds two entirely different contexts.

Mediatization supports the mass distribution and therefore with installation of an image of art, as a clearly identifiable possibility of any other human endeavor, signifying originality, uniqueness, skill, beauty, intelligence, market value. Informatization endlessly multiplies and links images, some belonging to art, the bulk of them not identifying as such. The main importance of informatization is that it installs an open structure for symbolic production, finely branched in a very dynamic aggregate. This exactly defines its major benefit for the arts, as a source and testing ground for aesthetic experiment on information and knowledge, for, and potentially with the participation of an interested constituency. Informatization signifies its content as knowledge, novelty, connectedness, contextuality, openness and distributedness

and is advertised since the coming of the Internet as (for) free, both intellectually as well as economically: 'Information wants to be free'.

Reclaiming Art for the Sake of Art

One of the consequences of art moving out of its proper institutions into other factions of society, where old habits can be as contagious as in any local culture, is that it has attracted stowaways to join in its practices. Certainly since the early 1990s a colorful variety of social critics and new media theorists has floated along with the artist over uncharted media territory. The landmarks of the *terra incognita* of information culture have therefore consistently been identified as signs of new technologies and new social organizations, rather than as a new symbolic visuality, or a possible developing epistemology. However, art interrogating new media conditions, or embarking on informatization projects, naturally involves different disciplines and their institutions, especially since in the early 1990s the art world itself was extremely slow to recognize the media landslide happening. Still today, a decent insight into the character of informatization is lacking here and primarily focused on the Internet, more often than not mixed up with the world wide web, if not with social media... Art discourse lags at least 20 years behind in media savvy, which should be taken into immediate consideration in the art educational world, as well as in the institutional presentation field.

Meanwhile art historian and photographer Julian Stallabrass sketches the limited reach of art's interaction with social

realities as follows: “Firstly, there is a trade-off between the number of participants and their diversity and likely discourse. Active participants tend to be few, elite, and self-selecting. Secondly, in these temporary utopian bubbles, no substantial politics can be arrived at, not least because even among those who do attend, real differences and conflicts of interest are momentarily denied or forgotten. A merely gestural politics is the likely result”³.

One of visual arts’ priorities is to reclaim its proper discourse, as it was refined in a long and rich critical tradition. In order to bring it up to date, it should urgently incorporate the new media situation that it finds itself in, already since several decades. By that updated discourse also art’s institutions will be invited to construct a new home base, including new house rules. Certainly the first of those institutions, ready for an upgrade, is the museum of contemporary art.

*The museum of the future is going to be like a university, like a campus, where the art is one thing, but the fact that you have so many different encounters and that you can test your own ideas out, that you can throw your own questions out about gender, identity, about the world, about salaries. And a museum is ultimately a much more representative, democratic society, it’s a real form of demos [populace], even more democratic than the way we are represented by politicians. I mean, do we still feel represented by politicians? By bankers? By insurers? By property owners? Probably not. We have to learn to represent ourselves. Self-governance. We have to learn how to make decisions for ourselves. And a museum can teach that, can offer possibilities. I call them probabilities. And that’s what a museum is going to be in the future about.*⁴

Tate Modern director Chris Dercon foresees a project for the future museum at the service of educating and facilitating the disinformed and betrayed 'demos'. His ideas take some historical tendencies in art experience and art management to their next extreme. His 'probabilities' however, in order to be successful, do not only need idealistic museum directors like himself, but demand a radical change of culture in the art world that involves everybody, the artist to begin with — if only for old times' sake. Appropriately the project will have as one of its challenges to bring art back to a convincing presence in the museum. Beyond just being 'one thing' among the many, as Dercon sees it, here it should be offered the right conditions at a timely moment in its development. Particularly in a reinvented museum context, first of all art will have to get the opportunity to present itself redefined.

Most gestures that took art to the street for social-political reasons or to merge it with an already idealized representation of the everyday, to instrumentalize it as a social political tool, in the end failed and degraded it, including its documentation, to the status of a commodity or utility. Every engaged artwork or event ended up in the old school museum or gallery space. If not already in, it will soon be taken there, in retrospect of its once short-lived moment of disruptive brutality. At the end of the day utilities and commodities do not teach us anything beyond their own status. At best they make us experience their dependency on consensus values.

Promoting the work of artists to be a commodity or utility may have provided us with insights into art's emancipation, but over the course of last century its strategies have depleted their power. When at such a moment of fatigue the

singularity of a new technology hits the market, like informatization does, all of culture will jump to a next level — or regress into the defense of old values. Since we are forced to witness the latter option being performed by Politics East and West, by Religions of One Church or Another, by Commerce in the Free and Controlled Marketplace, it leaves us Art for the Sake of Art to revolutionary move on with.

The Next Big Probability: Future Art for the Museum of the Future

Now that art has been democratically adopted as the context for everything else, once more it is time for its transformation. Art will reinvent its symbolic power in relation to the challenges of information ubiquity. The museum of the future should not become 'like' the university, for its educational and facilitary mission. Before you know, everything 'art' becomes 'as science', and the story of dis-identification starts all over again. Art needs its own institutions and forums to act and to inform from, enhancing its specific qualities to be further investigated, interrogated, tested, discussed, interpreted, translated, deposited and invested into the cultural contexts of information society, which in turn has a ticket to enter the museum via all imaginable channels, including the back door.

If art is among the probabilities for any kind of mobilization that is needed for human governance — whether it be self-governance or the governance of our planet, of economical systems, education, or generally, of our physical and spiritual health — we have to seriously consider the responsibilities that fall into the hands of people who never had the power

nor the ambition to conduct such grandiose operations. *Why trust them?* Dercon does not seem to wonder. Which conditions would make us ideologically ripe and ready to allow any demos to perform a brand new grand narrative, guided by a museum that has less to do with art than with teaching 'self-governance'? Are we that desperate with our representation by 'politicians, bankers, insurers, property owners'? It's a probability of a kind, canceling out any destructive-constructive project that the demos historically has occupied the streets and erected barricades for! Our concerns go anywhere beyond questions about 'gender, identity, the world, salaries'. Society's concerns go anywhere beyond its citizens pondering 'how to make decisions for themselves'. The outlines for ambitious narratives for the 21st century should be supported by new investigations into our symbolic orders. Art belongs in the forefront of this game change.

Beyond the emancipatory issues that academic and popular theorizing have dealt with over the past decades, in the age of two major epistemological developments a radical new critique of visual culture awaits art. Communication and information media present a symbolic order with the instrumental superpower of data gathering, organization and evaluation, and subsequent symbolic and material, at worst physical action upon the real life situation where the original data were taken from. This refined brand of the actual merging of symbolic and instrumental power, beyond anything that we have known as propaganda or disinformation before, is key to the future of media, including art.

While once media were their *authors*, to then become the *message*, today it is the *user* who becomes her or his media,

feeding it and retrieving that very same information in return, reformatted and evaluated against other logarithmically relevant data. Relevant to the system of evaluation, that is. We are only seeing a first glimpse of what it means to *become* information.

What kind of logarithmical probability then is art, for the future museum? What kind of a probability is the museum, for an art of the future? Will the contemporary museum and contemporary art serve each other *and* a 'coming community', in the same mutually dependent manner as they did during the last century? Who will benefit from its intelligence and the intelligence of those who will use this museum of the future for their future scenarios? Like with art, museum projects come about if their constitutive conditions are met. Ideas, objects, projects and events can be successfully produced as soon as knowledge, skills, facilities and attention together are urgently present and focused on the realization of the new endeavor.

The future of the museum takes a solid interest in the art of that very same future. Their combined efforts could maybe even save a demos from becoming *as information* ...to the highest bidder. For all of man's concerns to be not just as art and therefore in the museum, first of all the image of art and the image of the museum need a genuine makeover as instrumental symbolic orders, for the sake of their actual epistemological power.

Notes

1. Giorgio Agamben: 'Without Classes', in *The Coming Community*, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, pp. 64–65: "In the petty bourgeoisie, the diversities that have marked the tragicomedy of universal history are brought together and exposed in a phantasmagorical vacuousness. [...] Selecting in the new planetary humanity those characteristics that allow for its survival, removing the thin diaphragm that separates bad mediatized advertising from the perfect exteriority that communicates only itself — this is the political task of our generation".
2. More on the distinction between 'mediatization' and 'informatization' in Jouke Kleerebezem: 'The Post-Monumental Image', in *Open magazine #8*, '(In)visibility', 2005 ([http://www.skor.nl/_files/Files/OPEN8_P34-46\(1\).pdf](http://www.skor.nl/_files/Files/OPEN8_P34-46(1).pdf)).
3. Julian Stallabrass: *Art Inc., The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press New York, 2004, pp. 181–182.
4. Tate Modern director Chris Dercon, interviewed by Rosie Goldsmith for the Goethe Institut London, 2014 (http://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/lon/pro/doppelgaenger/Dercon_Transkript.pdf).

Go to Hell, Bastard

Hilde de Bruijn

Asger Jorn's Construction of His Public Image

Asger Jorn (1914–1973) established his international reputation by the end of the 1950's, and is today primarily known for co-founding *Cobra* (1948–1951) and the *Situationist International* (SI) (1957–1972). Apart from paintings, ceramics, tapestries, sculptures and graphic work, Jorn also produced over 25 books and several hundred articles. In these writings Jorn interconnects a great variety of topics from different fields such as physics, political economy, art theory and philosophy, and overall expresses strong ideas about the role of the artist in society.

Helle Brøns is an art historian who lives and works in Copenhagen working on a PhD on Asger Jorn at the University of Copenhagen, the Statens Museum for Kunst, and Museum Jorn. She is the author of *Asger Jorn*, Copenhagen 2009; 'Masculine Resistance. Expressions and Experiences of Gender in the Work of Asger Jorn, in *October: Asger Jorn: A Special Issue no. 141*, 2012 and 'The Shock of the Old', in *Hvad*

Skovsoen gemte. Jorn's Modifications & Kirkeby's Overpaintings, Museum Jorn, Silkeborg 2011.

Hilde de Bruijn is an art historian, freelance curator and curator at the Cobra Museum of Modern Art, Amstelveen, the Netherlands. Her main freelance activity from 2012 is a curatorial research into the writing and thinking of the Danish avant-garde artist Asger Jorn (1914–1973). Her findings are reflected in the blog www.hildegoesasger.org.

Those who study Jorn get to know him as an energetic and charismatic personality, always on the move and looking for exchange and discussions with others through meetings, the making of collaborative work or magazines, or exhibitions. These discussions were regularly held in public or semi-public realm of conferences and newspapers. Jorn's output as an artist coincides with a considerable amount of anecdotes and photographs that confirm the impression of him as a playful, spontaneous, and also (thought)provoking and going-against-the-grain type of free spirit that is hard to label or pin down.

When asked to contribute a text to the Art in Context publication around the topic of PR, I immediately had to think of how these anecdotes have become inextricably bound to his reception as an artist. It is hard to discuss Jorn and leave these anecdotes out, whereas at the same time there are aspects of Jorn that have been largely ignored in art history, such as the sometimes misogynist tendencies in his writings. It turned out that Helle Brøns' PhD research on Asger Jorn included both a critical questioning of how Jorn himself actively contributed to his public image and gender issues.

The notion of self-promotion, and the ways that artists actively influence the reception of their work, is a relevant one also in the present time. It is a time in which artists and intellectuals are required to possess of quite a few ‘entrepreneurial’ skills, including networking and self-promotion skills, and dealing with the press. This current call for cultural entrepreneurship has been criticized by sociologist Pascal Gielen as “a misunderstanding”¹. A free translation of his words: “it is in fact a call for self-management, for calculability (yet how can one ‘measure’ the time that is needed to come up with a new idea?) and controllability — the risks of shaping new ideas and objects has to be within acceptable proportions of risk”. Gielen’s critique might be justified, but the ‘entrepreneurial’ aspects of artist hood are an issue usually not one ignored by artists that carried to ambition to put a mark on the art and discourse of their time. Asger Jorn definitely belongs to this category of artists.

Hilde de Bruijn. Risk was an important element in Jorn’s thinking and strategies and certainly not something that he would be willing to shrink to ‘acceptable proportions’ in the ‘entrepreneurial’ sense. I would rather agree with you Helle, that Jorn was ‘unrelentlessly reckless’. He compared artistic practice with walking on thin ice, and I think that it is in line with this, that he disliked it if people would get a too clear picture of him. He would then undermine that picture, withdraw or do something unexpected so that it was difficult to type cast him as an artist. This does however not mean, that he didn’t like to be acknowledged or recognized as an artist. Chronologically speaking, the

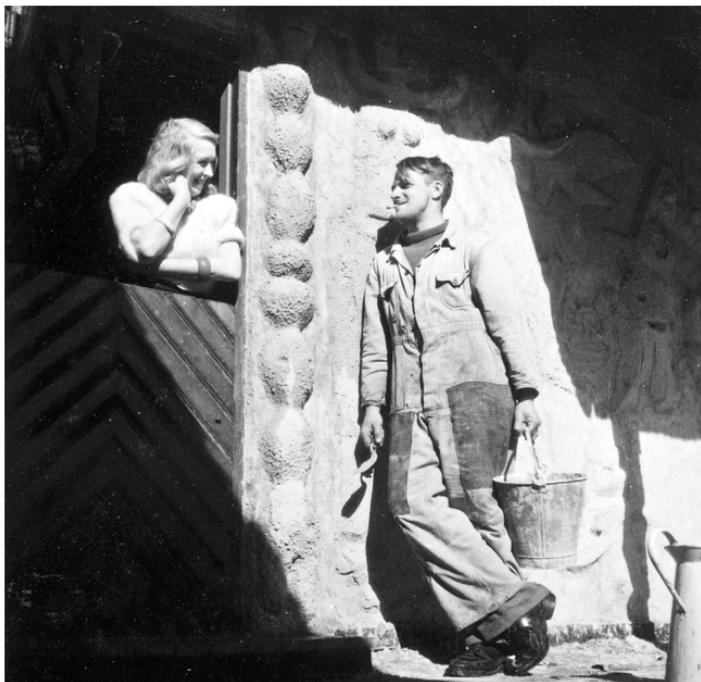
very first thing that springs to mind, is the fact that Asger Jorn was born Asger Oluf Jørgensen. He changed his name in 1945, the year that the borders of various European countries opened up again after years of war. In the literature about Jorn his name change is generally interpreted as a way to make it easier for an international network of people to remember him. Would you like to add to that interpretation, and, secondly, do you happen to know if Jorn has ever publicly motivated his name change?

Helle Brøns. I think the change of name was mostly a question of practicality. Jorn wrote to the Danish artist Robert Jacobsen: “Robert, we must have different names. It doesn’t work at all to arrive in France and be called Jørgensen and Jacobsen. Nobody can pronounce it. Damn it, I’m going to find myself another name”. I don’t know of any public motivation, so there is probably no more to it than that. What this does tell us, however, is something about Jorn’s self-confidence. That right after the war he was determined to go out and make himself an international career and that he was very conscious of the importance of having a name in the public. But ‘Jorn’ really isn’t the easiest name to pronounce either, is it? In his local Danish dialect ‘Jorn’ can sound like ‘Jorden’ (the earth) which he might have thought of as a funny connotation. (In Århus in the 1980s someone wanted to name a café after Jorn and were not allowed — they then called it Café Jorden as a prank.)

Hilde de Bruijn. During the preparatory talk for this interview, we briefly mentioned two photographs of Jorn that we both found striking in the context of the issue of self-presentation and dealing with the relationship with the press. One is a photograph published in the catalogue *Expo Jorn – Art is a Festival*, by the Museum Jorn in Silkeborg in 2014. It is a black and white photograph of Jorn, some youngsters and two adults walking up a hill. They are all playing musical instruments. The other example actually concerns a series of photographs of Jorn and art collector Elna Fonnesbech-Sandberg taken for *Billedbladet* in October 1944. What do you feel is most striking about these photographs?



Jorn and children walking up the hill playing musical instruments.
Photographer is unknown. Archival photo, Museum Jorn.



Jorn and Elna Fonnesbech-Sandberg in her holiday home in Tibirke. Photographed by Olaf Kjelstrup for *Billedbladet* in October 1944.

Helle Brøns. The photographs from *Billedbladet* are interesting both because they reflect the perception of the artist's role at the time, and because Jorn so willingly plays the part of the young, bohemian, masculine artist. He is in a boiler suit working outdoors or taking a break while Elna Fonnesbech-Sandberg looks at him in appreciation from inside the house — she is passive, approving and always photographed indoors. The setting is sufficiently domestic and normalized for people to identify with the

artist and thereby more easily accept his 'strange' modern art. It is a classical setup — which we also know from the photographs of Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner. Krasner, though being a splendid artist herself, is portrayed as the supportive, admiring wife, while Pollock is performing his drips — which served to anchor the Pollock's art work in the figure of a white, male (heterosexual) artist. In Jorn's case however, the woman was not his wife, but his mistress and patron (and future painter and artist colleague).

So the rather conventional photographs that seem confirmative of the bourgeois norms and morality in reality covers an even more complex reality. Even if Jorn posed in the public media as a typical artist hero, at the same time he was very critical towards this notion of the genius artist individual, and warned that an artist who lets himself become a celebrated hero will stand in the way of his own art as popular or folk art — which is what he wanted his art to be. The photo with the music procession was taken at Erik Nyholm's place (he was a ceramist and a friend of Jorn). He and Verner Permild (a printer) are the other two men the photo. It looks like a happy, spontaneous moment luckily captured on film and it might well have been so.

But very often Jorn also initiated such 'happenings', when a camera appeared. He was very good at using such moments to pose as a 'bohemian' artist. His son told me that he sometimes put an instrument in everyone's hands when someone took photographs. When the son objected that he didn't know how to play it, Jorn said that it didn't matter — you couldn't tell from the picture. Again, it shows how conscious Jorn was of how to present himself as a lively,

impulsive artist living up to the public expectation, while in reality he was also very strategic and theoretical. I think it might be part of the reason why his theoretical work was not acknowledged as part of his 'real' oeuvre for many years.

Hilde de Bruijn. The photographs we just discussed show Jorn to be quite strategic with the media, but you told me about a conversation you had with one of Jorn's children. Apparently Jorn once said that "now he was as good as Picasso was in dealing with journalists", right after he had answered a journalist from an important newspaper at his front door (and who obviously didn't know what Jorn looked like) that Mr. Asger Jorn wasn't home, and closed the door. Whereas it is not my intention to try and speculate too much about his motivations for his action (which would suggest that a clear picture could emerge), it seems to me that generally speaking the anecdotes around Jorn generate from more or less spontaneous responses, but that he also knew very well how to use these anecdotes to his advantage or to create a certain image of himself — or if necessary distort that image again.

How to think of Jorn's 'strategy' to always add to complexity and readability of his personality as an artist, his artistic work, in relation to our current times, and to an audience that is already overloaded with information?

Helle Brøns. I cannot help thinking of the way the British art critic Tom Wolfe in his satirical 1975 book *The Painted Word* describes the play between the artist and the cultural

elite as the 'Boho Dance'. An artist can only be successful, he argues, if he knows the rules of this dance: first the bohemian artists performs his moves of utter disdain for the bourgeoisie, at some point the cultural elite will nevertheless make a move towards him and after some discrete hesitation he must accept the accolades and attention. Wolfe argues that if the artist gets stuck in a crippling disdain for his audience and cannot accept the offer to dance when it is made, he is doomed to stagnation and will not be revered by history.

Artists like Picasso excelled at this art mating ritual, he said, while Pollock was the classic case of the artist hopelessly stuck between the Boho Dance and the fulfillment. A few artists however managed to double-track their way from the Boho Dance to the consummation, but truly successful double-tracking requires the artist to be a sincere and committed performer in both roles, he argues. I think this is what Jorn attempts — to be true to his communist belief and at the same time have success without kissing ass. As is typical for him, he tries to change the rules of the dance. Wolfe points out that the general public was not part of this transaction; perhaps one could say that Jorn attempts to move the dance into their territory (by connecting so strongly with folk art and popular art).

Particularly in his Situationist period of course he was split between the success of his painting and the anti-capitalist critique of the SI — this split made him invent an alter ego — George Keller — who stayed in the SI while Jorn resigned. He then canalized some of the money earned on painting back into the subversive activities in SI. I think the

Boho dance is still in function today — think of someone like Damien Hirst — but of course the scene has changed radically. The performance, which was for a very long time acted out on a unisexual scene — was overplayed and can no longer be presented as natural or credible. There are more artist roles available and a much broader cast. Also, many artists today work with the public media as a medium — a strategy that the situationists were some of the first to use — but the attitude of most younger artists towards media, institutions or consumer society is much more workable and diverse. The recognition of artistic research that Jorn struggled for is very relevant today and in some ways obtained, which also allows for different relationships between artist and public.

Hilde de Bruijn. During his lifetime Jorn wrote a great deal of texts. He was very outspoken about many topics, and he was a well-read man. The reception of his texts at the time, and also today considers his textual and more philosophical output, primarily as an example of artistic thinking. In 1950s Jorn send in one of his existing manuscripts at the University of Copenhagen, asking to consider it as a dissertation. The university rejected his application, which as you suggested, could not have come as a big surprise to him. Do you think that he really wanted to position himself as an intellectual, or what do you think might have been his agenda with this application?

Helle Brøns. Yes, in 1952, he submitted his aesthetic manifesto *Luck and Chance* to the University of Copenhagen in

order to have it accepted as a philosophical doctoral thesis. The book was rejected because it did not meet the university's academic requirements, full as it was of intuitive leaps and argument from one discipline used in the field of another. I believe his purpose was to proclaim the existence and value of an artistic way of thinking as an equivalent alternative to the philosophical and scientific one. His theoretical work was both very sincere and at the same time it included a humorous, irrational aspect which was not compatible with academia. Jorn strikes me as an intellectual who does not want to be intellectual.

In his introduction to a later book *The Natural Order*, he stated that success as a philosopher would be “the most embarrassing and ridiculous thing I could ever achieve. It would be like giving a man who loves women the most beautiful wax mannequin in the world, complete with real hair”. What he cared about was the ‘real thing’, a living, passionate sensuous reflection rather than an elaborate, but lifeless, philosophical thinking. In the same book he claims that “We need a Ministry of Disturbance, a regulated source of annoyance, a destroyer of routine, an underminer of complacency, or, in other words, a ministry of aesthetic activity”. I think *Luck and Chance* was intended as such a disturbance.

Hilde de Bruijn. Jorn was quite critical of the idea of the museum as the arbiter of taste and what could be called the culture industry of his time. When Jorn was awarded the Guggenheim Award in 1964, he sent a telegram to the president of the Guggenheim saying: “Go to hell bastard

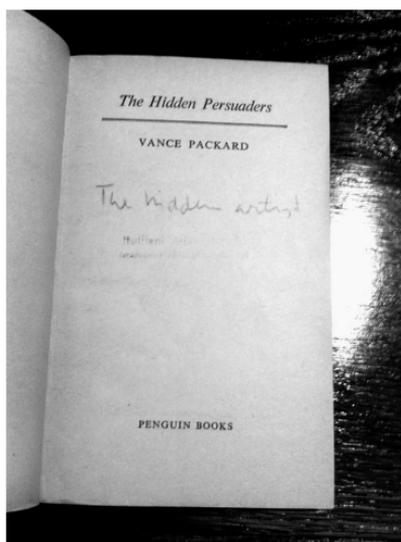
— Stop — Refuse prize — Stop — Never asked for it — Stop — Against all decency mix artist against his will in your publicity — Stop — I want public confirmation not to have participated in your ridiculous game”. On January 8, 1964 he also sent a longer letter explaining himself in more detail, stating that he has always refused any price as “price-giving is the establishment of an hierarchic distinction between artists”, and on top of that he adds that refuses to be used as “an example to artistic and public education, as I hate every sort of education en bloc”. The Danish writer and critic Elsa Gress (1919–1988) however, didn’t necessarily think of Jorn’s action as daring or risk-taking, but pointed out that he might gain more from all the media attention then from the award itself. Could you say a little more about what she said, and in what context their subsequent dialogue took place?

Helle Brøns. I think the rejection of the Guggenheim Price is a perfect example of Jorn’s attempt at double-tracking: a perfect abusive Boho dance move but at the same time he got more publicity without compromising his convictions. What Elsa Gress did was in a way to expose this transaction as part of the game. She discussed how abstract spontaneous art had become academic and that there was too much speculation and publicity in art — even Jorn who just turned down the Guggenheim price uses publicity, she says. Jorn wrote an angry reply, refusing to ever have used publicity besides the publicity implicit in every artistic statement. Gress then pointed out that because of his constant presence in the media, his writing, debating and

self-conscious appearance, Jorn's public persona, whether he wanted it to or not, confirmed the image of the artist as a genius bursting with masculine vitality and agency. This artist's role expressed the last gasp of patriarchy, as she saw it, noting Pollock as an example of a male artist self-destructively living his own myth. This was a sore spot for Jorn, who himself saw modern society as being increasingly influenced by what he defined as female values of harmony and stagnation, while masculine values such as experimentation, aggression and innovation lost territory. In the following discussion they both projected gender differences onto their arguments. Gress — taking off from Simone de Beauvoir, Margaret Mead, and others — was advocating for a general humanism that does not discriminate between the sexes, while Jorn stressed the generic differences between the sexes. In his book *Alpha and Omega* he continues this discussion of art and gender in rather misogynist terms. He does, however, also have a very humorous and ironic tone, which is also evident in his art — not least the modifications and disfiguration which ridicule both men and women. Such 'self-portraits' as the one at the cover of *Value and Economy*, where he poses as Marx, is a similar ironic self-representation: He puts himself as an artist thinker in the place of the philosophical father figure. In another photograph he poses as the little mermaid and ironically shows himself as a paradoxical, popular national symbol with breasts, pipe and beard. I think it is a great picture of his self-ironic attitude to his public image as a masculine artist hero.

The Hidden Persuaders / The Hidden Artist

I would like to conclude this interview with thanking Helle Brøns for her time, energy and insights, and with a photograph that I took at Museum Jorn, in a small room that contains part of Jorn's personal library. It is a photograph of the title page of the book *The Hidden Persuaders* by Vance Packard, underneath which Jorn wrote "The Hidden Artist". It is an interesting note perhaps to end with, as Jorn draws a direct parallel between the artist's practice and the work of PR managers and other 'persuaders'.



Packard's book *The Hidden Persuaders* was first published in 1957, and according to his underlining of many paragraphs, Jorn must have read it with interest. Packard looks into the use of psychological techniques by advertisers to influence the

behavior of potential buyers. Packard identified several ‘compelling needs’ that advertisers promise products will fulfill that according to him are so strong that people are not able to resist the impulse to buy. Packard also looks into the manipulative techniques of promoting politicians to the electorate and questions the morality of using these techniques.

In ‘The Exploitation of the Unique’, the second part of his publication *Value and Economy*, Jorn discusses the subjective and human passion at length in relation to art, politics and advertisement. He writes for instance: “The best object for exploitation in human society is human desire and enthusiasm and the creative results of this, our cultural past”² and “Politics consists of catching people’s attention and is thus art”³. At the core of his thinking lies the idea that art is the ultimate tool for invoking differences in values, for invoking change and that only changes can catch people’s attention. He then indeed draws a parallel between art and advertisement saying “[...] academics have made a false separation between what they call art and what they call advertisement. They simply refuse to admit the obvious that all art, even that of Beethoven and Rembrandt, is art because, amongst other things, it is an advertisement for something, and that to advertise is to give sensory experience an extraordinary significance. That a sensory experience is given an extraordinary significance is first and foremost to say that that one is conscious of it as something important and something present”⁴.

In ‘Value and Economy’ Jorn shows himself critical of the role of mass media in the dependence of politicians’ popularity and he shows himself critical of the role of the advertisement industry in relation to commodity consumption, but

perhaps most importantly in the framework of the artistic practice, he shows himself critical of academic thinking about the value of sensory experiences. He says that the consciousness, the focus of attention that artists can generate “is what in the most elementary sense could be called intelligence”⁵.

Academics, according to Jorn, have refused to acknowledge the intellectual aspect in this process. To Jorn however, intelligence does occupy itself with experiences of reality, not only with concepts. He can't relate at all to the academic concept of reality as something that cannot be experienced but only comprehended: “Art is to be able, but to be able is also to know”⁶ says Jorn, which to him means that you can't remove knowledge from art, or isolate direct knowledge from the problem of intelligence.

It is useful to realize how aware Jorn himself was of the importance of human desire and the focus of attention where it comes to his public image. The image of Jorn as a bohemian artist did not occur as ‘naturally’ or spontaneously as it looks like at first glance, and a critical look at his practice and thinking from the perspective of gender issues also completes our image of him in a different way.

At the same time, the numerous photographs of Jorn smoking, of Jorn working with paint, clay or textile, of Jorn eating, drinking, of Jorn flirting, of Jorn playing a musical instrument, but rarely of Jorn not engaging with the world of matter around him, seem to focus our attention not only to him but also to one of the most fundamental ideas underlying his practice: through experimenting, a direct engaging with matter, art invokes differences, and by invoking differences art generates knowledge about ourselves and the world around us.

This is not the ‘scientific’ or objective type of knowledge, but a type of knowledge that issues from the subjective, from the needs of mankind. In terms of art, to Jorn this was the true meaning of realism — which when you come to think of it, sheds another light of some of the photographs discussed above. Perhaps Jorn’s ‘manipulations’ were foremost aimed to bring across the image of something as ‘real’ as possible.

Notes

1. Pascal Gielen, ‘Repressive Liberalism – Art, the Art Market and the Cultural Policy System in the Netherlands’ in *Kunstlicht* 1/2 (34), *De Publieke Markt*, 2013.
2. Asger Jorn, ‘Value and Economy – Critique of Political Economy and The Exploitation of the Unique’, in *The Natural Order and other texts*, translated by Peter Shield, Ashgate 2002, p. 165.
3. Value and Economy, p. 175.
4. Value and Economy, p. 199.
5. Value and Economy, p. 199.
6. Value and Economy, p. 199.

Interview with the Nike Director of Corporate Communications

Ken Rooney

Ken Rooney interviews Ilana Finley, *Nike* Senior Director of Corporate Communications for Central and Eastern Europe, by email, on the brand's PR philosophy.

Ken Rooney: How would you describe the PR of a company?

Ilana Finley: At *Nike*, we no longer refer to the function as 'PR' which is often associated with the more traditional (and less desirable) aspects of the field. We reference the function as 'Communications', which more appropriately captures the broader scope of the function. Within *Nike*, our mission as a Communications function is to create powerful and authentic connects that allow us to tell premium, innovative brand stories, enhance corporate reputation and engage, inspire and empower *Nike's* 40,000 employees worldwide. Gone are the days of the basic media pitching and party planning. Our teams now have a vast responsibility of connecting with a wide variety of audiences from athletes, to consumers, to influences, to governments to investors... and of course media.

KR: Who provides the wording for your PR, are they the real voice of PR personnel?

IF: At *Nike*, the Communications function works to tell powerful stories that support our overall Company's mission: To bring innovation and inspiration to every athlete in the world (if you have a body, you are an athlete). We focus on stories that showcase innovation and design, creativity and culture and how *Nike* is empowering change through sport around the world. We articulate the *Nike Inc.* voice through the stories we tell.

KR: In what other ways do you communicate internally and externally? What type of tools or channels does a PR department use?

IF: We communicate both internally and externally on a daily basis around the world. Internally, we focus on employee communication that provides information on our business objectives, connects them to our brand and supports them in doing their day to day jobs. Externally, we focus on providing insight into our brand, or products, our athletes and our efforts to support future generations of athletes. We leverage media (TV, print, digital & social channels) to help communicate these efforts via events, videos, conferences, blogs, websites, photography, collaborations, 1:1 engagement and a host of other platforms or tools. Most of what we do is developed in house or with support from creative agencies we work with. You can find examples of the stories we tell at www.nikeinc.com.

KR: Do you align PR globally, in a large company?

IF: Yes.

KR: How would PR measure the success of it's PR?

IF: We define success by how strongly our message is communicated within the media... and ultimately to the audiences we work with.

KR: Does PR have any interaction with communities outside of *Nike* (agencies, media, events)?

IF: Yes.

KR: What is the relationship of PR and advertising, are they separate?

IF: Communications and Advertising are managed separately within *Nike*. We work closely together as our goal is to tell aspects of the same story in different manners.

KR: Can you link the use of PR and innovation — the word is used a lot on your corporate website?

IF: *Nike* is an innovative company. We work relentlessly to push the boundaries of performance innovation within the products we deliver. This is part of our DNA as a brand and goes back to the philosophy that our founders Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight adopted when starting the company. You'll find the history of our company on the corporate site. There you'll find that Bill Bowerman was a University Track Coach. He designed and built shoes for his athletes. He was obsessed with lighter, faster footwear that helped his athletes perform better on the track. He was relentless in his efforts to find newer, better materials. *Nike* has been built on that same ethos. We exist to serve athletes. Part of serving them is to ensure we provide the best innovations we can for any sport they do. This is who we are... this is our story to tell.

KR: Can you combine storytelling and PR or are they mutually exclusive?

IF: Communicators are storytellers. If you are not defining a message, developing a voice and ultimately driving a story, you are not delivering Communications.

KR: In relation to people and culture, how does PR reflect on itself?

IF: Not sure I understand the question.

KR: Briefly, in your view, how does PR give a company and society meaning?

IF: Communications is designed by nature to help connect consumers to a brand. To give insight into who that brand is, what they believe, what they stand for and what they can do for consumers or the broader community.

KR: For our Art exhibition at Cobra, I'd like to capitalize the event to promote my work/myself. Can you recommend a PR method I could incorporate (or a few bullet points)?

IF: Tell your story in an authentic, organic way that best represents who you are and what is your work. Make a video, host a talk, write a blog. Communicate in the format that works best and share it with an audience that will be open to hearing it. Good luck with your project.

Everyone is an artist

Except you

Do You Want to Sell Me the Thruth?

Rikke Goldbech

I am checking my email, for the umpteenth time. It has become a daily routine or maybe more of a bad habit. I want to be updated and to have a smooth conversation with the world around me. A lot of spam has found it's way to my account. I am happy that my email operator is clever enough to divide the emails into different categories: the *primary*, the *social* and the *commercial* ones. I can't help it. I am going through them all anyway. The social media is telling me that I have been gone too long and that I am missing important stuff. One of my friends has a new profile picture, I haven't even commented on it yet. In the folder with commercials a health company offers me vouchers if I *like* them on Facebook. It seems like every single person wants to get in contact with me. Dear friend, I know exactly how you feel and what you need. I am asked to share and forward a message, and within minutes I get the same email from another friend. A chain reaction is started and going like wildfire around the globe. The moment from experience to responds is only a matter of one single click. The spread of information going out to the

public is like constantly running water, a noise stream from everybody who wants to be heard. All kinds of voices, an *over-voice*, an *inner-voice*, a *hidden voice*. Some of them are clearer than others, more visible or transparent in a way, which make them easier to understand.

This is a story about a hidden voice. Once in a while discussions concerning the use of words are brought up in the media. It can vary from the use of basic words like for example the name of a cheese, to more political statements, such as calling a year without studying a ‘goofing around’ year. We need to be extremely aware of the way we use language. We hear the media constantly using certain kinds of words, and it is hard not to copy the language that we are surrounded with. Our use of words can make us think and understand the world in a distinct kind of way. Without realizing it we can start using a loaded term that doesn’t fit our way of thinking. We need to determine what can and may be said.

Under the last Danish government the law concerning foreigners has been tightened and made more complicated. In the same period of time the bureaucratic agency that takes care of the decisions regarding immigration into Denmark has changed its name into something sounding less controlling. The old name was be something like ‘Immigration Governing’ or ‘Board of Immigration’ – a rather authoritarian sounding organization. The new name is ‘Immigration Service’. While writing this text I discovered a case of language control had happened. Using Google Translate to find a suiting word for the old version of the immigration system I discovered that only names containing something with ‘Service’ were suggested. The modification had already been made, as if the old

term had never existed. History has been rewritten, leaving only the new way of seeing the world.

A way to deal with such copyrighting of truth is to write you own history. In that way we avoid narrowing down reality, while it will remain clear that such a story is only one way of seeing it. A broader, more personal reality will prevent us to start acting due to a new consensus. It will prevent that it becomes okay to say to a refugee, who simply wants to live a life without war in the backyard, that they are freeloading off the system of our services.

While our 'wrong' histories have the risk of disappearing, a new world is shaped in the light of our behavior and patterns of moving around in life. Technology makes it straightforward to follow us everywhere. We are constantly online, meaning that we are constantly watched. Even the thoughts we only intended to share are being saved. When we write a post on Facebook, but don't publish it, it will still be saved in the system¹. In that way advertisements can be linked to our 'secret' thoughts. We would maybe not even be aware of a lack of something, before someone's ad tells us that we can buy it on their website, now. It is like in the theatre, where you accept the invisible people behind the scene, controlling all the things going on on stage. The illusion breaks instantly when a leak makes us aware that the complete system is not made for our benefit. But that awareness lasts for a moment and then everything is forgotten again. We live our everyday life, without thinking of every single movement, without thinking of why we do as we do and which consequences this may have. We save time and energy by doing so. We are like

the tired parent answering a child that is trying to understand the world, 'that's just how it is'.

The news media has a big impact on what our minds are occupied with and which cases should be brought to life? Both the use of language and the stories chosen to be shown in the public media, are playing a big part in the making of our world picture.

A girl called Madeleine McCann went missing in 2007. That in itself is, unfortunately, not so odd. The entire handling of this case is, however a bit mysterious. Seven years after her disappearing, the English Government is still using money on finding her. Why is it so? Why are so many resources being used on this particular girl, compared to other cases? Which details are not given to us? This case is a good example of how reality and fiction can melt together. BBC's program *Crimewatch* reconstructs major unsolved crimes. It is a high-profile program, which means that it gets a lot of attention, both from the public and others media. When the BBC makes a cliffhanger, in the promotion for an episode of *Crimewatch*, which contain new information in the Madeleine McCann case, they use the same language as in fictional crime series. The real case becomes just another episode of *The Killing*². We are attracted to the game of solving; it gives us a pleasure, a moment of redemption, which seems short, and feels as an anticlimax afterward. To keep the tension episode after episode is actually what gives us the biggest pleasure. The way this case and similar cases are handled confuses our reality, in the same way as Reality TV does. We are looking for suspects in our own movie. The surroundings confirm that we are in one; we walk side by side with ordinary people, from television. What does it do to our way of thinking and behaving?

A Muslim guy starts praying in the airplane. What is he up to? Is he a terrorist? Or is he simply afraid of flying. What do we see, when do we see? Can we control ourselves and choose not to see criminals, paedophiles and terrorists all the time?

2. Do You Want to Sell Me the Truth?

With wonder towards the uniform news stream, I started to focus on how to get a broader perspective on the world situation. The main topic that I wanted to approach was war. The ordinary people's involvement in a war can be seen as one little piece in the big picture. It is a personal incident, influencing everyone's individual life, and at the same time it involves the whole world in a big political play. There are so many viewpoints, so many stories to be told, why only go with one of them?

I wanted to get local news, from the people actually living in the war places. I got in contact to a lot of people via Facebook, that were living or had been living in countries at war. One of the contacts I remember best, is an engineer in communication technology, *بيدرر كك وولششماقق* (Kurdish 'Qamishlo', as he called himself). He works at a news media institution in Qamishli, Syria. He was actually not who I was looking for. The idea about paying no attention to the mainstream media and getting another angle on the situation would be lost if a person working for a news station was helping me. But suddenly the prospect became interesting when the situation started to be about trading, in a Facebook chat³.

KURDISH QAMISHLO: Are there any in return?

RIKKE GOLDBECH: What would you like in return?

KQ: mony Money.

RG: I am a poor student, but I can save some to pay you, if that will make you mind to do it.

KQ:

RG: ?

KQ: I will send you all the information and stories about Syria in a lot of people that you want, as well as video clips and photos.

RG: But the important thing for me is that it is not just the news story, but personal stories.

KQ: I know.

RG: Okay. I don't know how to give a person in Syria money or how much you are thinking?

KQ: But did not tell me how much and when to pay Stdfien? Compared to this information.

Because this information and personal stories are looking for all the channels and I could sell them.

RG: Sorry. I didn't get that part?

KQ: Madam Danish. Western countries is that you want to live in this situation to control us and consume our goods and steal all our wealth Is it not our right to keep some of the money they stole from us Western countries? I'm sorry for my candor.

RG: Yes yes. We agree, that Western countries are a big part of the problem. That is also why I want to make art about. But to want money from a poor artist, is taken from the poor and given to the poor. You maybe think that I am rich, but here I am not at all.

KQ: Did you know that we as a family to live a full month to 200 euros.

RG: No, I didn't know. And I don't know how expensive the cost of living is.

KQ: SEND some of the money to send you what you want.

RG: I can tell you that my room cost 250 euros per month, and that is outside town in a moldy house, so I get it cheap.

KQ: Ok.

RG: I need to think about it. How it will be for what I would like to tell. If I have paid to get some work done. Sounds only reasonable. But in a way I will maybe be as bad as the rest of the Western world. I feel it a bit like prostitution.

KQ: Politicians are not the bad people

RG: Who are the bad people?

KQ: Politicians.

RG: Okay. I think I need to sleep on it. Maybe we can make a project together. The money thing is really interesting. Trading.

KQ: Ok. Nice to met you.

RG: You too. Hope to talk to you soon.

In the further research I found a homepage for the international minimum wages of 2014⁴. According to this page the minimum wage in Syria is 6,110 Syrian Pounds per month, which is around 30.79 euros⁵.

It never came to actual money negotiations. I wanted to create a contact, saying that I was buying the truth from *بيدرركك ووللششمماقق*. We once more had a short talk about the contract but after that he never again replied to my messages.

A notion of everybody wanting to be in the spotlight was a starting point for my thoughts. My believe that, with the help from all people who wanted to be seen, this project was able to come true. Possibly this is just half the truth. The human need of showing off will perhaps recline to the background, when you are in a position where your life is in danger. Nobody knows whom to trust, and I am actually surprised by the openness that I have met in most cases. To ask people in a precarious situation, to be self-exposing, with videos, sounds and written texts, is maybe not the easiest way to get a result. But is it a matter of self-exposure, when one puts one's life at risk, by taking part in another persons project? Often people told me that it was the minimum that they could do for their country. The will to tell their truth was definitely there, but circumstances made it sometimes hard.

Communication has been a central point to get the project to work. To learn how to approach people in such a way, that it provides the best result for a conversation, was indeed a challenge. Often the lack of a common language was a major problem for the conversation. Misunderstandings have surely made some conversations come to an end before the intention

was fulfilled. Translation programs have been used on both sides, mostly from Arabic to English, being the common language. A few times I have used Google Translate to write in Arabic. It feels weird to blindly trust the program. To have no idea about what you are actually saying. Only to have a hope, that the translation mistakes are clear enough to understand that its intention was otherwise. Perhaps this is too much to ask for. The online research, partly based on conversation, has not been sufficient, in the way of giving me the knowledge about the cultural differences. Like if it is normal to talk about tough subjects? In Western culture it became okay to tell if you are having a hard time and to get help from a psychologist, medication or an intimate conversation with a good friend. Such behavior is just normal.

Part of my reality is that people are queuing to be Reality Stars and getting their 15 minutes of fame. We have an X-factor culture, where everybody can be broadcast as a 'singer', or at least cherish a dream about it. It is a show-off culture, where everybody has the right to be seen and if you don't want to, you seem a bit odd. A same attitude can be proven from how movies are made with mobile phones. It seems that the purpose is to show the rest of the world how great you are. To say: 'see where I have been', 'look what I can do'. But is it normal to show off in the Middle East? I have noticed a difference in the way of making movies with mobile phones. There it is more of a registration, of what is going on in front of the maker's eyes, without the maker being present in the picture. Without the maker being a personal and unique part of it. Similarities in social behavior are difficult to find. Conceivably, the worship of martyrs is a way of

acting, closest to the cult of personality. Still it is as different as it could be. From social minds fighting for the team, to one single mind focusing only on a personal gain.

3. *Do You Want to Sell Me the Truth?*

The Armed Forces of Denmark in 2006 made a commercial where a group of young cool people are doing an activity. One person is leaving the group of friends while undressing to their underwear. In the end of the commercial, the half naked people walk away from the camera, out in the night, while an Internet address with 'We Need You' (ViHarBrugForDig.dk) shows up. If it hadn't been for the logo in the right hand corner nothing would indicate that it was a commercial for joining the army.



Still from a commercial video, for joining the Danish Army, 2006 (WeNeedYou) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qubx-0c7pxM>, at 0:33.

The Trade Descriptions Act 1968 ('TDA') is seemingly a statutory regime designed to require traders to tell the truth about the goods and services that they deal in. But how much of the truth must a trader disclose in order not to offend against the TDA? Those in business, whether independent traders or international corporations, inevitably make claims about the things they sell. The advertising industry thrives on promoting the goods and services of its clients. The more attractive a product can be made to sound, the more likely it is to sell. It is in the commercial interests of traders to stretch the truth as far as they can without offending but, if they do offend, it is no defense that what they said was almost true.⁶

Another army commercial from 2012 also ends with a person walking away from the camera, but this story is completely different. This one is about telling a true story. One man talking, and explaining why, this education fits him. The focus point here is to show the army as a place to have high level education. The narrative structure is following a perfect smooth line that says how the war is fought when it is needed. The narrator tells us how he grew up in a collective, sailing around the world, and how his parents didn't like the idea of him joining the army. When they realized that their upbringing was the perfect background for this education, they of course accepted. It is a commercial befitting its era, talking about leadership skills with a social touch. The story is told from and about this unique human being, who could be you, using a footage filled with eye-candies and music with emotions on top of it. "And the uniform? It doesn't make you a different person, it tells you only where you belong, and this is certainly where I belong".



Still from a commercial, for joining the Danish Army, 2014 (The Armed Forces education – A different way of learning), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMKDNRmPwqo>, at 2:17.

Notes

1. http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2013/12/facebook_self_censorship_what_happens_to_the_posts_you_don_t_publish.html.
2. A Danish television drama series.
3. Conversation from Facebook January 21, 2014.
4. <http://www.minimum-wage.oRG/international/en/Syria>.
5. <http://www.flightpedia.oRG/exchange-rate-6110-syp-eur.html>.
6. <http://www.consumercrime.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ar3329>.

Propaganda as a Weapon

Roosje Verschoor

War knows many weapons, some more scary than others, propaganda being one of them. It is perceived as powerful and dangerous. Governments in some cases try to protect the people against it.

In the Netherlands after World War II, already from 1944, 20,000 children from collaborating parents were placed in children's homes. There was nowhere else to take them after their parents had been detained. From the age of thirteen the children were labeled 'Political Youth Delinquents'. These young people were a source of worry for the Dutch government since they were possibly politically infected and might develop extremist ideas and behavior at a later age. The children received an education that was supposed to teach them about democracy and patriotism. The danger of propaganda maybe comes from the idea that even though you can see through it, other people might not.

In 2010 Dutch public libraries wanted to publish fascist documents from World War II on the Internet. It consisted of Dutch newspapers that were created under German

supervision. This created a big discussion, since some people believed it would spread hate and anti-Semitism.

The Polish Jewish photographer Henryk Ross was hired by the Germans to capture the work done in the ghetto. Secretly he made pictures of Nazi crimes. But he also made photos of the daily lives of the Jewish community in the ghetto. After the war the government did not want to publish his work because it could create the idea that life under the Nazi regime might not have been all that bad.



A New Language, to Replace a Rotten One

The artists who came together in the Cobra movement rejected rational Western culture, which as could be concluded from World War II, had shown itself to be rotten to the core. In their desire to reach the very source of human creativity, they took their examples from those forms of arts

which appeared not to have been tainted with the rules and conventions of the Western world. Meanwhile, the government wanted to return to old morals to restore war damage as quickly as possible. Society had to be rebuilt. Old values had to be restored in order to protect the people. Pragmatism was needed in order to rebuild society. New houses provided work and homes. A lot of streets were built on bombed land that had lost a visible history. The buildings were without context and looked all the same since they were built as quickly as possible using cheap materials. People in the fifties saw art and culture as having a didactic function for young people. Artists were expected to contribute to the reconstruction of society. Cobra artist Corneille meant the following: “Dutch society was a dull affair. The little sweet life with a cup of tea and a cookie wasn’t very profitable for creativity”.

Artists wanted to liberate themselves. After the suffocating war they refused to tolerate more discipline and regulation. A gap grew between artists and society. The poet Gerrit Kouwenaar criticizes pre-war poetry. To him traditional poetry neglected to revise its values when it denied the everyday reality of people in the real world — such poetry, which thought to become autonomous, turned out to be “fourteen-lined mockeries of reality, when it tardily noticed that a painful war had dropped out of the sky. It is complete unrealistic poetry, which is in the ditch — a ditch so deep and full that the smallest attempt to escape, other than with aesthetic ladders and ropes, simply is not recognized”. As meant Kouwenaar. But another Dutch poet, Vasalis held: “If the new mentality has become a chaotic one, then it’s especially hard to find a language to express that chaos. This can only succeed if, while

writing, one stands unified against this chaos. The personalities that act in the poetry of Cobra have been raised with the authoritarian destructive voices of the occupier”.

Vasalis believed that the new poets had been more influenced by the mechanisms of the war propaganda than they were aware of. By excluding the supposed bourgeois they made the average citizen into their enemy. Including oneself into a certain group and defining others as being left outside of it is a destructive mechanism, which the artists themselves certainly would not accept from others.

We move forward about half a century to our own era. I also am an artist and I am also living in (post-)war times. Although the war is much further removed from my direct surroundings, I am confronted with it through all kinds of media.

An absolute event that defies any form of interpretation.

— Jean Baudrillard, in *The Spirit of Terrorism* (2001).

The war act of 9/11 was a PR stunt in itself and it was perceived as such. New York was the capital of the Western world and the Twin Towers collapsing was proof of a system that imploded on behalf of its own cockiness. Al-Qaeda showed their ability to penetrate a society that felt totally safe. Counter propaganda started immediately: a War on Terrorism. The image of the towers collapsing was now used as propaganda for the United States. In response to the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the US invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to dismantle Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Al-Qaeda's infrastructure in the country was

destroyed and their military commander, Muhammed Atef, was killed. Abu Zubaydah, another top operative, was captured in Pakistan. Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri, however, escaped. From time to time they released audio and video messages to Arab media. And so it continued. Al-Qaeda made a video of themselves to show how terrifying they could be and the Western world used that same video to show us why Al-Qaeda were dangerous terrorists that needed to be attacked.

Images and videos are, as before, great instruments of propaganda. The public has become so attached to the imagery that without photographic truth historic events are received as ambivalent. When the US reported to have killed Osama Bin Laden a lot of people were in disbelief. Even when the military claimed to have DNA proof that the man who they killed was Osama Bin Laden, people were still confused: why didn't they show a picture of his dead body? Apparently it has become totally normal and in some cases even a necessary act to photograph dead people.

As always, artists reacted. Literary and other artistic expressive forms hope to represent, to process the inexpressible, irrational, non-narratable. The 9/11 artists make works from a worldview that is defined by fear and unease. Themes like globalisation, privacy, war and anti-Islamic subjects can be released in a work of art.

Journalism tries to contextualize images of death and war. Is a poetic interpretation of war more truthful? Or is a contextless low-res image more truthful? Truth is important when it comes to the news. Not just a moral truth, but a realistic visual truth that has not been photoshopped. Of course there is no

pure truth, every source colors its truth through the medium that it makes use of. Therefore it becomes even more important to be transparent: to show which source you used and which choices you made.



Journalists used to be somewhat safe in war areas, but nowadays more are killed in the line of duty. So there are much less professional journalists in Syria that can tell us about what is happening — it is simply too dangerous for them to be there. Maybe the amateur journalist brings us a more direct and unpolished truth. But is the pure violence, are the actions themselves even truthful? Is the war our truth? Then death is truth and it is widely spread over the Internet. In low quality, no poetry without symphony.

The PR of war today has a very high level of penetration due to the use of new media, e.g. the war in Syria. Imagery comes from every kind of source and is usually without context.

While once the word maybe was more powerful than the sword, today the smart phone is more powerful than a gun. War and death have become iconic terms of propaganda that are used as weapons within the media. The battle between images accompanies the armed battle: they run synchronically and have become partners.

Historically all armies have made use of PR to recruit warriors and because of the globalization of new media these warriors are now recruited from all over the world. In 2012 a fighter in Aleppo handed a reporter his cell phone, shaking his head in disbelief. "Assad, Assad" he said. On the screen was a video of someone beheading a prisoner with a chainsaw. It had been circulating in Syria for at least a year.

The footage itself is very real, but it is five years old, and was shot in Mexico. Drug lords carried out the crime. The video has been used by rebels in conflicts all over the world.



Looking through the pictures and clips from Syria you find brutal attacks, beatings, mass executions and rows of dead women and children. Although you find many bogus videos and pictures between them, it does not seem to matter. Before people find out whether or not these images are truthful, they have already found their way onto the major television

networks and have been widely spread through social media. In another video, aired on national Syrian state television, a Syrian claiming to be a resident of Homs says that the Al Jazeera cable network is broadcasting false reports about ongoing conflicts in the city's centre. He films the Al Jazeera report from his television, showing a destroyed city filled with smoke, then pans to his window to reveal a calm street. A blogger later identifies the man's location as being in central Damascus.



An Ever Proliferating Theme: Art and Reality

Artists are more free when it comes to showing their vision on a real event, or on reality proper. On the other hand they can be more bound to a moral truth. The German composer Karl Heinz Stockhausen made it to international headlines with his remarks at a press conference at a music festival in Hamburg, six days after the 9/11 attacks. These events, he said, were “the greatest work of art imaginable for the whole cosmos”. And continued: “Minds achieving something in an act that we couldn’t even dream of in music, people rehearsing like mad for ten years, preparing fanatically for a concert, and then dying: just imagine what happened there. You have people who are that focused on a performance and then 5,000 people are dispatched to the afterlife, in a single moment. I couldn’t do that. By comparison, we composers are nothing”.

Stockhausen’s comments produced immediate disgust worldwide. “To the victims of terrorism” wrote a commentator for the *Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung*, the composer’s “mental descent into hell [...] must seem like hideous mockery”. Although Stockhausen subsequently claimed he had been misunderstood, he became a pariah for a while in Europe and North America. His concerts at the Hamburg festival were cancelled; his daughter, a pianist, said she would no longer perform using the Stockhausen name. When he died, in 2007, many obituarists mentioned the 9/11 scandal. Indeed, for some, it overshadowed his extraordinary musical career.

To return to Cobra, Karel Appel made a series of paintings after a train journey through Germany shortly after the war. On the railway stations he saw German children begging for food. He used this image for his paintings. When Appel made

a mural with images of these children in the canteen of the Amsterdam town hall, the civil servants objected so heavily that in the end the mural was covered by a white wall. They refused to eat their sandwiches in the presence of an art piece that revealed the fate of German children after the war.

Forward another half century. When Dutch designers of *Studio Job* designed a tablecloth with imagery reminding clearly of concentration camp gates they did not make friends. Dutch TV host Matthijs van Nieuwkerk asked Job why he had made such horrific work. Why didn't he make nice things, since he was an artist and shouldn't artist make pretty things? Even if an artist manages to make work that says something unusual about a sensitive subject, that is however accepted, he runs up against limitations: on the one hand there is a great sense of freedom in the art world, artists seem to be allowed more of it than their fellow citizens. There is however a downside to this, since artistic choices don't necessarily result in practical consequences for the real world: "When artists are allowed to present new, stimulating ideas, it doesn't mean that they are allowed to actually bring change. But of course, artists will never stop trying"¹.

Notes

1. Hans den Hartog Jager on his exhibition 'Meer Licht' (2011).

My Coffee got Cold

Loidys Carnero

A Conversation on PR and Art with Eric Wie

The issue of PR is an unknown world to me. My past in Havana was very homogeneous. Cuba doesn't have advertising. This ad-free environment may sound utopian, but consider the principal reason why advertising is so scarce: because there aren't a lot of things to buy, and not many people can afford to buy them. In effect, the lack of advertising is correlated with the Cuban economy's consumer activity. With only a thin layer of consumer activity, advertising isn't needed and rarely could be profitable. The only ads over there are about politics and always from the same and only political party. What can I write on PR for this publication?

Now I live in Europe. Trying to do my work as an artist somewhere, somehow. From my point of view when I think about PR, the question arises: what kind of work can or should I do as a person out of his context? Where and to whom will I present my work? How can I meet the right people? When do institutions rely on an artist? To learn about these subjects

I had the opportunity to interview Eric Wie, head of communications at Cobra Museum for Modern Art. In our intensive chat we started talking about institutional PR and ended up talking about individual artists and even strategies to achieve a good career. The conversation took place at the Cobra Museum café on the 18th of March, 2014.

LOIDYS CARNERO: Somehow it seems to me that PR is beyond art.

ERIC WIE: Well, I think it is not a very inspiring theme for artist.

LC: It is a strange subject. In the past, artists were doing all the images for the society, e.g., paintings, posters, and photographs. Today the PR world is outside art and artists. It corresponds to marketing and design. But I do think that art has its own PR.

EW: My first question is: "What is PR?" Officially it is "Public Relations", which is basically what every human does for himself, the relations with people around you. It is also about ego, trying to reach as many people as possible. The way that people talk about it in my context, is as 'free publicity'. Working with PR to me is trying to get journalists involved in things we are doing here at the museum, so they create a trustworthy content.

There are two ways to inform people, one is advertising, the other is to have some content on television or in newspapers. When it is content-driven people probably think it is trustworthier than an advertisement. We investigate what makes people come here to the Cobra Museum. The source they say they use the most is content-driven journalism. I

don't know if this is true because people will never say, "Oh, I came here because I saw an advertisement", like if every time we see an advertisement we immediately do what it says.

LC: Do people read press releases?

EW: In general people do not read press releases. When we talk about PR, I talk about sharing information, not sharing advertisements, so it is the part in which I spend a lot of energy and I do not pay anybody to create this information. In any newspaper or any television network, it doesn't matter if it's commercial or state organized, there is a line that divides paid information and free information.

Let me give you an example. One of the most trustworthy art information sources is the television program *Kunstuur* (art hour) by the AVRO channel. Everything you see there is paid for, we are there regularly and we pay 500 euros per minute. If the viewer looks up close, they can find this information at the end of every content or program, where you can read "this was paid by..." but people never read this and they probably think that it is a totally autonomous program. All mass media functions in the same way, except for small companies, but those are not interesting for me because I put all my energy in things that for sure have a big chance that a lot of people will decide to come here, we need the public to pay for the exhibitions.

For example *De Witte Raaf* is a small magazine, but I don't have any advertisement in the magazine because the people who read *De Witte Raaf* already know exactly what is shown here, they are very well art informed people.

LC: International art magazines, perhaps?

EW: A little bit, but not small international art magazines, meaning that we only do it for the credibility of the museum. But again, I'm sure that the person who reads *Flash Art* or *Art Forum magazine* knows exactly what is going on here in Amsterdam. Now for the Guggenheim collection exhibition I did advertisements in German and Belgian newspaper, but no art newspaper.

LC: Art today is extremely elitist, increasingly geared at the richest people or only for a very limited audience. Do you think that the lack of PR in art, that could persuade a wider audience (such as via the world of advertising) causes a lack of interest? Or simply that the battle is over and the rich have won.

EW: First, I think that museums are growing in audience, one hundred thousand people a year visit our museum, and this is Amstelveen: there is no other reason to come here than this museum. So I think it's amazing that 100,000 people choose to come to this village every year to visit the museum, I mean, there's no train station here, a lot of people come over by car and they have to pay a lot of money on parking, so in my opinion we're doing well attracting people. The problem is that to run a museum is very expensive and society has always questioned the amount of money from the community spent on art. Secondly, 99% of artists I've seen are egocentric, they don't care about society, so that doesn't help, they are only interested in themselves, you don't see many visual artists on television or invited in talk shows. Musicians, theatre people and writers have a more open mind. But in general people would like to be

an artist, people who are not visual artists occasionally have said, “I wish to be an artist”.

LC: A painter.

EW: Yes, to do exactly what you want to do and don't give a damn about anything else, so this is the romantic part, which makes art and artists so attractive.

LC: This subject is very interesting.

EW: And that's what creates the elitism you were talking about before. Art is much more difficult to understand than music, it is a different form of emotion, although Cobra artists tried to be very direct in their emotions, but they totally failed because people wanted to see fine paintings and they were painting from their feelings with a complete freedom in color and form. This is interesting because every time you see an artist or an art movement that wants to give back to people, to become less elitist, it means the opposite and it becomes even more elitist, e.g.

Asger Jorn was like extremely anti-elite and it is the most elitist artist you can imagine because he always changes style, and people go, “Oh that's Asger Jorn, now I understand that next time he will do something different...” so this is the catch-22 of being an artist (laughs).

LC: There is an article by Daniel Buren in 1970 called ‘Function of the Museum’, where he wrote: “Museums are privileged places with a triple role:

1. *Aesthetic*: The museum is the frame and effective support upon which work is inscribed/composed. It is at once the center in which the action takes place and the single (topographical and cultural) viewpoint for the work.

2. *Economic*: The museum gives a sales value to what it exhibits, has privileged/selected. By preserving or extracting it from the commonplace, the museum promotes the work socially, thereby assuring its exposure and consumption.

3. *Mystical*: The museum/gallery instantly promotes to Art status whatever it exhibits with conviction”.

In your opinion does the Cobra Museum fulfill these roles?

EW: Those are the building stones of my PR or communication, mystification is something you can use in a very good way, but what I'm missing is 'discovery', people like to discover things. Economic value is a difficult one. I know it works for the press, to give you an example, for the upcoming exhibition with the Guggenheim museum collection, my first press release draft was filled with economic figures, prices of the most expensive paintings, how much it costs to bring the works from New York, etc. Because I know that journalists like those figures. Why do they like those figures? Because they know that people like those figures, but there was a big 'no' to this idea of mine because it seems vulgar, on the other hand it's about security. We didn't want to give people the strange idea that this art is so expensive and the community money is involved, but the community love these figures, you can see it here in the museum every time people ask, "Hey, what's the value of this painting?"

LC: It also has to do with gossip.

EW: It is the same as with mystification. If you look at this wall (this conversation took place at the Cobra Museum café, right in front of a wall covered with pictures of the Cobra group members, very proud and posing in front

of their works), it is all about mystification, Cobra artists where seen as some kind of national heroes in the 1960s and 1970s, not only because they were great artists but because they lived with total freedom, extremely wealthy, marrying younger women and living the life that normal people really wanted to have.

LC: Like a dream.

EW: Yes, it's curious, all of them have died and their wives are still alive, they were ten, twenty, thirty years younger. That's what you do as an artist.

LC: The *Picasso* lifestyle.

EW: Exactly, that's mystification.

LC: Sometimes with Modernism and Cobra aesthetics the reaction of people is like, "Oh, I could have done that too, even my son could have done it".

EW: This is a compliment for a Cobra artist, but this is one of the battles we still have to fight as the museum, this is their legacy, we have to overcome that. Aesthetics is important, but also the social impact of museums, this subject has become bigger in the last few years, for example the Van Abbemuseum in Holland or Palais de Tokyo in France, they both do socially engaged art projects. This museum has an intern new battle, we know this is happening and how can we deal with it? It is a cultural thing and in my opinion we have to make that move because otherwise as a museum we are not relevant and then I cannot tell my PR stories anymore.

LC: All works of art are absolutely the same, wherever and whenever produced, by whatever artist. This would explain their identical arrangement in thousands of museums

around the world, subject to the vagaries of curatorial fashion.

EW: That's not Buren right? Because he would be one of the most extreme examples of that. In the 1980s and 1990s museums in Europe were full of different versions of Mario Merz or different versions of Kounellis. Museums nowadays have their own identity and they try to be as different as possible from other museums. For example, the Groninger Museum will organize a David Bowie exhibition. If Charles Esche in Eindhoven had organized this exhibition it would be nonsense because it doesn't fit with the Van Abbemuseum's corporate identity. The Cobra Museum doesn't have a good corporate history at the moment, I don't know if this will be possible, but people do not come here only to see the Cobra collection.

LC: I think the next show is a big step, you are bringing works from the Guggenheim collection, off course it has the Guggenheim name on the exhibition title, but it works.

EW: There will be a lot of new and important visitors and if we give them a good show and we manage to get in touch with them, then we might get them back next year with another show. But it is also important that when the show is over — we were talking about that this morning — we will show Asger Jorn this autumn. He is an important artist, but not a very well known artist with a broad public. How can we use the public we will have this summer for the upcoming Asger Jorn exhibition?

LC: I want to discuss individual artists, and individual PR. This is an extract from an online publication about how to make a bright artist's career. It was written by Charles Esche

within a paragraph, I changed the text format and now they look like rules, I wanted to make a poster out of it:

How to Live Happily in the Art World

1. Turn on the charm.
2. Cultivate a sense of mission.
3. Know some subjects extraordinarily well.
4. Tell a good tale.
5. Show interest in the world around you and especially its media representations.
6. Oscillate widely between modesty and hubris.
7. Know where you come from and let on that you know where you are going.
8. Be tough but tender.
9. Question the given.
10. Doubt universalism but moderate the uniqueness of the local.
11. Promote your friends.
12. Listen to people you respect and be generous to your enemies.
13. Learn who's who in the art world but don't obsess about it publicly.
14. Enjoy being an artist.
15. Do what you want given the time, resources and your capacities.
16. Make work you like yourself, because if you are successful, you may be making it for quite some time.

EW: Actually I rather would write: “How to Live Happily”, because if you go to a dentist congress or whatever and you show this rules, probably wouldn’t work, you will have to change some words. I don’t know what do you think about this, but I’ve heard many times people saying, “I’m not a successful artist because I’m not a network artist and I’m really bad in presenting myself” I don’t believe in that, I think it is an excuse for being a bad artist, at the moment you decide to do network you are not networking. Networking should be an extension of your behavior, which is natural, and then express what you think is important, always tough but tender. People will think you are interesting because you are real, nice, you are open-minded and they will come back to you. Almost like Buddhism right?

People that are networking all the time will never be successful because we will notice that they are only networking. People are too smart to fall for networking; I mean if someone is constantly networking towards you, you will notice immediately. I believe that content and attitude is the way to be happy and perhaps a successful artist.

Charles Esche is not a cynical person and this is not a cynical text, but using these rules as an art work is on the edge to become a cynical artist and it will not help you, so I would rather get these 16 rules and say, “Ok, for the period of the exhibition I will live up to these 16 rules and we will see what’s going to happen to me”.

LC: To test whether the rules work.

EW: Yeah, don’t make any material work. Just try to follow the rules and figure out if you will become a better human or a better artist.

LC: I was really interested in this text and I want to do something different with it.

EW: I'm surprised that Charles Esche wrote this.

LC: Some tips may work, but others are very cynical.

EW: Especially the first one.

LC: 'Turn on the charm'.

EW: As if it's something you can turn 'on' and 'off', maybe for a short period you can, but in the long run you are charming or you are not charming. Also, to some people you are charming and to others you are not. The second rule is also problematic.

LC: 'Cultivate a sense of mission'.

EW: Everybody has a mission; you can set it aside or put it in the foreground, personal beliefs about what you could change in the world to make it better, or things like that. I constantly see artists, who are not saying anything interesting, but they do have a mission, it could be a simple mission. You as an artist have to be able to be pinpointed, it has to do with the kind of work you make, for example "Oh, yes, this artist always use red" or "Oh, yes, this artist always use vegetables".

LC: Do you think that an artist should do the same 'type' of work (like Lawrence Weiner for example) through his entire career? So that galleries and art institutions trust him/her.

EW: I must say that most of the artists are extremely boring because they always do the same trick, but from a professional point of view as well as for story tellers from museums, story tellers from art institutions and also from an economic point of view it is of course much better if you

always do the same, especially if you want to sell your work. Galleries will accept you and you will be able to sell works only if you are a stable person, they will go: “Well, this artist will deliver for the coming three years this kind of work and it will give us every year at least 10 pieces” etc., but if you start doubting about your work and you will change, probably the gallery will dump you, and if you don’t have a gallery it is more difficult to sell, this the cynical part of art. It’s also like sports, you have the public watching football games, but if you would change the rules every three games people will not look at the games anymore, they like it because they understand it and they don’t have to think about it, it’s a relaxing moment in their lives, you look at the tennis games and you say “ok, these are the rules and they will always be the same”. Such situation is very similar to how people look at art, like “it’s nice, it raises questions, but not too many questions, if it raises too many questions to think about, then I don’t have time anymore for my own life”.

LC: Especially nowadays, where everybody is in a rush for success.

EW: If you look at the Rembrandt times it was probably as it is now, if you were constantly changing your content it wouldn’t have worked. We have forgotten great artists because they made two paintings with one style, then two more in another style, then it’s like “hey, forget about it, it’s too complicated to pinpoint him”.

LC: Our exhibition with Art in Context will last two weeks, it will be here at the ground floor. I thought to show two works. One is the poster with the rules that I showed you

before, of course I am considering your advice. For the other I'm thinking about to bring inside the museum some workout equipment, like treadmills, exercise bikes, etc. Perhaps a metaphor about the situation of the Cobra Museum as a contemporary art institution, but it also has to do with the relation between art and sports.

EW: So you are looking outside the museum while you are walking or running in the same place on top of the machines.

LC: Yes, probably. I have been talking with curator Hilde de Bruijn about it, because of the space we will not be able to place too many machines, only two or three machines perhaps.

EW: Does it become sculptures by themselves? Because when you pass by walking in front of those gyms and look through those huge glass windows you see the machines like performative sculptures in constant movement somehow. But you need more than three machines!

LC: Once inside the museum they become sculptures, but they are functional, people can use them and workout.

EW: But it will not work, unless you organize the whole situation very carefully, I mean you can put the machines there, but nobody will use them. People do nothing. If you want to do this, you have to organize people to do workout for two weeks here, you have to talk with friends or people who go to gyms, and otherwise it will not work. Maybe one person will use it one minute and that's all, those few machines over here will be a cynical comment, but if you make a battalion of machines only on weekends, for example every Saturday and Sunday the situation will be more powerful,

but you have to make sure that it will be people working out on those machines. There was a show at the Rotterdam Kunsthal about one year ago and there were these treadmill machines, but facing famous paintings, it was a kind of experiment about how people look at paintings today. And how to connect what you want to do with the topic of PR?

LC: I thought about how the museum can offer an extra service?

EW: Create an extra service is really nice, but the service has to be credible and not so strange for people to do. For example, we have a library, but nobody uses it, you can make a library day, in the morning you take all the books downstairs and create a temporary library, maybe outside the museum where people can just read the books, and this is something more close to our corporate business. People are lazy and you have to come up with a service like a bicycle repair or something like that, people pass by, but never come inside the museum. A boot polisher or to pump up bicycle tires, I don't know. These ideas sound ridiculous, but we as a museum say, "ok, we understand that we are elite, but we want to show a good side, we want to help you, maybe you will start to look at us differently with this simple help". Where are the boot polishers? I love them, I always use this type of leather shoes, and it is something that is forgotten. The slow side of life, simple and quality service. If you create something that is really practical as a service, then I create press releases and stuff like that, I'll have a story to tell. For example, for this exhibition instead of going to the gym you can come to the museum, pay a lot

of money and also work out, that's not a story I can tell. We can talk more about it, but I have to stop now (laughs).

LC: Oh please, it's ok, really, thank you for your time. It's been an incredible conversation.

EW: My pleasure, I would like to get involved in your projects for the exhibition, perhaps with social networking or creating a buzz. Last year we didn't have any article and no visitor came for the Rietveld show, I think it was a failure. To me the museum is not a school class, you should use it as a professional platform and give your best to the public. The moment you are exhibiting is very appropriate because the Guggenheim collection show will be on display, there will be a thousand people every day and they don't want to see an exhibition of students, they like to discover interesting things, so you will have many possibilities.

LC: (Laughs) All right!

EW: Your coffee got cold.

Pathologization

Marie Vedel

Before the spring arrives to the northern parts of Europe, at this time of year, the winter seems endlessly prolonged. As many other Scandinavians, I've been lately feeling more tired than usual. I assumed it was because of the season, but my tiredness continued, and I started to search for possible symptoms of an illness, on the Internet. After reading about different obscure diseases, I coincidentally stumbled upon a test called the Goldberg's depression-test. The test measures your level of depression within the following intervals: 0-9, 10-17, 18-21, 22-35, 36-53, 54+. I got a 10 on the Goldberg-scale, which means: "It looks like you are suffering from very light depressive symptoms. A lot of these are common in the normal population. It is unclear if these problems are serious enough to seek treatment. Whether you are depressed or not, ask immediately help from your doctor. Tell your family or nearest friends as well, how you are feeling, so they can support and protect you from suicide, until you are healthy again".

The test indicates that I might not have a depression, but it simultaneously says that I'm not healthy. This is of cause an

internet-test and not an authorized doctor's diagnosis. Such a diagnosis I've had twice in my life, when I was 17 years old and again when I was 21. In both cases I was labeled with a 'moderate depression'. But now, as the winter slowly oozes away, and I compare my state of mind to the times I was moderately depressed, I don't feel like that at all.

In the days that followed the Goldberg-test, I started wondering what it means to be mentally healthy. I have always thought that happiness was only seizable as a momentary feeling, but if one can score a zero in the Goldberg-test, they probably really feel thoroughly happy. Are these happy people those whom read self-help books, or does 'mindfulness' wonders, I asked myself. I know that such spiritual offers are very popular and I started to ransack the Internet for information about the new providers of happiness. According to the market survey company Marketdate Enterprises, self help-offers turnover alone in USA increased from 5,7 billion dollars in 2000 to 11,57 billion dollars in 2012. They prosper from both popular and scientific interest in phenomenons as mindfulness, detox and yoga. And generally doctors and psychologists increasingly refer to mindfulness courses, literature and cd's, as ways towards living a happier life.

Though I certainly don't have a depression, I could, according to the test, get both happier and mentally healthier. But happier and healthier than when? Should I maybe read a self-help book or take a mindfulness course myself? Except from my tiredness, I didn't think I had a problem until I took the test, but since then, I can't stop considering my mental health.

Self Help, Mindfulness and Positive Psychology

The booming market for self-help literature is a new branch of the psychiatric direction: positive psychology. The concept originates from the notion, that especially clinical psychology has been focusing on psychological problems and illnesses, and thereby under-prioritized positive phenomenon as happiness, courage and strength. Its originator Martin Seligman became president of The American Psychological Associations in 1998. In his inauguration speech he wondered why the research in mental illnesses never really raised the question “how do I get happy?”.

Svend Brinkmann professor in Communication and Psychology at Aalborg University says: “It’s not a coincidence that this comes from the USA and not from the former Soviet Union. The time before and after the Second World War has been about the struggle between good and bad in both the individual and in society, it has been about being a free human being or the opposite. And in many ways positive psychology reflects the foundation for the Western world and our way of thinking: that you can do whatever you want to”. According to him positive psychology represents a consumer society’s wish to paint everything in a positive light — a bit like the advertisement industry.

The question “how do I get happy” is raised in Mindfulness. In this meditation form you thrive to learn to reach a presence of mind. Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhism, and can be viewed as a western appropriation of aspects of eastern philosophy. Mindfulness is concerned with the registration of what is in your mind, and accepting the present feelings. In many spiritual self-help books it is a generic idea that we are

born with an original core of energy. Through our upbringing we accustom to outward expectations and pressure, and in the end we no longer feel the core, and loose the power of controlling our own life. All negative feelings have their origin in this separation from the inner core: hate, mistrust, jalousie, anger. To find love, trust, tolerance and happiness you have to go back to the core. The self-help books introduce you to techniques, that can help you regress into yourself, and find the core again.

Today mindfulness is used in nearly every branch of society. In many companies it is introduced as a mean to fight stress. Courses in mindful-leadership are offered to help solving teamwork problems. A Danish professor in psychology, Peter Elsass, who has interviewed spiritual masters in Tibet and North India, gives the following perspective on mindfulness: “Many of them (the spiritual masters) have asked me if it is true that we in Western society meditate to relax and to control our thoughts to get rid of stress and depression” and he continues, “They meditate for others, they concentrate to care and to feel compassion for others, they claim it can be very stressful to meditate”. Peter Elssas’ point is that our interest in mindfulness has become an individual treatment project, where the participants have to define themselves as stressed and depressed to benefit from the course. According to Peter Elsass “mindfulness is creating the same problems as it is presenting itself as the solution to”.

Negative Feelings

One of the main problems with the new ‘prescriptions’ on happiness is the idea that happiness is a condition to be found within yourself. Many self-help books teach the reader to avoid exterior norms and ideas, and instead to look inwards to find salvation. Associate Dean of Communication at Aarhus University, Claus Holm, yields a historical perspective: “In the Antiquity they distinguished between four temperaments [...] If you had an overload of melancholy, you were pathologically heavy and sad. The cure for the pathological gloom was to reestablish the balance between the four bodily fluids, which followed the four temperaments. But the overload of melancholia could also be an expression, for the one who was in the possession of a highly estimated — artistic — temperament”. In contradiction to his perspective, the American Psychiatric Union’s diagnose manual 2013, DSM 5, says that depressive symptoms as sadness, lowered joy and increased tiredness are defined as pathological after only two weeks. In my opinion, to get a depression diagnosis after 14 days of lowered mood is wrong. The diagnosis can never explain why people are feeling what they do, but only describe the symptoms.

What Are the Consequences?

Self-help books and mindfulness profile themselves as having the recipe for ‘the happy life’. The ideas and prescriptions presented in these books have seen a massive commercial and psychiatric success. It seems that the common definition of happiness has altered during the last years, from a momentary

feeling to a general state of mind. The consequence of this alteration is that happiness becomes a matter of one's ability to achieve it, a matter of competence, and hence is creating a group of 'happiness-losers'. In trying to achieve a happy life, the negative feelings are viewed as wrong-beings: they are de-familiarized and diagnosed in a way that makes them inhuman. Sorrow, for instance, is the only appropriate reaction to experiences that hurt, but today one can find multiple offers that would help you overcome the feeling in order to find your tracks on the happy road. If you try to suppress negative feelings to live up to this norm it can, according to Sven Brinkmann, have the consequence that the negative feelings will respond in the shape of a depression, which was what you tried to avoid to begin with. This is the ironic dialectic of popularized positive psychology branches as mindfulness, that in a prescription of happiness they might actually hunt it away. To me, the distinction between depression and sorrow is very important: depression is a pathological term whereas sorrow is a specific human reaction. My point is not to estrange depression, on the contrary, it is to sharpen the distinction between negative feelings and illness. Instead of treating healthy people as patients we should acknowledge sorrow and other negative feelings as perfectly normal reactions.

The Western appropriation of eastern meditation is often misinterpreted, in that it understands happiness as an inner core of the individual into which one must regress. I believe that in the privileged Western world problems are primarily created in relation to other people and therefore have to be solved in relation to others. Maybe I would be a more effective employee at my work if I was happier, maybe I would be a

better friend if I never complained, maybe I would be a better citizen if I was notoriously satisfied. But on the other hand, it would take away both the critique and depth from my relations. I doubt I would be a better person if I was a zero on the Goldberg-scale.

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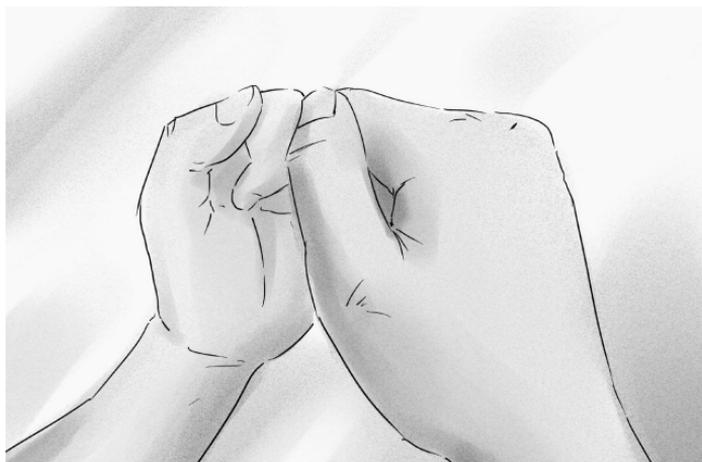
Public Relations as a Mirror, Transparency as a Veil

Thom de Jager

PR is an extension of things, the shell, husk and wrap around it. It is a medium, a language, like any other device that we use to express ourselves. The information that it renders might be true or false, but neither matters because it simply is. The way something looks or feels is relevant, for it is the surface with which we come in contact first. It defines why or how we are attracted to something. Perception leads to the forming of opinions, which is why so much effort is put into PR by all people or collectives that are dependent on how they are perceived by others — which makes ‘Public Relations’ such a relevant theme. No one is irreverent of his or her own radiance towards the external — it builds and is built on interaction.

Take e.g. Donald Draper, the protagonist of the *Mad Men* series, as an example. Draper creates identities for corporate firms, but — coming from an extremely poor family — he also created an identity for himself. Or rather, stole one from somebody else (during the Vietnam War, from another US soldier, who had died), for he wanted to start a new life. Draper realizes that PR reaches further than anything solely

commercial; PR is social — it is a politics or diplomacy. Which is why a world without PR is practically inconceivable. It addresses our emotions through something made up, being a mode of survival. It seems that Edward Bernays, the creator of the term ‘Public Relations’, did not exclusively invent something. The building blocks were already there, since it is in our way of life to persuade, glorify and degrade things, or people. Whether information is true or not becomes irrelevant. Rather we should look at how and why it is presented in this specific manner.



Mirror

First of all, where exactly does a PR practice end and where has it started? Or, where ends the skin and do the intestines start? It's difficult to tell. If we look e.g. at an Amsterdam based platform, label and magazine called *Subbacultcha*, things

automatically reach into the external. Attendants of the shows that are hosted by *Subbacultcha!* logically communicate behind the organizer's back, influencing each other's opinion. And, of course, PR not only lives on and inside the covers of the magazine, but also in the way the events are organized — the inside is the outside. To analyse their PR, we need to limit our understanding of PR to the capabilities of the subject itself: the PR is the relation of *Subbacultcha!* to their audience, as far as *Subbacultcha!* itself could influence this relationship. Analyzing the PR of one institution does not reveal what is relevant about this specific topic. We should look at the bigger picture. In our times these processes are not top-down anymore. Audiences are generally building the public relations, for the relational media are open to every single individual. PR went from being a monologue — advertising a product to the public — to a mirroring dialogue, where the public is advertising their desires or opinions in return. A collective like *Subbacultcha!* is under direct influence of its audience, communicating with them through social media. It is a horizontal relationship, a circle within a circle (hence, 'the outside is the inside').

Therefore it seems that the definition of PR is in a state of flux, more than it ever was. The outcome of any promotional action is, to an extent, more uncertain than before, because the communication is polyphonic. However, thanks to the relatively transparent design of social media, any institute can to a certain extent see the influence of their actions — the opinions being formed about it. So how to act as an institute now seems quite indefinite, but becomes clear along the way (no surveys are necessary anymore). What the people want

Subbacultcha! to be, regardless of what it by itself aspires to be, is what matters. Or, in the words of Donald Draper: “People tell you who they are, but we ignore it because we want them to be who we want them to be”.

In practice this also comes because the audience is quantitatively bigger and its opinions are made visible everywhere and are permanent, for everything on the Internet obeys *past + present = future*. Public perception plays an even bigger role in the image of any institute than the extent at which it could communicate itself.

The company or ‘author’ lost its autonomous agency, lost its privileged position in spreading information, which is partly due to the focus on the user and because of influences such as the transparency of the Internet. It seems public relations have become a complex concept, a grey, translucent area where information has become transparent and the audience is at least as powerful as any institute. The question remains, how to deal with information? Or, what to think of this idea of transparency?

Collective

In regard to the phenomenon of transparency, I have inquired into the repository, the storage space of the museum. The reason for this is the fact that here things are clearly being concealed. Most of the time only the staff knows which works of art are stored here and, more importantly, why. In the case of the Cobra Museum of Modern Art in Amstelveen, the works are ordered chronologically and alphabetically by name of the original owner, private or other.

When a work is exhibited there is no information concerning the financial background and the name of the owner is only mentioned if s/he wants to. There is a digital administrative system, which only the employees can look into. According to the curator, all works in the repository have been exhibited at least once in the existence of the museum, partly because it is a relatively small institution. The works circulate automatically, so there is no need to change this in-transparency — time fixes it. However, this strategy somewhat opposes the philosophy of the Cobra movement.

Their ideology contained a freedom of creation, so arguably there should also be a freedom to access the art left unseen. In contrast to this, the Kröller-Müller Museum has a few computers inside the building where visitors can request a work from the repository, the work with the most requests is exhibited the week after, revealing a certain democratic transparency. The Rijksmuseum applies a different way by using an online and high-quality database, which is accessible to everyone. Still, a lot of their works will never be exhibited, which denies the people a specific real-life, aesthetic experience.

A collective transparency is desirable, for in reality, the act of creation is a joint effort, overt to any viewer. In this perspective, the future public repository in the Rotterdam Museumpark and the Museum aan de Stroom in Antwerpen are interesting. Transparent repositories, where there exists hardly any distance between the works, the curators and the audience. This leads to the main question: is denying access to information desirable? And should any powerful collective have this capability? For any information leads to questions which, in turn, allow us to remain critical, or: "...in our era of

increasing knowledge intensity, no one's knowledge should be an island".



Veil

To look further into the concept of transparency, we have to analyze its implications. The term transparency is derived from Medieval Latin *transparentia*, meaning 'the condition of being able to see through'. At first, the term was purely attributed to natural phenomena, such as glass and fauna, but its use rose up in the 1990s in the field of business, where this 'condition' became appealing to certain parties. Because, if light is able to shine through, it creates an openness, stating 'I am visible and there is no barrier between you and me'. However, there is a relevant difference between transparency and openness, for (in time) a transparency implies an attribute,

an underlying stance towards the external, whereas an openness deals more with the isolated actions one undertakes.

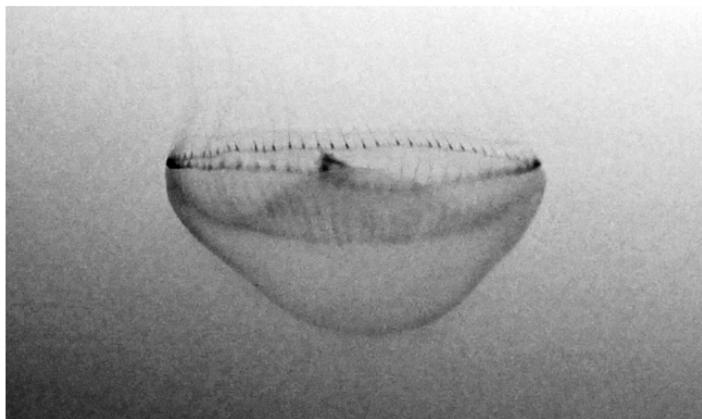
Furthermore, transparency tries to divert the attention, like fishing wire tries to obscure itself in favor of the function it fulfills. It is telling, not about the inherent transparency, but about the institute using such a tactic. It is not here because you can see through it. This desire to catch fish with something that tries to be invisible can become problematic, when the strategy to be transparent also becomes transparent itself.

How to evade this when most information becomes 'open-source'? Managing public relations in our time has become transparent a priori, which is again why the theme is very relevant. Many parties are in need of dealing with this in a credible way. That's when transparency is also utilized to suggest purity and innocence, to come across as being the opposite of a black box. Obviously this kind of transparency works as a veil. It is like using white or green colors in advertising or like a glass building that isn't publicly accessible, or certain parts of it only by the executive board.

Hierarchy is involved in transparency. Certain things are only visible to a given few: all information is transparent, but some is less transparent than other. But like I mentioned before, this hierarchy is interactive, it works both ways. Meaning, any action exerting influence on others is political and has political consequences.

According to French politician Michel Barnier: "transparency is the precursor of responsibility, because it leads to morality if one's actions are public". In other words, when you are being photographed you become more conscious of your behavior. Monitoring the NSA makes them aware of their

own monitor. We could argue that hierarchy has become far-
raginous, that the spy is now able to defeat the marshal. But,
does this mean that the public can also be held responsible for
their actions concerning PR? Is it problematic if an audience
destroys a company's image for invalid reasons? These are
important contemporary questions, that have to be taken into
account. Thus-far it appears that in a democratic society the
majority is often the one with the rights, whereas presumably
each case should be looked at from a moral perspective.



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The Dictatorship of Transparency Forms of Expression in an Information Era

Cécile Plouhinec

The 'Entartete Kunst' (Degenerate Art) exhibition in 1937 in Munich and the 'Salon des Refusés' (Salon of The Refused), in 1863 in Paris provide two historical situations in modern art which provide an interesting point of departure, bearing upon what 'Public Relations' has become today. So-called PR, before known as 'Propaganda', consists of the promotion (also self promotion) of values, desires, political thoughts and technological innovations. What PR promotes is not so much a view upon new conceptions or visions, but rather it elaborates the germination of desires in a society or specific group. Its efficiency settles on feelings that we are most of the time not aware of, such as fear, which increases the power of its strategy, in terms of acceptance of its demand.

What happened in 1937 for instance, is that in order to promote what is good art and what is bad art, two exhibitions were taking place in the same street. One was exhibiting

good art (realism, figurative art) and the other degenerate art (abstract art, impressionists, cubists, with artists such as Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Ernst Barlach, Georg Grosz). They were juxtaposed in order for the public to clearly see, feel for itself, and make a trivial distinction between good and bad art. And through that see what the values of the Nazi regime were.

There is an obvious relation to power and censorship in this historical example. Yet, power and censorship are still used in PR. It stays away from building communication in clearly translating the values of a brand, a state or an institution, while at the same time it shows that the subject is ready to be communicated when behind it lays control, censorship, and power.

The idea of transparency or 'trans-appearance' in architecture treats with the light around something which appears and disappears. We should ask ourselves, on a physical level, what does transparency mean? Still physicists are trying to determine if a photon has mass, and they'll continue until they find its mass. Through PR, what filters the initiation of communication? Isn't it spots of light on what is not longer part of what we see? Jean Nouvel, French architect, talks about the idea of transparency in architecture: "I'm going to do something that won't be seen, and I'm going to see everything through it. On the architectural level, it's nothing else than pornography".

The most trivial transparency as a vector of power, focusing on the elimination of secrets: the secrets of transparency against the dictatorship of transparency.

Getting back to the 1937 exhibition in Munich, the choice is trivial: things were presented here to be either black or white.

Values were created to be mass-media diffused (more specifically through the radio for the Nazi regime), and made easily manageable and usable by the population, its target audience. Nowadays, we are settled in a time where PR can be applied for our own self promotion, and it consists of — as Jean Baudrillard says talking with Jean Nouvel¹ : “[...] contrasting the interplays of the visible and the invisible against absolute visibility”. Glass and transparency convey also the idea of fragility, in the sense of a more living, more poignant reality, ever since banks started using glass for protection.

Previously transparency stood for an absolute kind of ideal. We could believe in the transparency of our social relationships or our relation to power. Now it's turning into a 'form of terror' according to Baudrillard. From this point, I find it necessary to develop the concept and use of communication in the human network (or humanity). When speaking, natural tones do not come out as in bird song and writing is not a natural gesture like the dance of bees, as states Vilém Flusser². Human communication relies on artistic techniques, on inventions, on tools and instruments, meaning: on symbols ordered into codes. After learning this code, we tend to forget its artificiality. I quote hereby a relevant question from Suzanne Bernhardt's essay *To Some Extent*³:

*What is nature, when do we perceive something as natural?
Nature does not speak, it does not use language and it does
not know it is named nature. It does not see itself. It just is.
We, for this fact of naming (signifying), invented nature.
And if we can invent nature, why not invent a PR?*

To reflect this idea, hereby a text taken from Oscar Wilde's *Intentions*⁴. During a conversation with a friend, Vivian, a dandy character, is asked to demonstrate that Nature and Life are an imitation of Art:

Where, if not from the Impressionists, do we get those wonderful brown fogs that come creeping down our streets, blurring the gas-lamps and changing the houses into monstrous shadows? To whom, if not to them and their master, do we owe the lovely silver mists that brood over our river, and turn to faint forms of fading grace curved bridge and swaying barge?

The extraordinary change that has taken place in the climate of London during the last ten years is entirely due to a particular school of Art. You smile. Consider the matter from a scientific or a metaphysical point of view, and you will find that I am right. For what is Nature?

Nature is no great mother who has borne us. She is our creation. It is in our brain that she quickens to life. Things are because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it, depends on the Arts that have influenced us. To look at a thing is very different from seeing a thing. One does not see anything until one sees its beauty. Then, and then only, does it come into existence. At present, people see fogs, not because there are fogs, but because poets and painters have taught them the mysterious loveliness of such effects. There may have been fogs for centuries in London. I dare say there were. But no one saw them, and so we do not know anything about them. They did not exist till Art had invented them.

Now, it must be admitted, fogs are carried to excess. They have become the mere mannerism of a clique, and the exaggerated realism of their method gives dull people bronchitis. Where the cultured

catch an effect, the uncultured catch cold. And so, let us be humane, and invite Art to turn her wonderful eyes elsewhere. She has done so already, indeed. That white quivering sunlight that one sees now in France, with its strange blotches of mauve, and its restless violet shadows, is her latest fancy, and, on the whole, Nature reproduces it quite admirably. Where she used to give us Corots and Daubignys, she gives us now exquisite Monets and entrancing Pissaros. Indeed there are moments, rare, it is true, but still to be observed from time to time, when Nature becomes absolutely modern. Of course she is not always to be relied upon. The fact is that she is in this unfortunate position.

Art creates an incomparable and unique effect, and, having done so, passes on to other things. Nature, upon the other hand, forgetting that imitation can be made the sincerest form of insult, keeps on repeating this effect until we all become absolutely wearied of it. Nobody of any real culture, for instance, ever talks nowadays about the beauty of a sunset. Sunsets are quite old-fashioned. They belong to the time when Turner was the last note in art. To admire them is a distinct sign of provincialism of temperament.

Through these lines, Wilde asserts that Nature is a creation of the human mind, and how the cultural (art, religion, philosophy, science) affects the natural, the Being ('Where the cultured catch an effect, the uncultured catch cold'). From this point, and considering what happened after 1937 in Europe, the catch of the Effect is a guarantee of authority in the field of the Being. The finalities for humankind are unpredictable, and the duration of its development is difficult to bring under control. Effects can be the rise of a new era, or *époque* ('La Terreur' in France 1792; 'La Belle Epoque'), which can appear

in different ways, through a specific rhythm and going back and forth in time, in Cycles.

When Vivian's friend says that Art expresses the temper of its age, the spirit of its time, the moral and social conditions that surround it, and under whose influence it is produced, Vivian rises up: "Certainly not! Art never expresses anything but itself!". In other words, the effects' catchers, artists, have a strong role in the evolution of the Being. Notwithstanding that they are often seen in a specific sphere, historical cases may give us warnings on how to communicate these effects to the Being.

An important parameter of the results of these effects on the Being seems to be settled in how the effect was communicated. In other words, the strategy in communication might aim at a direct and efficient result, but at the same time it generates repercussions in time and space. Looking back in history, we see how deeply the results of certain kinds of communication, propaganda and 'PR', affect and traumatize the Being, for multiple generations.

Returning to the context of the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition in 1937, which was meant to be an official and public event, the words 'official' and 'public' legitimizing a broad communication, which was an aim in itself, in order to spread new values and codes, ready to be used in real life. When Wilde's Vivian means Art to inspire Nature, this could be translated to the effect that events precede (or create a context for) communication ('things are because we see them').

Communication can take place because there are events that create, legitimize communication. If we look at the art field from the same perspective, why to use PR if we consider

and defend in our purpose that art itself is a form of communication? The aim may be the communication itself. Human communication seems to be an attempt to deny nature, in the sense that we tend to spin a veil around us made from science and art, religion and philosophy, so that we forget our solitude and death, including the death of others. Man is a political animal (or 'zoon politikon', according to Aristotle) and communicates with others not because he is a social animal, but because he is a solitary animal who cannot live in solitude.

Strategy comes overruling the use of PR and our fascination for transparency. Etymologically, strategy comes from the Greek words 'stratos' (army) and 'agein' (to lead). Strategy as for a military commander, leading an army, or more broadly a 'skillful and prudent handling of affairs in a unarmed battle — political', as states Igor Zabel⁵. We can notice a correlation with the actual post cold war situation, inescapable from diplomatic relationships between states, or corporations, due to the handling of nuclear weapons with many countries (we can ask ourselves about the impact of technology in democratic policy). Stepping into the field of art, Zabel writes that "art as such can only realize itself in relation to an audience and it is precisely in the act of defining this relationship that we inevitably encounter a kind of a global strategy idea... exhibition strategy is a global concept, a sensible collection of procedures and approaches aimed at ensuring that the work will be seen in the right light by the right viewer".

In other words, the relation to the audience, the definition of the attitude to be adopted by the artist comes beforehand, in order to be able to develop a work, and the development of the work will define more precisely and clearly this attitude

towards and aimed at the audience, and not only for the artist. The work's aim is to make visible and clear what its position is, while the clarification of this position is a proof of success of its communication.

Notes

1. Jean Nouvel and Jean Baudrillard's talk in *Urban Passages*, 1998.
2. Vilém Flusser: *What is communication?*, 1973.
3. Suzanne Bernhardt: *To Some Extent, in Art in Context — Public Relations*, 2014.
4. Oscar Wilde: *Intentions*, 1891.
5. Igor Zabel in: *Theories of Display; The World of Art: Curatorial Course for the Contemporary Arts*, 1998.

To Some Extent

Suzanne Bernhardt

The whole point of our language, our speaking, is to characterize something other than the speech itself. We speak about something. We seek to elucidate an aspect of the world. To the extent the meaning of our scientific descriptions is not at the same time the meaning of the world, the descriptions fail as science. As scientists we are always trying to speak faithfully the language of nature.

— Steve Talbott¹

Nature does not speak, it does not use language and it does not know it is named nature. It does not see itself. It just is. We, for this fact of naming or signifying, invented nature. We have become dependent on information and patterns in our perception to interpret and conceptualize the world. Language as carrier. Voice as medium. It is in our nature to use our voice and it is in our culture to do this through language. Language makes (read: we make) a distinction between culture and nature, while different cultures deal with the depiction of this distinction differently. Belonging to a culture means belonging to a group, to a social system, or social reality. This social reality depicts a particular way of dealing with

the physical reality, the environment. And the environment influences how the social reality is built up. In an exchange of information that doesn't require language. Surviving and reproduction requires the ability to change or adapt to an environment, may it be social of physical — the will to live.

Expectation Dictionary

Nature	Perceiving action, reacting upon.
Culture	Perceiving nature, acting upon, receiving a reaction and influencing it.
PR	Perceiving culture, acting upon, receiving a reaction and influencing it.

Culture comes with its cultural identity. Within existing individual identities and consisting of individual characteristics (Figure 1). We, as speaking human beings, learn to express ourselves through language, choosing the words that fit our character. But to what extent can language express what you stand for? And to what extent do you force yourself to speak along? And to what extends an A4 sized sheet of paper? As I'm writing this text I am combining notes, research material from books, conversations and undeniably the Internet. I'm writing and looking how the words are filling this page, different than on paper with a pen. Fitting more words on one page, according to my handwritings and being able to correct ~~mistakes~~ without anyone ever knowing. Although it looks like a piece of paper, formatted in 100%, it is illuminated white pixels. How much are we dependent on systems and formats? How much of this language is a dogma? It is chosen

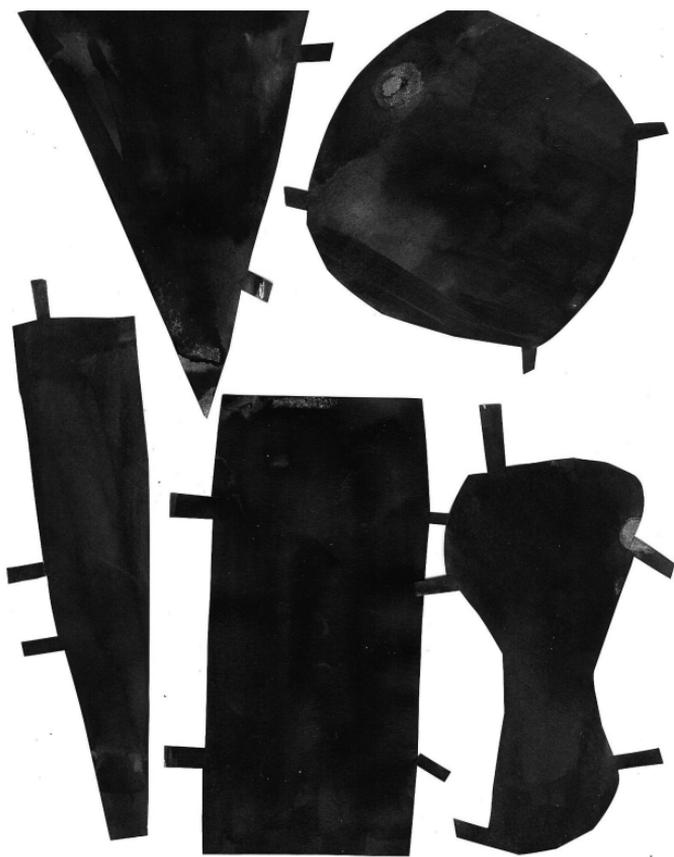


Figure 1.

Study for identity – individual characteristics by which a person is recognized.



Figure 2.

Study for identity — from pure form to identity.

for you, you are born into it and you have no choice. To some extent I am part of this system, to some extent I intend to be part of this system and to some extent I want to think about my intention to some extent wanting to be part of this system.

Does individuality exist or do we turn out being identical using a ready-made system? (Figure 2) Individuality is the result of self-realization. Once one is able to recognize one's own position in a social context, one is able to recognize others' positions. Understanding individuality means understanding the importance of being part of a group. Our dependence on universal systems and patterns gives new meaning to individuality and identity.

The Internet swallowed the personal approach of communication. Though it might provide us with options to express ourselves, the indirect exchange of information becomes an exchange of formatted signals.

Taking these formats for granted, because they provide us with convenience, results in an impersonal message. We attach importance to individuality, although we are unable to recognize impersonality. This plays not just between individuals. A corporation, firm or business needs a corporate identity to embed itself in the minds of a selected audience. This act we've named: PR or public relations. Its logic implies that a group of people can be seen as one identity. Being part of that group — do you want to be part, do you have a choice?

What is nature and when do we perceive something as being natural? What does nature — the non-human physical world surrounding us — expect from us? If nature expects anything at all.

Whereas PR expects us to go into action — receiving information and acting upon it, may it be social or physical, usually both — nature is without expectations. Or one could say that it expects only the natural, the effortless action, the non-intention, the non-doing, just a breath — shaped into a form of reproduction, surviving and repetition. PR is opportunistic. It uses our human ability, which is in our nature, to adapt to change in a social or physical context. It creates change and expects adaptation. It uses nature to force us into a (re-)action and uses culture to force us into change. The weakness of our ego allowing, our ego that makes us human and makes us part of one another. Our ego, that needs to be alone together. To some extent.

Notes

1. 'The Language of Nature', in *The New Atlantis*, number 15, (2007): <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-language-of-nature>.

The Cavefish

Jorik Galama

The walls of the boarding room were light green with posters of frogs every two meters. Except for the rearmost which was kept white so it could be used as a projection screen. The few armchairs in the boarding room were taken, two people were late and had to take a tip-up seat from the corridor. One person took the task of filling paper cups with coffee and tea. The cups were consistently passed to the left.

When the first cup made a full circle and was handed to the person who had filled it, the meeting was opened by the head of the environmental organization ASEW.

“Dear staff, good to see so many have come” said Sara while she rose. Her dress had crept up a little and made a folded crescent on her belly, she started moistening her lips, but tasted lipstick and drew her tongue back in.

“Today we have gathered to discuss our upcoming campaign for the Alabama Cavefish. Martha, you know you have to make notes today?”

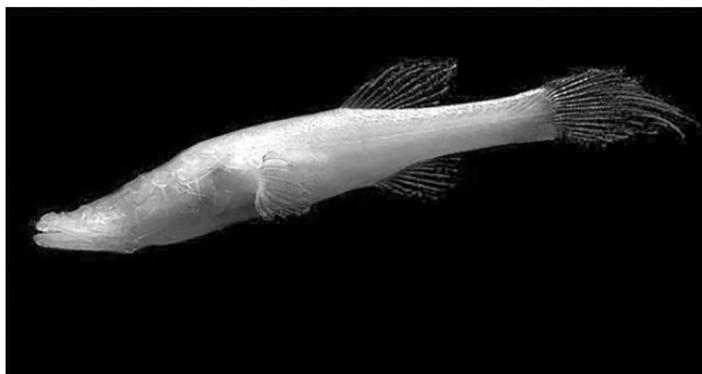
“Sorry my laptop didn’t respond, okay it works”.

“Good, you can leave the first sentence. This fish who also listens to the name *Speoplatyrhinus poulsoni* is on the brink of

extinction. It is only known to be found in the underground pools of Key Cave in northwestern Alabama, it is the rarest American cavefish and one of the rarest of all freshwater fish. Only nine specimens have been observed and approximately less than 100 are left on the planet.

Here is a picture of it, can somebody turn off the lights? Well have a look. As you can see its color is transparent white, with a red spot where its heart is located”.

The room was dark with only the fish radiating softly. Most of the attendees looked wonderingly, like they had discovered the fish themselves and were about to scream their self referential names for the fish.



“The fragility of the fish is caused by its diet, it only lives of the Guano of Gray Bats. The goal of the campaign will be simple, we should raise enough money to buy the cave and its surroundings, make the terrain inaccessible to humans and hire full time security. So what are your ideas on this?”

Sara sat down and put her hands flat on her knees.

“Well, Sara thanks for your introduction, I think that we are together in our aims to save all species from extinction,” said Tristan while opening his brown leather agenda.

“Yeah I think Tristan is right,” said Ethan, quickly finishing his cup of coffee with one gulp. “I mean, the fact that a species is about to extinct forever is horrible, we ourselves and other environmentalist will support all actions to protect endangered flora and fauna, but what will the public think? To what extent will people feel connected to this fish? None of them has probably heard of it”.

“That’s exactly the reason why we should start this campaign,” said Sara while putting her left hand on the table.

“You only want to inform them about it’s existence?”

“Inter alia, but more importantly, the threatening end of his existence”.

“I understand, but what I’m pointing at, how are we going to make people enthusiastic about it, I mean it’s rarely seen, isn’t very photogenic, to put it differently, what meaning does this fish have to us?”

“I don’t know if I have to respond to this, the meaning of this fish” said Sara while putting her right hand on the table.

Ethan’s face turned a darker shade of red. “Okay that sounded odd, I mean it pragmatic, of course the fact that this fish is nearly extinct will be enough reason for some people to support our action, but let us recall the WWF campaign for panda’s. I mean it’s quite similar, panda’s were nearly extinct.”

“Yeah, but still a dozen live in zoos” said Martha, the secretary, who would normally only ask a question about the planning at the end of meetings.

“But most of them don’t reproduce” replied Sara while not looking in Martha’s direction.

“I know, I know, but what the WWF did was picturing panda’s as cuddly animals, they worked well as toys etc. everybody likes fluffy animals. But how do we turn this animal into something relatable, how are we gonna give it a reputation that sells”.

“Well, it lives hidden and solitary?” said Sara while folding her hands.

“Hidden... Who lives hidden?” said Marilou the treasurer who said uncomfortably in her tip-up seat.

All attendees looked at the ceiling or their cups, Ethan visibly wanted to reply directly, but felt he had to soothe a little. The silence made obvious everybody thought about relatives or themselves, how they were functioning. Then Marilou started with a lisping “Eeeeeuhm” a “Eeeeeuhm” of which someone once said it showed her character. “Well of course elderly people, depressed people trapped in bed, night workers, computer programmers, night porters, albino’s”.

“Precisely, millions of people live hidden” said Ethan with tremendous force.

“And alle people have their solitary moments” Sara replied.

“Exactly, were getting at something, let’s drop some slogans”.

“There is a cavefish in all of us” said Alphons, the only schooled biologist.

“Do you want to be... Wait, let me look up this Burroughs quote” said Mark, head of human resources. “Here it is: Most of the trouble in the world has been caused by ten to twenty percent of folks who can’t mind their own business, because

they have no business of their own to mind, any more than a smallpox virus”.

“I don’t really get it, I mean are people really trying to diminish those fishes? Let’s not get of topic with shifty poets”.

“Yeah let’s stay with plans for the campaign” said Sara while affirmatively nodding towards Ethan.

“Yeah before we end up with a discussion about platonic cave fishes” said Tristan, softly chuckling, while immediately returning to his agenda.

“So what about presenting this fish as a loner, that likes to be lonely? Connecting being okay with being lonely, with independence. Maybe we can phrase it this way, the Alabama Cavefish is on his own and likes it that way, will you make sure he stays alone?” said Ethan while scanning all faces one by one.

“Were getting at something, lets have a small break. Martha could you send a small introduction of this proposal to the PR-company we are hiring?”

Months later it was reported worldwide that yet another species had gone extinct, the Alabama Cavefish. Hundreds of individuals made a pilgrimage to the Key Cave in Alabama. To sit solitary near the pools where the Cavefish was supposed to live, thereby dislodging the Gray Bats who supplied the Cavefishes food. After a few weeks a little less than hundred Cavefishes floated on the surfaces of the pools. A person who stayed in the caves for several weeks emotionally declared to the press “no one wants to be alone, its a filthy lie that the fishes wanted to be alone”.

Why PR?

Ivana Filip

Art has been propagandistic since the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. These kings designed their pyramids to project a feeling of power and durability. Similarly, the architecture of the Romans served a political purpose — the glorification of the state. [...] Whether the propaganda content of art reduces its esthetic value is a matter for art historians to debate. The value of art in propaganda is another story; the visual image can help to make abstract political ideas understandable.¹

Following above mentioned, I would like to explore the multiple perspectives of the museum's relations toward its public, allowing myself to ask questions without necessarily making conclusions.

Thinking about the two main words — 'public' and 'relation', those two define the relation of the museum and its public in good faith, with many further attributes: honest, respectful, informative, proper. The following text² describes it more detailed:

1. Trust: An organization doing what it says it will do.
2. Openness: Sharing the organization's plans for the future with public members.
3. Involvement: The organization being involved in the welfare of the community.
4. Investment: The organization investing in the welfare of the community.
5. Commitment: The organization being committed to the welfare of the community.

Is it true that PR always sells something? If we consider trade as an exchange of goods but also of non-material benefits, it can also give, share, and not just sell. I am rather interested in a utopian version of this exchange. The main law of economics is the law of supply and demand but the law of diminishing marginal utility, closely related, could be easily connected with a utility of museums. Utility is defined as an ability of a good or service to satisfy some need or desire we have.

Total utility would be the aggregate level of satisfaction or fulfillment that a consumer receives through the consumption of a specific good or service. Each individual unit of a good or service has its own marginal utility, and the total utility is simply the sum of all the marginal utilities of the individual units.

'Marginal utility' measures the extra utility (or satisfaction) from consuming an additional unit of a product. The law of diminishing marginal utility operates in a way that total utility increases at a diminishing rate. When marginal utility is zero this means there is no increase in total satisfaction from the

consumption of that unit (e.g. the 6th unit). It is possible that you can over-consume some items in which case the marginal utility might be negative (from the 7th unit and up) and total utility would then fall.

If you are lost in the desert and very thirsty, water has an enormous value for you. The first possible glass of water has such high value that you would give or pay whatever it takes, but the second glass should be cheaper, the third even cheaper than the second and so on, right? That means, every further glass of water you could drink you actually do not need. Further to this — in the age of enormous production, where we are still focused on growth, is it the time to focus on a vertical (but silently alert) point — that of quality? We produce much more than we spend, still there is no country without public debt. Public? Who is in charge of that one? It is named 'public' so that it seems to be a responsibility of all of us.

It is hard, for me, to think about PR as some autonomous separate entity. I would like to consider it as a being part of ourselves, the one that is the communicator in good faith, in relation to the other — animal, person, institution, element. It is the way you are, in respect to the other, the way of moving out from yourself to the other self, the connection between those two.

Irrespective of the 'avant-garde' or 'conservative', 'rightist' of 'leftist' stance that a museum might take, it is, among other things, a carrier of socio-political connotations. By the very structure of its existence, it is a political institution. [...] The policies of the publicly financed institutions are obviously subject to the approval of the supervising governmental agency. In turn, privately funded institutions

*naturally reflect the predilections and interests of their supporters. [...] 'Artists' as much as their supporters and their enemies, no matter of what ideological coloration, are unwitting partners in the art-syndrome and relate to each other dialectically. They participate jointly in the maintenance and/or development of the ideological make-up of their society. They work within the frame, set the frame and are being framed.*³

*The result can be an absurd situation in which the commissioning institution (the museum or gallery) turns to an artist as a person who has the legitimacy to point out the contradictions and irregularities of which they themselves disapprove.*⁴

*In itself the term Institutional Critique is a paradoxical construction as it suggests a critique of an institution that is itself institutional — a critique not simply addressed to institutions and critical of them, but also a critique of an institutional nature, so to speak. The double scene of this critique reminds us of two things — of the deep entanglement between artists and institutions and of the degrees to which institutions have determined the shape or directions of works especially made for or about them. One could go so far as to say that they showed artists the way.*⁵

According to Chris Dercon, the Director of Tate Modern: "The museum of the future is going to be like a university, like a campus, where the art is one thing, but the fact that you have so many different encounters and that you can test your own ideas out, that you can throw your own questions out about gender, identity, about the worlds, salaries.

And a museum is ultimately a much more representative, democratic society, it's a real form of democracy, even more democratic than the way we are represented by politicians. I mean, do we still feel represented by politicians? By bankers? By insurers? By property owners? Probably not. We have to learn to represent ourselves. Self-governance. We have to learn how to make decisions for ourselves. And a museum can teach that, can offer possibilities. I call them probabilities. And that's what a museum is going to be in the future"⁶.

He continues: "And this space should be a place for freedom, for different forms of usage. [...] Because, you know what? We cannot keep encountering people by all these machines. We have to meet people in a real way. And there should be no taboos".

Maybe that's my role, to speak about this? Maybe that is the role of all of us? Artists and museums together? But how to achieve such, if the answer is 'yes'? There should be no taboos when saying that we cannot any longer continue with the same missions and programs that museums had in 'history', to offer knowledge or entertainment or it is time to reposition their role. Is it possible to take Dercon's statement as a general rule? I don't think so, as there is always an exception possible, and a flexibility necessary, according to one's own specific quality.

Focusing onto above statements, one of the possible candidates for a new approach is the Cobra Museum in Amstelveen. The attitude of the Cobra movement after which the museum was named, was freedom, spontaneity, an experimental attitude. The artists were in search for new paths of expressions, a new society and new art. When members began to receive

individual acclaim the group lost its initial impetus and dissolved.

The Cobra museum PR manager in charge, Eric Wie, confirms that their main audience consists of women over 55, but their PR campaign is not just focused on that group. He admits that there were just a few female artists in the Cobra movement, while in the end none of them were accepted as an official member. The museum staff, interestingly enough, consists mostly of women, just like its main audience, but younger generations. The PR campaign is dispersed and actually they would really love to get a younger audience, at least 10 years younger, into the museum, because it is much sexier to work for them. A younger audience would bring more vitality into the museum and revitalize the spirit of the Cobra movement. More contemporary exhibitions however would not result in a larger or a younger public, is the museum's conviction. It seems necessary to keep the existing audience but also attract a fresh one. The museum has limited financial resources, so it aims at being very tactical and smart about its selection of exhibitions, satisfying the needs of all players in the game. Yet they do not want to cross the border of playing it 'safe'. A new idea realized, just recently, is to set up a restaurant in the middle of the museum, which seems to work very well.

Is it possible for one museum to have several identities? As one person plays several roles in daily live, I think more diversity is applicable to the nature of a museum as well. Meanwhile staying true to its essence should bring more truthfulness to its relations.

One can ask, what else is needed in this respect to attract a new user — as I can see just numbers, talking about PR. Is it time for museums to start getting other museums in their viewing field as a source for possible collaboration? How can they help, share, influence, exchange, progress, amplify their own specific know-how but in relation to each other? Don't we define ourselves also in relation to the other? Indeed museums do so as well, but it seems there is a strong lack of communication between them. Everyone wants a piece of the cake, (which is logical economical market *modus operandi*) but what interests me is the missing link. Stop comparing and start sharing! Be open to new ideas, whether it is a playground in the museum, a restaurant, swimming pool or a library but a new vision is absolutely necessary. Add a bit more creativity, openness and interaction — within certain limits and with possible exclusions, as every museum should know what its core mission is.

According to scientist Gregg Braden, the minimum number of people required to 'jump-start' a change in consciousness is the square root of 1% of a population⁷. In a time when everyone is concerned with growth, while I am skeptical that this would be further possible in a sustainable way, it might just so happen that we should wisely decide to get closer to each other in a horizontal silence, watching each other closely; lower, higher, still being alert and present.

Notes

1. Gary Yanker: *Prop Art*, London: Darien House, Inc. 1972.
2. Mary P. Schoen B.S., Louisiana State University, 2003 December 2005, Ledingham, J. A., & Bruning, S. D., 'Relationship management and public relations: Dimensions of an organization-public relationship', *Public Relations Review* 24, 1998, pp. 55-65.
3. Hans Haacke: *All the 'Art' That's Fit to Show*, in Hans Haacke, London: Phaidon Press, 1974), pp. 104-105 1.
4. Isabelle Graw: 'Field Work', in *Flash Art* (Nov-Dec 1990), 137 2.
5. Isabelle Graw: *Beyond Institutional Critique*, in *Institutional Critique*.
6. Goethe-Institute: www.goethe.de/london.
7. <http://www.greggbraden.com>.

Such as Viaducts and Tunnels

Cleo Florine

Introducing PR as essentially, a system of linking one image or idea to the next. It is an associative system, that hooks into the chain of associations we automatically or subconsciously connect to the subjects/objects of our fascination. At this moment, thousands of minds are working to create new methods of associating or relating.

They have been doing so, in the context of PR, for almost a century. Present, and ever-developing networking technology allows access to innumerable images, the combination of which is exponential. The chain of associations becomes an ever-changing, transformative complex.

+ Association –

– Association +

+ Association – Subject

+ Association –

Object – Association +

+ Association –

– Association +

Introducing a chain of associations with words from my subconscious & further words by John Cage's *On Experimental Music, Silence, Lectures and Writings* (1939-1968) plus fragments from Walter Gropius' manifesto *What is architecture* (1919), words/fragments from the Rietveld Academie philosophy, and words of architect Wim Quist concerning the construction of the Cobra Museum of Modern Art. Words as images in the associative web of your unconscious mind.

such as viaducts and tunnels

don't mean just houses but every
imaginable type of building and structure
spun off from the way the human dwelling is organized
(scene 1) *human dwelling* *behaviour*
and *as*
the museum as a *a form of* *human dwelling*

Slowly- *and that was how* *they carried her* *into the*
museum **There is no such thing as an empty space**
or an empty time. *They were inside.*

In fact, try as **we may to make a silence,** **we cannot.**
For a moment, *the only sound* *the creak of the*
revolving door. **There is always something to see,**
something to hear. *Wind bristling against glass.*

For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds:
those that are **notated** **and those are not**

Arising in his ear, *sound like clockwork.*
Her movements, as she strode placidly towards him,
rhythmic places *quietly* *covering the grounds*
of the museum *sure steps* *on frozen marble*
Those that are not notated appear in the **written music as**
silences, **opening the doors** **of the music to the sounds**
that happen to be **in the environment**
An arm dangling from the *stretcher* *Soft, round*
fingernails *trailing the floor,*
leaving invisible marks.
"She will have to stay here tonight", *he said,*

a hunched figure caught in the reflection of a mirror

This openness exists in the fields of modern

(*scene 2*) and architecture.

'All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.'

And while looking at the constructions in wire of the

it is inevitable that one will see other things, and people too, if they happen to be there at the same time, through the network of wires.

The glass houses reflect their environment, presenting to the eye images of clouds, trees, or grass, according to the situation

Remarkably, he once worked in the same practice as two of the others, a total institution the professors lived in new houses built by the director himself.

Kandinsky shared on with Paul Klee (1879–1940)

sculpture

All our works are nothing but splinters

sculptor

Richard Lippold,

For there is no 'Professional art'

Mies van der Rohe

Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.

The Bauhaus according to Gropius

a daunting pairing.

Public Relations Use the Following Tools Please

Ken Rooney

Abstract

In his conclusion to *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, Niall Ferguson construes civilizations as being highly complex systems. Yet, as with all highly complex systems these manage to fall and enter a new cycle: “But there comes a moment when they ‘go critical’. A slight perturbation can set off a ‘phase transition’ from a benign equilibrium to a crisis – a single grain of sand causes an apparently stable sandcastle to fall in on itself”¹. With this in mind, and the art world as a system of public relations, filled with confidence, egos, sales pitches, lets try to investigate this postulate it a little bit more, and perhaps take out some of it’s public relations magic, let it collapse. Then rebuild.

Double Double Toil and Trouble, Fires Burn and Cauldrons Bubble

Bubbles burst, whether it's a floating vessel for economy, property, or dotcom — ascending far above our earthly bound minds. Has there been a cultural bubble bursting, where we lose feeling for what our culture means to us, where it no longer holds a market value? Will our culture reach a point where money isn't a pre-requisite for the art world to exist? When will they separate, or has this already happened. When we reflect internally, would we be aghast at how ugly our innards appear, yet contemplate how sublime it is to hold them in our hands. If we can sell our shit as art, is there a true reflection, as if we've just had a face transplant and stare in the mirror.

So then is there a price we can place on our reflection, knowing that a billion people survive on one dollar a day², and 1 billion US dollars is invested every year to address poverty, yet in 2013 alone, 65 billion dollars was spent on the global art market³. Which brings this market back to its pre-recession level and certainly for a percentage of people this is a cause for celebration. Within this trumpet blowing of an entry into yet another successful selling year, where do artists stand, or where are they stranded, between a driven market, where money is power, and a history where retaining power has involved a vital relationship with the public.

For many artists and institutions reputation and power are indebted to each other. They revolve, maintaining momentum and connection with society. There has been a heightened impression of the artists as imposing a role upon themselves in society. Being a group which causes a lot of damage to their

own image, this is perhaps an exercise in failed public relations. Although do artists need public relations, if an artists role is presupposed by society? Especially in a geographical sense, where they want to live and set up studio. Being an artist is seen as a tool of gentrification by some, and an annoyance by others (in terms of funding). In relation to location, and highly expensive real-estate markets, such as New York, there's always an area where the artist is in limbo, where "artists out-price low-income families before they, themselves, are displaced by yuppies, chain stores, and anyone else who can afford higher rents"⁴.

In any society however there is a need for art to act as a tourist cultural draw, or to get people to raise their heads and ask as many questions as possible within a certain context.

So is location important: where do you get educated, where do you exhibit, where is your studio where is your audience? Wherever these places are, money, power and cultural policy anyway join forces. In the last decade, the value of culture has gained an ever increasing awareness from people whom understand how it works as a capital income. This is evident, now as in recent decades, in cities where museums have popped up, or experienced vast renovations. Such as the Pompidou in Paris or the recent build of the Stedelijk and the Rijksmuseum, "Inspired by the success of that cultural centre, many European cities engaged in the construction of new museums and the expansion of existing ones"⁵. A prime example being the success of Frank Gehry and the 'Guggenheimization' of new builds: a staple diet for any culturally starved city looking for a new tourist attraction.

With the importance of location (or the property sandwich artists find themselves in), there has to be an understanding of why museums are sometimes located in suburban shopping malls, or a train journey to the outskirts of a Copenhagenized area. Take for example the Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum, which houses one of the Rothko Chapels for the Seagram Murals. Surrounded by a 300 hectare park, the museum is part of the DIC corporation, set up by DIC ex-CEO Katsui Kawamura. With one of the recent measured successes of the museum is its social contribution to improving the image of the DIC Corporation. So art has led a roll as an indirect cleansing tool in the public relations for a Japanese chemical manufacturer⁶. Is this a relationship of art, location, and public relations being intertwined, or public relations combining money, power and cultural policy?

Similarly, power and funding money is used to clean an image. A trend in Europe for indirect government funding is through national lottery (paid through a government agency) such as the Kansspelautoriteit (KSA) ('gambling authority') in the Netherlands. With some institutes laying claim to being non-publicly funded hiding behind a sponsorship badge. Yet the majority of people are aware of this, as the core function of a lottery is its relationship with money as power. "In the Middle Ages, for example, lotteries were run to raise funds for orphanages or for victims of the Plague. Nowadays, most lotteries are organized by the state to collect money for the state treasury"⁷. In modern times, with the plague eradicated, lotteries exist to serve new beneficiaries.

Upon a closer look, all lotteries pay a license for the privilege to sell people 'scraps of hope in receiving a financial windfall'.

In 2008 a number of EU countries lottery groups joined to form an association; the Association of Charity Lotteries in the EU (ACLEU). One of the main concerns for the ACLEU is the debate in Europe on a strong perception of members seeing the negative side of gambling. Addiction being the main concern, where the association believes long-term funding to charities is of the utmost importance, and how to communicate a positive relationship between public gambling and lotteries: “Unfortunately, the national and European debates on gambling are generally focusing on the negative sides of gambling such as gambling addiction, fraud and money laundering”⁸. So this becomes a public relations exercise in how to clean money from people’s addictions, and send it through an association which pays the government a licensing fee, whom are then obliged to contribute a percentage of profit winnings to a ‘good cause’.

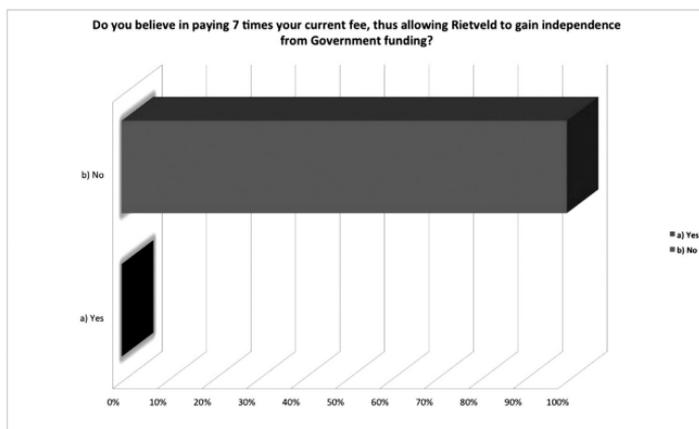
How do relations form with power and money? Are people born into power or do they work hard to maintain a hold? The Medici family, historically, are one of the most powerful families in our history books. They were patron to the arts, produced four popes and two regent queens of France. They also ran a family business in textiles and banks. Yet their achievements were through relations with the elite. They had something to sell, be it their financial services or their children to marriages. Combining these private relations indirectly maintained their public relations. Although public relations is to maintain a constant positive image in society, the use of reports assists in releasing information and communicating to stakeholders and investors. The Medici House maintained a ledger system which hasn’t changed significantly to a modern

financial report. Except now we have stock photos of smiley happy people pointing at unbranded laptops, or pretending to be somehow involved in painting a landscape.

When looking at financial annual reports such as Cobra Museum's 'Definitieve jaarrekening 2012' and the Bank-Giro Loterij's, it is visible that the Cobra Museum receives earmarked funding from this Dutch lottery. This is another method of indirect contributions, where lotteries registered in a country raise funds for a charitable organization. In 2012 Cobra Museum received 200,000 euros funding from Bank-Giro Loterij⁹. An amount which is put to good use, in terms of both adding new pieces to the permanent collection and the restoration of current Cobra works. Although this type of funding brings needed assistance, it also brings an art institute into the fold as a charity (among the list of beneficiaries of lottery money is War Child, and Unicef). So would funding be put to better use in a charity which directly assists people in need, instead of filling a museums warehouse with works of art or paying highly for culturally educated staff. Although on the other-side of this sits the cultural heritage maintained and saved for society, which is a priceless service.

Is it the point and part of an image and public relations in any organization, that art institutes have been so used to state funding; they find it difficult to adapt to new ways and sources, and the idea of corporate funding can appear daunting to an art institute, as corporations often restructure and change. Yet it would be hardly seen as laudable to hand over the keys of our cultural heritage to a private conglomerate, such as the Detroit Museum fate due to the City of Detroit's bankruptcy.

In April 2014, three of the Netherlands big lotteries (The National Postcode Lottery, Bank-Giro Lottery and the Friends Lottery) applied to cut their contributions from 50% to 40%¹⁰. Which would reduce the flexibility of art institutes in terms of promoting, presenting and expanding. Also within the 2012 Cobra Museum financial report is the various grants and rent supplements received from local Councils. Similar to the Kawamura Museum and it's status, location is important, it gives an art institution power to survive, and indirect funding gives an opportunity to relate themselves to society as a good cause.



A report can be a voice, in a conference call, on a desk, a form of communication to many factions of society: investors, regulators. Reports are not that dissimilar to coding — both are a basis of language, one for machines another for investors. Although in the wake of crashes and scandals, reports are something we as society should all be able to read and

question. Or would the graphics and layout immediately put us off? Financial statements, as statements of power and money, have developed considerably from the times of large national family banks, such as the Medici family's, whom held great economy to the point where they could buy a monarchy and put themselves in charge. Or another example of financial organization yielding political power: "The Dutch Republic prevailed over the Habsburg Empire because having the world's first modern stock market was financially preferable to having the world's biggest silver mine"¹¹. Can annual reports be scrutinized by anyone or should we bother with them at all? Would it make us question the public relations of an institute, whom is doing good by collecting and maintain aspects of our culture, both a public and private relationship?

Can art survive without money, if a people roamed the streets with clipboards and stickers, stopping pedestrians and convincing them to place money in an institute which wants to buy a painting, would there be preference to donate the money to a donkey sanctuary? Perhaps our perceptions of museums as fine-pristine-look-what-we-do-for-you are glowing examples of our governing institutes.

As part of society's cultural heritage, the people should be allowed to decide what goes where. There should be mass meetings, where people come together in a festival of financial reporting, Which also runs parallel, in each country to a Biennial. Could it be in the form of an ART World Report day, one day each year where everybody shares an awareness on where the public money goes? Or an Initiation by the United Nations to promote sustainable practices in financial awareness in society and the allocation of funds. Then where

would this stop, would it lead to an International Court for crimes against culture? “The point is ladies and gentlemen that greed, for lack of a better word, is good”¹².

Especially if it's for a 'good cause'. If our culture is too important to us, why do we insist on paying a price?

Notes

1. Niall Ferguson: *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, p. 665. Penguin book, 2011.
2. United Nation Development Program for Poverty Reduction, 28 Jan 2013.
3. TEFAF Art Market Report 2014, issued recently by the European Fine Art Foundation.
4. Brooklyn's Deputy Borough President Diana Reyna at the 'Studio in Crisis' panel discussion, Skowhegan-led, April 4th, 2014.
5. 'From museum to mass entertainment, the evolution of the role of museums in cities', Irina van Aalst, Utrecht University. Published by Inez Boogaarts Service Centre for International Cultural Activities (SICA), Amsterdam.
6. DIC Company Profile. Reuters, March 26, 2014.
7. Annual report 2012 Association of Charity Lotteries in the European Union (ACLEU).
8. Ibid. p. 5.
9. Reference: see Cobra Museum 'Definitieve Jaarrekening 2012'.
10. Telegraaf, Monday 14th April 2014.
11. *The Ascent of Money*, Niall Ferguson, 2012, p. 3.
12. Gordon Gekko, in *Wall Street, 1987*; screenplay by Stanley Weiser & Oliver Stone.

Appendix

Art in Context

Discussion Document

Total Identity

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Inleiding

Met identiteit als uitgangspunt creëert *Total Identity* samen met klanten de mogelijkheden om te handelen. Impact bereiken we door zowel het proces als de communicatie te ontwerpen. Met een creatieve insteek en aandacht voor motieven, ontwerpen we waardevolle diensten en creëren we interne en externe actieve betrokkenheid. Zo is de klant behalve vormgever van zijn organisatie, ook actief en betekenisvol vormgever van zijn omgeving — en van de maatschappij.

Het samenwerkingsproces geven we vorm door in het contact met klanten onmiddellijk naar overeenstemming over een gezamenlijke koers en aanpak te zoeken. Het is behulpzaam gebleken om hierbij te beginnen met een korte uiteenzetting over het conceptuele instrumentarium. Onderstaand een toepassing op Art in Context.

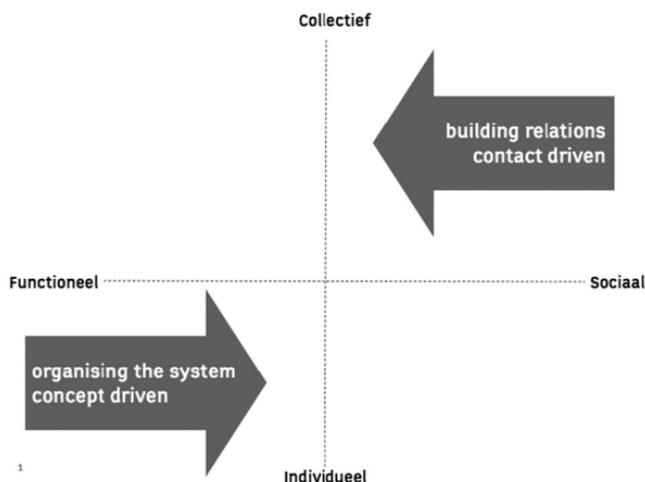
Art in Context is Public Relations

Tijdens het programma van Art in Context (AiC) onderzoeken studenten het eigen werk en de positie als kunstenaar ten opzichte van een specifieke context en de daarin gangbare werkwijze. Zo bereiden zij zich voor op hun positie als professioneel kunstenaar midden in de maatschappij. De kern van AiC is onderzoeken, ontwikkelen en handelen op basis van concept- en contactbewustzijn (in zowel context als in kunst).

Uitgangspunt is steeds om vanuit een artistiek bewustzijn (*creative intelligence*, vgl. onderstaand schema) een actieve relatie en dialoog met een bepaalde wereld aan te gaan. Door veldonderzoek en theoretische verkenningen verzamelen studenten informatie en ze leren de taal en mechanismes van de gedefinieerde context kennen. Met deze kennis en inzichten als basis ontwikkelen ze eigen werk. En bepalen positie ten opzichte van krachtige mechanismes en invloedrijke ontwikkelingen in de context. Dit balanceren tussen de autonomie van de eigen uitgangspunten en de wetmatigheden van de maatschappelijke realiteit is vergelijkbaar met het mechanisme van public relations. Professionele PR vereist een goede strategie gebaseerd op een heldere positionering en scherpe profilering. Ook voor Art in Context geldt dat voor optimaal

presteren een goede strategie noodzakelijk is. De principes zijn vergelijkbaar.

Strategische PR is functioneel en sociaal. De kernboodschap die een bepaald effect in de omgeving teweeg moet brengen, is functioneel. Sociaal is: weten wat er speelt in deze omgeving, welke taal gangbaar is en wat er nu relevant is. De *scope* van handelen gaat van individueel tot collectief. De strategie wordt bepaald op basis van kennis en inzicht in de context.



Professional Scope

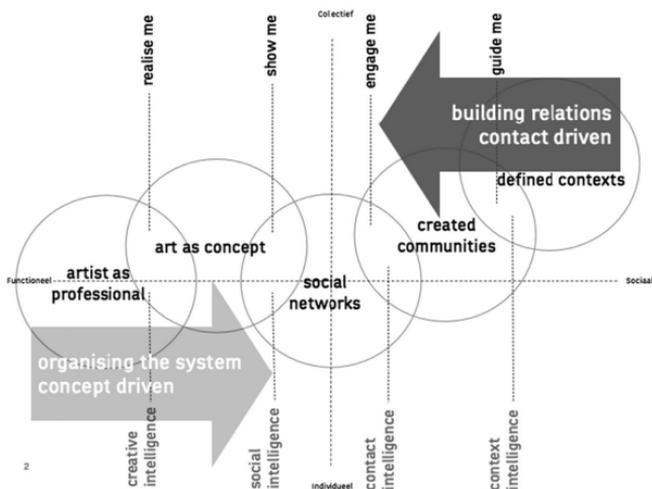
Zowel de functionele als de sociale opdracht is gebaseerd op dat wat een organisatie — in dit geval AiC — wil betekenen. De ambitie van Art in Context is studenten voor te bereiden op hun positie als professioneel kunstenaar midden in de maatschappij. AiC doet dit door studenten gericht in contact

te brengen met een scherp gedefinieerde context. De door AiC gevolgde strategie kent twee bewegingen. De contact-gedreven beweging vormt relaties met de omgeving — dit jaar is dat de wereld van PR. De concept-gedreven beweging van AiC stimuleert studenten in het ontwikkelen van een eigen visie als basis voor het eigen werk. Door het samenspel tussen beide bewegingen maakt AiC studenten bewust van de inspiratie, energie én invloed die ontstaan in deze dynamiek.

Artist in Context

Veranderingen vormgeven betekent een actieve rol pakken en perspectief schetsen, in plaats van er achteraf op te reageren. Public relations is het regisseren van het samenspel tussen verbindende kracht en onderscheidend vermogen in een gedefinieerde context. Een scherpe positionering en heldere profilering ten opzichte van de omgeving zijn hierbij noodzakelijk. Art in Context gaat over het bewustzijn van dit mechanisme.

Ieder onderdeel van de werkmethode van AiC is naast systeem-gedreven, ook contact-gedreven. Dit betekent dat het programma is gericht op het in beeld brengen van de mechanismes van de gedefinieerde context en de verhouding met de maatschappij als geheel (*guide me*), dat het gesprek met de professionals in deze context gevoerd wordt (*engage me*), dat de relevante onderwerpen worden uitgelicht (*show me*) en dat tenslotte het eigen werk(proces) van de student zich ontwikkelt (*realise me*).



Organising the System

Invloed uitoefenen door de relatie met de omgeving te bepalen (positioneren) en te bespelen (profileren) is van alle tijden, maar bestaande routines raken telkens weer achterhaald en maatschappelijke, economische en technologische ontwikkelingen vragen om constante aanpassing, verbetering en vernieuwing. Ontwikkelingen gaan steeds vaker over grenzen heen; voorheen gescheiden werelden blijken te versmelten. AiC staat midden in deze verandering en biedt studenten de mogelijkheid zich hiertoe te verhouden. Studenten worden uitgedaagd het eigen werk in relatie te brengen met de maatschappelijke context in het algemeen en hierin keuzes te maken (*context intelligence*). Het onderzoek wordt verdiept door in de gedefinieerde context veldonderzoek te doen, professionals uit deze specifieke wereld te ontmoeten en bevragen

(*created communities*). In dialoog met de context (*contact intelligence*) wordt inzicht ontwikkeld, worden keuzes gemaakt en concepten ontwikkeld. Van autonoom werk tot interventies op routines of alternatieven voor wetmatigheden. De resultaten van het onderzoek zijn eigen projecten (*art as concept*). Het samenspel tussen concept- en contactgedreven handelen wordt aan het eind van de onderzoeksperiode publiek gepresenteerd in het daartoe meest geschikte en krachtigste medium.

De uitdaging voor AiC is dit samenspel tussen concept- en contactgedreven handelen, krachtig regisseren en tegelijkertijd ruimte bieden aan de dynamiek van het onverwachte en ongekende.

