Value—the profanely sacred

GUARD #1: Halt! Who goes there?
ARTHUR: It is I, Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon, from the castle of Camelot. King of the Britons, defector of the Saxons, sovereign of all England!
GUARD #1: Pull the other one!
ARTHUR: I am. And this is my trusty servant Patsy. We have ridden the length and breadth of the land in search of knights who will join me in my court of Camelot. I must speak with your lord and master.
GUARD #1: What, ridden on a horse?
ARTHUR: Yes!
GUARD #1: You're using coconuts!
—Monty Python & The Holy Grail

When I went to the Trocadero, it was disgusting. The flea market, the smell. I was all alone. I wanted to get away, but I didn't leave. I stayed, I stayed. I understood that it was very important. Something was happening to me, right. The masks weren't like any other pieces of sculpture, not at all. They were magic things.
—Pablo Picasso

History records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling money and its issuance.
—James Madison

‘Geld’ as ‘Money’ has an etymology that comes from ‘Gold,’ and from ‘Geltung’ (Validity) relating to the value people fix based on a perception of a natural right. In our quote above the value ‘Coconuts’ was substituted for ‘Horses’—a brilliant idea saving thousands—now that's absurd yes? Well prisoners in the US are not allowed money and when smoking was banned they had to stop using cigarettes as currency and find something else: one of the weirdest is plastic-and-foil pouches of mackerel fillets. They taste disgusting but that means they are ideal as money.

This transference and then fixing of value produces all manner of cult objects: take Northern Soul, an amazing sub-culture partly based on a worship of rare soul music on six inch vinyl singles (such as Frankie 'Lover Man' Crocker's 'Ton of Dynamite'). No doubt someone has said: “This piece of plastic is my life.” Much of the really inspiring and enduring art comes from a few individuals who simply loved art, not money; it was their
enduring art comes from a few individuals who simply loved art, not money; it was their absolute passion. The type of value they put on it merged with their lives, and we owe them a debt of thanks for their struggle. We value their values and adopt them as our own. The mission of these missionaries, the ultra-passionate, is hard to maintain and organisations go in different directions sometimes at odds with the values that founding members fought so hard for i.e. they sell out. Art and our whole culture is a question of what survives and how values are passed on—this reflects an older world-view that accorded primacy to feelings and imagination.

For Simmel (1900) economic exchange can be understood as a form of social interaction. “Money is Modern” and when it became the prevalent link between people, it replaced personal ties with impersonal relations limited to a specific purpose that permitted exact measurement of equivalents. The paradox of the exchange of values is that money has value only in terms of its ability to represent other things valued for different reasons. Simmel tells us that a cultural cynicism took over those who adopted this rationalizing, valueless mentality of modern life. The cynics participated with relish in the calculating character of the money economy: the downward movement of values was part of the attraction: a template for other forms of social relationship. Simmel had a different view that art was almost the opposite of money, introducing the permanence of form into transient materials: …the essence of aesthetic observation and interpretation lies in the fact that the typical is to be found in what is unique, the law-like in what is fortuitous, the essence and significance of things in the superficial and transitory.

We ascribe values: to art, to people, to things and as artists tried to be counter intuitive and break new ground, the established ‘intrinsic’ value of art has always been problematic when its ‘pictorial language’ is augmented; we can refer to Maurice Denis' well-known 1890 definition whereby painting: “before being a battle horse, a nude an anecdote or whatnot, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order.” But it is unlikely a Sotheby's auctioneer is going to start off with: what am I bid for this flat, oily arranged thing. Is art’s value intrinsic or extrinsic? Is value more than the physical content of a thing? Is there no value to something if there is no sacrifice involved?

Maurice Denis (1913) The Annunciation (1893) Women in a park

The worrying thing about those who do not see any other value in art other than its price is that all the thinking and questioning is over. But what of art's ‘shock value'? What kind of art shocked and moved Andre Breton: what was it about art that he valued? In 1919 when he seen Le cerveau de l'enfant he froze, got off a moving bus and wandered back in a daze to see it close up and then, completely intoxicated he got the money together to buy it. For Breton life should be a “great spiritual adventure” (Balakian, 1964: 38). His devotion to the painting, what we could call its inspirational value, connected up with others into a movement of like-minded individuals —Surrealism in this case: a technique and a belief that Breton in the 2nd Surrealist Manifesto claimed referred to “palpable proofs of an existence other than that which we are aware.” This was the realm of the marvelous, the moment privilégié that embodied an “incurable human anxiety.” Or Breton is simply romanticizing the birth of the movement.
Here art obliges the reader to grasp the fictional world as a world of living people and to become suspended between a natural explanation and a supernatural explanation of the ‘events’ in question. This hesitation is also be ‘felt’ by one of the characters with whom the reader identifies. Cut in two by the window and again by the table: is the person in de Chirico’s painting a dreamer or a dream? In Surrealism it is important for the viewer or reader to adopt a certain attitude when they regard the work: they must reject an allegorical interpretation as well as a ‘poetic’ interpretation. The work remains perpetually enigmatic: look how calm the image is: its highly ‘interiorising’ quality.

Andre Breton edited an anthology on ‘Black Humour’ and if we think back to the Monty Python sketch above we see a similar ‘surreal’ process that questions social values. The process of valuation is dialectical: it resolves or creates a dichotomy — something becomes something else including its opposite. Things can change, but this value system usually works against art that questions our values: works like the Surrealist’s became a profanity for the majority of the Art World: what is the difference between values and facts?

In the US in the 1960s one minute people were going crazy for the Beatles, the next their records were on the bonfire for ‘religious’ reasons. The sacred was back to the profane. The Bonfire of the Vanities (Falò delle vanità) was the fifteenth-century organized burning of objects that were deemed to be sinful: supposedly including Botticelli. Like the Taliban’s destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues this is an example of a virulence of ‘faith’ that can only express itself in barbaric practices and barbaric values. The battle between values
is a battle between what types of human beings will prevail. The period of re-learning, the Renaissance, was a rediscovery of the humanist values of previous eras and the Renaissance’s ‘sacralizing of the secular’ that is often interpreted as the origins of modernity. With the role of Hermetism and magic in the evolution of early modern science the argument revolves around whether the scientific revolution secularized the European world or, because of the neo-Platonic religious mysteries of the Hermetists ‘ancient theologians,’ they sacralized it.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, was a 23 year-old philosopher and wealthy count who was the wonder of his age because of his amazing learning. In 1486 he proposed to call ‘learned men’ to Rome to debate 900 theses. He had organized 900 propositions which, he said would show that all knowledge no matter from what philosophical system it came: Platonic, Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, Thomist, kabbalist, Hermetic, Arabic was one. The great debate never took place because religious censors found that thirteen of his theses were heretical and six others were suspected of heresy. Instead, Pico fled to France. Later on, Lorenzo de' Medici arranged that Pico could return to Florence. The writings he did now no longer pointed toward the union of all knowledge. Instead, he spent much of his time, until his death in 1494, writing commentaries on the Psalms.

He was a 'Syncretist' (as were Kepler and Newton) and what survives from the plan is known as the 'Oration on the Dignity of Man', and according to Gosselin (2001):

Man is a great wonder, Pico says, because during the Creation, God had exhausted the qualities he could give by the time he came to man's creation. Accordingly, He decided to give man no fixed nature. He could take on the characteristic of any level of being, from that of the dullest existence at the bottom of the Scale of Being to that of the highest of the angels. He could, if he wished, even become a Godlike creator by his use of Hermetic divinatory magic and his own consequent creation of statues that move. The type of creations one later finds in Shakespeare's Tempest are the deific types of actions we can foresee of man in Giovanni Pico’s “Oration on the Dignity of Man”.

Pico represents the 'Laurentian Moment' (named after Lorenzo de Medici) of Renaissance Florence when beauty and optimism were ascendant, before the time of the ‘Bonfire of the Vanities’ and the negative view of man found in Niccolo Machiavelli's writings.

Syncretism (the combining of different, often seemingly contradictory beliefs) would go on to influence the symbolists and Gauguin with Primitivism and "Synthetic" Symbolism and then the Surrealist’s via De Chirico and Breton.

Different values emerged as writers drew on the ‘science fiction’ of mystics who had valued and kept ancient manuscripts. Giordano Bruno’s ‘Metaphysical Dialogues’ set out a view of the cosmos based on an infinite universe inhabited by a plurality of worlds and an
a view of the cosmos based on an infinite universe inhabited by a plurality of worlds and an
infinite number of beings. This was derived from the Magus, Cornelius Agrippa of
Nettesheim. Heresy abounded because artists and writers could not operate without state
sanction: i.e. expressing the values of the state: truth was whatever powerful people said it
was and artists were simply not allowed to challenge the values of society—you could not
say: “you’re using coconuts” to the Pope.

This relationship was also challenged when late eighteenth-century Germany aestheticians,
looking back at the Laurentian Moment, elevated the writer to the level of Author: a
reification of art as a ‘fine practice,’ perfected by the very few who were capable of
realising great vision, truth and beauty—an exclusive thing. Art is set off from other forms
of production based on a cultural significance assumed to extend well beyond monetary
value. Aesthetic theory in Germany redefined Art, as a conglomeration of activities—
painting, sculpture, dance, architecture—joined by a common pursuit of beauty and not
usefulness. This was a separation between artist and artisan: a re-evaluation. Another
underlying motive for the conceptual change that gave us ‘art’ was concerned with earning a
living. Early writers became 'Authors' who claimed their work was unique to ensure
financial reward: to justify the development of copyright laws for example. Their work
was 'authentic' and this declaration of autonomy was born out of the same financial
concerns it sought to escape. We can imagine the look on people’s faces when somebody
suggested mackerel fillets were money—but the more that art comes to resemble familiar
goods and services, the more the price alone (its exchange value) sets it apart.

One of the problems we face when trying to locate value in art is the reliance on the concept
of 'Art' as if it were a universal category of human existence. It is almost like we want to be
indifferent to the question of the social conditions in which works are produced and
circulate, so we can believe in something eternal. We have to take on the social construction
of meaning—in the past art might not have even been conceived as graphic description:
*personal adornment* was one of the most powerful and pervasive forms in which humans
first constructed and represented beliefs and values (White, 1992).

**What made complex representational systems possible, desirable, useful i.e. valuable?** Some people see the development of 'Art' in human history as simply mirrored
in the process by which children learn to depict. Education requires representation, so once
it was discovered that lines and objects could stand for things 'Art' spread rapidly because
its value was self-evident. No one filmed this moment, but drawing on White (1992) we
can explore how particular images, objects, materials, colours, forms, and textures came to
have value and to carry meaning within social and symbolic contexts.

What we do know is that the choice of rare and exotic materials; labour, skill (knowledge-
intensive production) and metaphorical reference to valued or sacred subjects are virtually
universal in their effectiveness in constructing meaning and communicating social identity
into the present. White draws on Willard Quine to say: "Conceptualization on any
considerable scale is inseparable from language." The argument is whether depiction is a
prerequisite to language or whether material representations have a value, immediacy,
authority, and duration quite different from those of linguistic representation (a bit like
Breton hypnotically getting off the bus). White gives three basics on cultural production:

(a) **Selection and procurement of raw materials**: Personal ornaments are
usually manufactured of materials exotic to the regions in which they are found.
Figurative and quasi-figurative objects show a distinct difference from personal
ornaments because they are almost always made of local materials.

(b) **Transformation of these into conventional forms via a set of techniques
and relations of production**. Beads were created by labour intensive gouging,
grinding or polishing, sewing or stringing. Pencil-like rods of ivory (or other
materials) were 'circumincised' and snapped into cylindrical blanks from 1-2cm
long. Those who believe that form should follow function will be glad to know
Those who believe that form should follow function will be glad to know that the form of ancient adornments results from an operational chain that begins with the natural cylindrical form.

(c) The exchange/display/use of the finished objects. This occurs in intraregional context: social, ceremonial, and exchange activities and an intra-site context: objects are purposely cached or buried, engraved blocks go on the back wall of early dwellings, giving the effect of delimiting the "living area". They would have been visible to the occupants continuously: a picture over the mantelpiece as it were.

Because objects endure beyond a single human life they can play a critical role in social reproduction and continuity — objects are remote from the wearer or giver and can, therefore, carry messages too dangerous or controversial for words: a crown for instance is a metaphor:

Metaphor is, at its simplest, a way of proceeding from the known to the unknown. It is a way of cognition in which the identifying qualities of one thing are transferred in an instantaneous, almost unconscious flash of insight to some other thing that is, by remoteness or complexity, unknown to us. [...] Metaphor is our means of effecting instantaneous fusion of two separated realms of experience into one illuminating, iconic, encapsulating image. (Nisbet, 1969)

Two types of metaphor are important to recognise:

(a) Metonymy: using one entity to refer to another that is related to it.

(b) Synecdoche: a special case of metonymy where the part stands for the whole.

So art's value is as a material metaphor. The 'feathers' you made for your ceremonial head-dress that you wish to associate with magical things like Bird Gods are representational, but metonymical and synecdochal if you used real feathers. Hey presto social distinction — I want a magic feather hat! Pierced animal teeth are supposedly the first things we started to monkey about with 43,000 years ago. The stone age did not end because we ran out of stone. People learned to make metal out of them and once metal appears — status becomes everything.

What is the connection between commercial, critical value and alienation? Inspired by Michel Foucault's history of discourses, we might wish to chart a theoretical model of the way in which the dominant discourse of the modern era has been produced. Science — knowledge of things in general — comes at once from the nature of the human mind and from the nature of things. Modern humans are secularized, the product of the Enlightenment and the scientific world-view. But is faith in reason qualitatively different from faith in the traditional God and revelation? Overcoming alienation in the modern world is not the same as in the early modern world. To be alienated today is a psychological (modern magic) problem and one that involves the reification of the human being.

The conception of what art is has changed but the commercial mechanisms of the Art World and Market have remained mostly unchanged since van Gogh's day: auctions, galleries, dealers, art fairs, art journals, etc. Robert Hughes (1984) said that the twin figures of the art impresario and the art star, performing for a large audience, have been with us since the eighteenth-century: "It was in Georgian times that dealers started to matter — emerging as people who exerted a real force on taste, as distinct from mere antiquarians serving the existing taste of patrons." The Art Market we have today did not pop up overnight. It was created by the great liquidity of late twentieth-century wealth. Sell a block of shares, shift the money elsewhere.

So how 'commercial value' is assigned in the Art Market and what it has to do with the
So how 'commercial value' is assigned in the Art Market and what it has to do with the 'critical value' assigned to a work of art has not really changed either. It has just got bigger and more desperate: the “experience economy.” The role of artistic labour to provide products and services is related to the commercial success of an artistic practice and this tend to neutralise its critical or socio-analytic capacities. Artists can operate ‘outside of the Art Market’ but its logic effectively excludes or undermines a place within it anyway: you are either a star or nothing. The Art World's profits are dependent on a pool of expendable temporary labour and exploited volunteer staff never mind those on the lowest rung: the unknown artist. As such you are ‘waiting to be discovered’ and if that is not alienation what is? A cycle of trendy art space, bigger trendy art space, then museum seems so odd now, since the relative autonomy of the museum today has become an extension of the Art Market. Art schools and universities are complicit in legitimising practices of self-professionalisation largely because they are part of a capitalist cultural apparatus—this ‘iron shell of bureaucracy’ is inescapable—or is it?

So is the Art Market the place to determine aesthetic value? Is the Market the place to locate reputations or fortunes? Can we have any certitude about aesthetic value? For Buskirk (2012) artist as brands operate without irony in the context of market hype (no references to coconut use here). This marks art’s absolute entrenchment into the system of commerce, with methods for production, dissemination, marketing and promotion that exactly emulate corporate strategies for commercial products. What is the difference, these days, she says, between the creative work of a marketing person and an artist? Buskirk fatalistically asks: how can, and why should, art stand apart from other creative, commercial endeavors, when its production and reception have become indistinguishable from theirs?

So what is the Art Market? How did it come to be? It is an unself-conscious, crude, double-dealing, spectacle of self-promotion, not particularly a place of intellectuality, ethics, taste, wisdom or even knowledge? Looking for the smallest salable unit often implies creating false meanings (rationales for the monetary worth of the object) to replace the lived relations of artists. From about the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, artists succeeded in gaining more control over elements of the Art World, but these structural changes are arguably being washed away. Certainly whatever has happened has had different and unintended consequences from those intended by many of the artists who had developed "alternative" art forms, journals, exhibition spaces without the pressure of commercialism. If anything the apparatus and distribution systems were reformed from a very class-based and highly restricted system: a return to one more in keeping with the postwar US model of institutions of mass entertainment, advertising, information, and merchandising, being ‘free’ as long as it did not challenge the received worldview too politically: i.e. in any real way.

But if we go back to Hughes (1984) he believed that the idea that money, patronage and trade automatically corrupted the imagination was a ‘pious fiction,’ believed by some Utopian lefties and a few people of genius like Blake, but flatly contradicted by Titian, Bernini, Piero della Francesca, or Poussin who would not lift a brush unless someone paid for them, and paid them well. Picasso was a millionaire at 40 and that didn’t harm him. He changed a bit as he got older, but Hughes believed that on the whole, money does artists much more good than harm: “The idea that one benefits from cold water, crusts and debt-collectors is now almost extinct, like belief in the reformatory power of flogging.” Back then he thought there was: “no known way of determining the cost-effectiveness of works of art.” Now obviously the market is rigged.

Of course the financial world and the Art World are corners of the speculative markets—irrational capitalism—that is why the Art World is still centered in New York. But several cities have developed active Art Scenes that were not oriented toward making (loads of) money from art. The ‘rising tide of public funding’ in the 1970s raised the level of this ‘alternative’ Art World and this confused the Art Market. Now remember that bit about ‘smallest salable unit,’ well the increasing artistic independence made it difficult
well the increasing artistic independence made it difficult to characterize the 1970s production as a particular movement or style, so that it could be marketed effectively. The Art World didn't want "pluralism" and when we get to end of the decade, dealers seized the initiative. They pretended to be curators (well Duchamp was a dealer). As the Art World expanded and its institutions recuperated and assimilated cultural funding intermediaries, for highly politicised reasons, brought in the language of marketing, particularly under Thatcherism, and then under New Labour a pretend social responsibility was layered over the language of marketing. In other words what had been rejected earlier as being against the spirit of art was returned to. Funding bodies just want rich artists who sell to private dealers to pop into existence from nowhere as long as some sort of rhetoric is cited.

The existence of separate domains of Art Scene, Art World and Art Market might mean that success is entering them all on your own terms. There are multiple Art Scenes, distantly related and most rarely impinge on the 'high Art World.' So is the 'Art Scene' where value is imputed and ascribed? On analysis the institutions that constitute the main Art Scenes are characterised by face-to-face rather than impersonal relations. The Art World has absentee owners and the Art Market is comprised of the absentee owners. The Art Scene is the contemporary arena where prominence emerges and vanishes. This tends to be related to the navigation through the Art World boundaries—these get breached when representatives of the Art World wander outside the metropolitan centres, much like old-fashioned imperialists bringing back elephant's tusks. Of course popular culture and mass culture are important and they tend to create the illusion that no social location is untouched by the general organization of society. Is the Art World at present dominated by the Art Market: is it is synonymous with the Art World?

The Art World of the 1980s tried to rethink itself as a clearly demarked marketing system with a division of labour to bring coherence to the system. The role of critics became less important, that of dealers grew. Young artists fresh out of Art School were marketed by new galleries who had little interest in the non-commodifiable (hence all the return to tangible objects). Those young artists seeking autonomy ‘self-marketed’ in a short-lived liberation from the galleries. Many artists simply seek deliverance from middlemen rather than some drunken antibourgeois outburst as the goal. The comparison between the gallery world and boutiques is an obvious one.

Somehow artists still insist that their works are intrusions, subverting institutions, somehow disruptive of this capitalist nexus, but these claims are nothing to the collectors. The collectors' market is still the place where fame and fortune is produced. The Art Market focuses attention on what its priorities are, these are big buying and big selling—so the Art World ends up talking about the stars like a tabloid: there is no real need for criticism any more: promotion yes, criticism no. One problem is working out how to focus attention in other directions. Irving Sandler, an 87-year-old New York art critic put it like this:

Collectors have had an insidious effect on young artists. They move into graduate schools and offer these kids ridiculous amounts of money. The result is that even art students focus on what sells and continue to produce that kind of work, rather than experiment, which is what they ought to do. (Viveros-Faune, 2013)

Corrupt me! I hear you cry: soul for sale! And it may be you are happy now that art has turned into a plaything for the 1%; you'd like to be hostage to rich collectors who have no respect for what they are doing. If the speculators' thirst for fresh talent is all that you are after, your idea of value is that anything, including the mediocre can be elevated by speculative greed, that real genius might as well be diluted for ease of consumption. For Simon Doonan (talking about Art Basel Miami) today's art world resembles "a vapid hell-hole of investment-crazed pretentiousness." These are previously sedate experts biting the hand that fed them, pointing out their colleague's bullshit, rank cupidity, speculation, and insider trading that takes place at clubby lunches (Viveros-Faune, 2013).
But it might be Larry Gagosian is your hero and he is the champion of the world's last art movement: Commercialism. This answers the 'how is value accorded question' by saying it's worth something because we have said its worth something and we are smart—the exact same argument of the Emperor's new clothes’ designers. Viveros-Faune also quotes from Felix Salmon on the degree to which the market is kept afloat by vast, dark pools of wealth. In "Occupy Art" he explains the basic information that made possible the contradiction of a skyrocketing art investment economy amid a wider economic recession. He also touched on how this "flood of money" is part of the Art World's increased identification with the mega-rich and why the Art Market “has stopped being a source of fascination and crazy numbers, and has started to be a source of sheer disgust.”

What does someone with the acumen of Irving Sandler—who should be in on the conspiracy but is not—make of the influence of financial speculation on art and how it affects the way art is made, understood and experienced: in short back in Sandler's day, people used to fight for their views: "Now people look for the auction prices, and the prices are their argument." If something sells for millions and shows at MoMa all the student’s ears prick up. His response to these challenges was a call to focus attention away from market-oriented art: art that behaves like a commodity can be counteracted by artists creating communities and creating anti-market polemics. **How would that work?**

Imagine we are standing outside Troy and someone comes up with this plan where we leave a 'gift', a kind of large wooden site specific sculpture, inside which we are all silently hiding—we know the Trojans are big time art dealers who surely by this time are probably fed up with making beads and they will drag the thing inside. Imagine as night falls that we are trundled in and at the right moment we all jump out with our swords and shields ready to slaughter Larry Gagosian and find a large Wooden Troy and Wooden Trojans which fall over like the flat facades they are. Yes they've seen this trick before. This is what the appearance of the 'subversive artist' does and we all pretend that nothing funny is going on. Or imagine Larry has sealed all the exits from the Wooden Horse and we are on show in his big gallery, all we can hear are the clink of champagne glasses as we are sold to a hedge fund manager.

Pessimists like Allan Kaprow announced the end of bohemia in his 1964 essay 'The Artist as a Man of the World,' (presumably before feminism) Kaprow said what contemporary artists really want is to become is proper middle-class citizens. There are moments in every generation when a facsimile of bohemia arrives: but these are really just periods of adolescence lived through by successive artistic cohorts. That reminded me of the story of the Royal Astronomer: he goes to the King and tells him the stars are going out one by one and that this portends the end of the world for everyone. The Royal Astronomer let's the King see for himself through his powerful telescope and there's nothing wrong with the stars—the Astronomer is going blind. Kaprow's wisdom cuts both ways.

Carried away by the crazy money out there, may be you believe the hype: success is about endless cash, lots of studio assistants, getting picked up in a limo. But if experimental
galleries migrate slowly to show only the artists that sell why should they show you? What's your value to them? For Magda Sawon, owner of Chelsea's Postmasters Gallery, the current situation is "completely puppeteered from the top" and: "It kills radicality for artists, dealers, and everyone else. I think the word collecting doesn't even apply to that kind of activity. It's about buying to sell, really, it's gambling, and has nothing to do with any of the issues that are central to the creation and appreciation of art in our time" (Viveros-Faune, 2013). Innovation happens in an artist's career where he or she can make advances on initial ideas and before these get locked into signature styles. **Does it amount to the same type of censorship we seen with Pico?**

So in the current system as regards value, the rich are really the ones who establish financial and artistic worth instead of artists, curators, and critics and the public. The tremendous deals that can be had in the Art Market cannot be made elsewhere and they are by and large, less traceable and less taxable. How much of the world's economy is tied up in art investments and how that economy is actually run is the $8bn question.

The combination of academicization and marketization has produced contradictory strains on artists that they have found unresolvable. Allegiances to bohemian values prove to be rather ‘wooden’ when tested. The desire to still want to reach beyond a restricted elite audiences or an identification with socially and culturally marginalized groups is now thought of and perceived as another marketing strategy.

Young artists should have high expectations. I don't know if professionalisation really means exposure to ideals of artistic integrity and social responsibility. I don't know if it is a value that everyone should internalise. If value is in works that reinforce the restricted discourse of the Art World dominated by the Art Market, then the professionals have this role as guardians of meaningful culture despite the obvious lack of public involvement (there's pretend involvement). **So how is value imputed to all those big expensive bits of art?** The collectors who aren't genuine lovers of art have to be told something and many of them get their information from those who's purpose is to sell: dealers, and this becomes little more than a secretive form of insider trading. I would recommend that they develop social contacts that would enliven and deepen their understanding. It may be art is the production of meaning and not just sellable objects, it could even be that it is the creation of worth or experimental worth and I would argue that this happens socially. We could go back to 1486 and the proposal to call ‘learned men’ to Rome and debate 900 theses. But the idea here would not be to produce inaccessible discourse on contemporary art for collectors. Art’s ironic alienation from mass culture suits them fine: it proves its value and worth. If there is no vocabulary for the communication of the importance of art to all of society this is because there has ceased to be money in it.

Eighty years ago, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht planned a journal to seriously wage an intellectual civil war against what they saw as reactionary or incompetent fellow critics. It was to be called Krisis und Kritik (Crisis and Criticism) and drew in figures such as Lukács, Adorno, and Marcuse. It was political in character “standing on the ground of class struggle,” with “its critical activity anchored in clear consciousness of the basic critical situation of contemporary society.” The Nazis felt so threatened by modern art they even went to the lengths of putting on exhibitions of degenerate art—**let us explain why you should not like this.**
The Cold War tried to support art as symbolic of intellectual freedom: although no such freedom was available—a Wooden Troy. This is analogous to the corporate face of benevolence that art becomes when used by menacing predatory institutions like J. P. Morgan or indeed Google. Corporate culture is now assimilated into national culture as everything becomes commerce: the paid spectatorship of mass culture. Corporate support of culture doesn't need a philanthropic cover now: promotional public-relations and marketing is aggressive. Corporations support exhibitions and institutions, by their immaterial body appearing everywhere and permanently inscribed: like the writing round the Vatican "In honor of the prince of apostles; Paul V Borghese, Pope, in the year 1612 and the seventh year of his pontificate" a kind of equivalent of brought to you by Viacom.

This was the Pope who met Galilleo and told him to cool it with all this 'the Earth goes round the Sun' bullshit: and we can clearly see the loss, the madness here—yet when Larry Gagosian does much the same thing no one feels anything is lost: is this because we no longer believe in art?

Sociopolitical critiques include challenging received opinions—even if there are few who will do it. In the 1980s Hughes thought that all this talk of divorcing art and money was a bit of a waste of time: "The residue of Transcendentalism teaches us that art refines, educates, makes people better," but he also felt that the whole question of the relation of art to money in this culture does not hinge solely on million-dollar art sales. Hughes also offered us some rules of art and money which bring us back to a religious posture of the new Popes of art: the art market today takes its stand on two articles of faith. The first is the 'Dogma of the Perpetual Resurrection of the Dead. It holds that everything old can be revived. The second concerns the 'Miracle of Van Gogh’s Ear,’ which teaches the unbeliever that nothing new may be rejected. To say that these propositions might contradict one another is impolite. They do, but it makes no practical difference: "Their purpose is to ensure a heavy flow of product for the art market, despite the fact that the supply of good past art is dwindling and the supply of good present art is, to put it mildly, not getting that much more copious."

Since we are all to become like him to be contemporary, let’s leave the last word to P. T. Barnum author of 'The Art of Money Getting or, Golden Rules for Making Money,' I'll list his contents page:

Don't Mistake Your Vocation
Select The Right Location
Avoid Debt
Avoid Debt
Persevere
Whatever You Do, Do It With All Your Might
Use The Best Tools
Don't Get Above Your Business
Learn Something Useful
Let Hope Predominate, But Be Not Too Visionary
Do Not Scatter Your Powers
Be Systematic
Read The Newspapers
Beware Of "Outside Operations"
Don't Indorse Without Security
Advertise Your Business
"Don't Read The Other Side"
Be Polite And Kind To Your Customers
Be Charitable
Don't Blab
Preserve Your Integrity

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