THE WORK OF ART IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION: THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGITIMIZATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

by

Natalia Tkachev
Bachelor of Arts, University of British Columbia, 2000

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
School of Communication

© Natalia Tkachev 2006

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2006

Approval

Name: Natalia Tkachev

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: The Work of Art in the Field of Cultural Production: The
                                  Principle of Legitimization in The Digital Era

Examining Committee: Chair:

_____

Dr. Roman Onufrijchuk
Senior Supervisor

_____

Dr. Martin Laba
Supervisor

_____

External Examiner

Date Defended/Approved: _____ Apr. 5/06 . _____

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY library

STATEMENT OF
ETHICS APPROVAL

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

(a) Human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

(b) Advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

(c) as a co-investigator, in a research project approved in advance,

or

(d) as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Abstract

This thesis deconstructs the field of cultural production by examining contemporary institutional framework of the arts and symbolic struggles that occur in effort to maintain or subvert established alignment of power. I will argue that the field of cultural production today resembles a market structure with increasing demands on all agents in the field for internationalization and globalization. Cultural producers today assert their autonomy and adapt to current structure of the art institutional framework by appropriating recent technological developments. I argue that cultural producers today challenge established framework of the field of cultural production by the particular appropriation of the Internet and its possibilities. This work will introduce changing cultural politics of the art world, and provide an informed inquiry on an emerging phenomenon of on-line based nomadic digital art galleries.

Keywords: the field of cultural production, symbolic capital, the arts, the work of art, the institutional framework, principle of legitimization, the art gallery, the artist, the art dealer, cultural producer, Conceptual art, the Internet, nomadic online based gallery.

Dedication

To my family and friends who supported me in various ways through this journey.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

This thesis deconstructs the field of the arts and examines the struggle over the monopoly and power to formulate and validate 'legitimate' art and artistic practice. In particular, I investigate how the Internet challenges the established power relations in the field of arts. I argue that the distribution of symbolic capital in the field of visual arts, i.e. the legitimization and validation of artistic practice, the artists, their prestige and recognition, is being subverted and redistributed due to the contemporary phenomena of the Internet and its effects.

Chapter One introduces the theory of the field by Pierre Bourdieu and suggests that the art world can be analyzed through the field of cultural production. The analysis reveals that the established institutional framework of the arts produces a specific social order that imposes an unequal distribution of symbolic capital. Chapter Two continues with the disruptive impulse of the Conceptual Art movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Conceptual artists, in their attempt to subvert the institutional framework of the arts, developed a momentum that challenged and undermined the established monopoly of the art world that defines 'legitimate' art. The disruptive impulse generated in this era was made largely possible due to the introduction of the philosophical discipline into the production of the work of art by the artists. Further, the emergence and application of information technologies, corporate capital and the introduction of the corporate collector made the Conceptualists an influential art movement that subverted the structure of the art world. The contemporary global art world is increasingly influenced by market forces and is now challenged and simultaneously

1

enhanced by the emergence and application of the Internet. In my third chapter, I suggest that the Internet, when applied to the field of cultural production, offers a new potential for cultural producers to alter the established institutional framework of the arts and to alleviate struggles that persist over the distribution of symbolic capital. Particularly, the recent phenomenon of nomadic online-based art galleries allows all members of the arts to be liberated from the burden of established institutional frameworks empowering members of the artistic field to take more control in the processes of production, circulation and distribution of art.

It is important to acknowledge Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" since this thesis unfolds a sociological dimension of the post-Benjaminian work of art. The Internet not only allows unprecedented and instant reproduction of the visual culture[1], it makes the work of art nomadic and the access to it unlimited. Benjamin's theory must be taken as a general background for the foreground issue of this thesis: the use of art as a cultural weapon as well as a commodity in the context of the technological advancements that are currently taking place in our society.

This thesis also is concerned with my recent personal investment in the field of cultural production. I officially became a fledging art dealer in April 2005 when I started my own art gallery. I represent seven young, emerging contemporary artists and organize and curate art exhibitions every five weeks. I attended my first international art fair last October and have plans to go to many more. As a relatively new member of the arts community I strive to be part of various cultural formation to learn about the current state of the artistic field in its many facets. I have become part of the Contemporary Art Society, and I have a

---

[1] The reproduction of visual culture by means of the Internet is an issue outside of the scope of this thesis.

membership in both the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Contemporary Art Gallery. I visit a number of artists in their working studios and attend most art exhibitions in Vancouver to keep up with the contemporary developments of artistic practice. More importantly, I continuously attempt to convince the rest of the art world and the community at large that the art I represent is legitimate and worthy of attention. Having no previous gallery experience, I constantly come up with many questions in the process of establishing myself as a knowledgeable and credible art dealer locally and internationally.

One such question is why and how a cultural producer authorizes and validates his/her cultural practice and makes it into legitimate art. I realize now that it is my responsibility and goal as an art dealer to validate the art I represent, to make it legitimate. I also realize that the artistic field is highly competitive for that recognition and validation. I am personally forced to be part this competition since, having a certain degree of power to formulate and construct what 'culturally significant' art is, I am faced with making a choice with what artists I will recognize as 'legitimate' within the realm of my gallery and the art world[2]. In response to my immediate experience, there are two important realities that need particular attention.

First, the art world is a large social organism that includes a variety of individual cultural producers, including members of academia, art critics, artists, art dealers, collectors and the audience at large. It also incorporates an institutional framework, which sets a power dynamic and contributes to the reproduction of the established social order along with its inequalities. The work of art is not produced in a vacuum: within its practice, it carries its

---

[2] To reiterate, as an art dealer, I assist the audience in acquiring the 'important' and 'significant' works of contemporary arts. I do so first by giving an opportunity to the artist to exhibit his/her art in my gallery. The mandate of my art gallery, Blanket Gallery, can be found on www.blanketgallery.com/about.

own institutionalization. For example, the institutional web of the art world produces its symbolic meaning and value. Second, the art world is a competitive field that can be described by struggles among groups and individual members who seek to enforce their version of legitimate art. In other words, the dynamic of the art world's power relations encompasses the struggles over the monopoly of cultural authority and legitimization and the monopoly to maintain the status quo in a larger social realm. The struggles to be recognized and validated within the art world often take place on a variety of levels: they take place among artists, who aspire to be accepted within their peer groups; to be represented by better commercial galleries; and to find support and recognition from patrons and public art establishments. These struggles further take place among art dealers, who aspire to gain the support of art critics, collectors and the audience at large. They also take place among public museums, art schools and artist run centres, which continuously attempt to acquire more funding from the government, private foundations, and the private sector for their curatorial and educational programs. In other words, the field of arts is a field of struggle which, by in large, affects the structure of the art world and affects cultural practices of artistic production, its reception, circulation and distribution. The work of art is "a historically-specific and socially constructed concept, as that it is defined, more specifically, by what artists do within the institutional and market structures which support them" (Miles, 2000, p. 33). It "affirm[s] a world of privilege, interpretation, alienation and disempowerment" (Miles, 2000, p. 33).

This thesis is thus scholarly and personal. It offers a social commentary on the contemporary field of cultural production and the new cultural logic that is currently being shaped with the help of the Internet and its effects. I find this investigation critical to my immediate life experiences, as this study offers an outlook on the art gallery as an institution

in the field of cultural production and allows me to vanguard and follow the emerging

cultural formations in the field of my profession.

CHAPTER ONE.
THE WORK OF ART:
THE INEXORABLE REALITY OF THE FIELD
OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

This chapter establishes the correlation between the work of art[3] and an institutional context in which it is produced, circulated and distributed. I will argue that an essential condition for the work of art to be produced, circulated and distributed, it is becoming part of the social formation (the art world), which is governed by a set of particular laws and its own power dynamic. When the work of art is produced and is ready to be shown to the audience, it cannot be recognized as 'the work of art' until it has been accepted by the gatekeepers of the art world: art galleries, museums, academics, art collectors and art critics, among others. The recognition and acceptance by the art world and its power to select and impose what is legitimate art and who is a legitimate artist, unveils the established dependency of the work of art on the highly controlled institutional framework of the arts.

To embark on this argument, it is necessary to develop a theoretical framework, which will define the work of art, the artist, the art gallery, and the artistic field. This framework will introduce the field of cultural production and aid in contextualizing these definitions and establish their place within that field. A theoretical framework I establish here shares close affinity with the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Janet Wolff, Peter Burger and Garry Hagberg, social scientists who have written their own, yet interrelated versions of the sociology of the production of the work of art. With the help of these authors, and in

---

[3] For the purposes of this discussion, the work of art is referred to the work of visual art (in whatever medium it may be produced). The work of art will be interchangeable with the terms artwork and art.

particular, Pierre Bourdieu, I will introduce and utilize the concept of the field of cultural

production as a schematic ground where art is produced, received and distributed. I will

further utilize this schematic ground to define the work of art and apply the Institutional

Theory of art founded by George Dickie. I will also offer an outlook on the art gallery as a

key social institution in the processes of the production, distribution and reception of art.

This chapter concludes with a discussion on the relationship between the work of art and the

art gallery, and the influences that the field of cultural production casts on the two. The

overall argument of this chapter will reveal and confirm Garry Hagberg's statement that the

work of art "has become [the product of] an arbitrary exercise of power and authority by

persons strategically placed within the various institutions of the arts" (Hagberg, 2002, p.

487).

The field of cultural production

The concept of the field of cultural production was introduced in the early 1970s by

Pierre Bourdieu's 'theory of practice.' Bourdieu's methods, based on 'radical

contextualization, examination of the set of social conditions and cultural practices of the

production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods[4]. One of Bourdieu's central

concerns is the role of social structures where unequal power relations are accepted as

legitimate, embedded in cultural practices, and taken for granted in the society at large.

Bourdieu's theory of the field reveals the material and symbolic production of cultural goods

and takes into account the mediators who contribute to the work's meaning and

---

[4] Bourdieu uses three levels of analysis, which include socio-historic, discursive and interpretive analyses. Socio-historic analysis examines the conditions of production of any symbolic goods within any given field of human activities; discursive analysis offers a powerful tool to investigate an internal organization of symbolic forms and, finally, the interpretive analysis makes possible the creative construction of meaning.

legitimization as their ultimate function to maintain 'the universe of belief'[5] within the

cultural field. This is the central element in Bourdieu's theory of the field and is critical to my

thesis: I am concerned with the unequal power relations in the field of cultural production. I

am also concerned with methods of resistance that the various agents in the field of cultural

production develop to subvert the established power dynamic. I chose to rely on Bourdieu's

theory as it effectively addresses the relationship between cultural practices and larger social

phenomena and examines the relationship between systems of thought, social institutions

and forms of material and symbolic power and provides a powerful tool for social analysis in

the cultural industry. For the purpose of this chapter, Bourdieu's theory addresses the

relationship between the production of art, its symbolic meaning and larger cultural

phenomena. I establish a direct connection between Bourdieu's work and my overall thesis

question: how is the distribution of the symbolic capital in the field of cultural production

being altered and subverted due to the contemporary phenomena of digitization (the

Internet).

The field of cultural production is 'the universe of belief' and, similar to any other

field including political, economic or scientific, it is a social formation determined by social

situations and governed by a set of objective social relations, laws of operation and its own

power dynamic[6]. The field is determined by the power relations and the symbolic struggles

to either sustain or subvert the existing power dynamic. These struggles, which are imposed

on all agents of the field:

> ...weight with a particular brutality on the new entrants – assume a special
> form: they are indeed based on a very particular form of capital, which is

[5] A term coined by Bourdieu to describe the field of cultural production.
[6] Bourdieu predominantly uses a literary field in his application of the theory of the filed of cultural production, it is however also effective to apply his theory onto the field of visual arts.

both the instrument and the object of competitive struggles within the fields, that is, symbolic capital as a capital of recognition or consecration, institutionalized or not, that the different agents or institutions have been able to accumulate in the course of previous struggles, at the cost of specific activities and specific strategies (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 12).

Each field has its particular structure determined by the agents who are strategically placed within that field, who operate in a set of social relations and conditions and who are continuously in flux by the process of position-taking in that field. The position of agents "implies an objective definition of their practice and of the products resulting from it" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 131)[7]. The field becomes a dynamic concept in that a change in the agent's position means a change in the field's structure. The dynamic of the field depends on the distribution of available positions and by characteristics of the agents occupying them. The positions and position-taking by the agents within the field are determined by strategy and trajectory chosen by the agents within that field. The strategy results from an agent's dispositions toward a certain practice as well as the stakes of power in the field. Trajectory is determined by the successive positions that an agent may occupy within the field: "Trajectory is a way in which the relationship between the agent and the field is objectified" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 17). The agents occupy a variety of positions and employ their trajectories to engage in competition for control of the interests and resources specific to the field. In the field of cultural production, this competition takes place over "the authority inherent in recognition, consecration, and prestige" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 7). The field's dynamic is then inevitably influenced by the struggles among these agents to occupy these positions within that field. The positions occupied by the agents of the field (i.e. the producers, artists, museums, public institutions, commercial

---

[7] The relationship between positions and position-takings depends on the dispositions of the agents, or their roots in a specific "habitus", one of the central concepts of Bourdieu's theory of practice referring to formation of individuals in their childhood setting, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

galleries, etc) and the processes of legitimating of the cultural products, and its consequent power relations determine the field's dynamic within the broader field of power. The field of cultural production is determined by the struggle between the producers of the work of art and the producers of its meaning. Cultural legitimacy, recognition and prestige appear to be the fundamental norm in the field of restricted cultural production[8] and represent the symbolic capital within that field. The acquisition of symbolic capital is an exercise of power and implies the principle of selection utilized by different groups of agents competing for this cultural legitimacy and is determined within a system of social relations.

The cultural field in Bourdieu's view[9] is the universe of belief where symbolic capital[10] is an essential element, a currency that is not reducible to economic capital. Symbolic capital determines a specific economy of the field and is based on the speculation that what constitutes a cultural work, is its aesthetic and social value. Symbolic capital in the field of cultural production includes an authorized validation of a cultural producer and a cultural product as legitimate according to the existing standards and trends of the art world and the field as a whole. For example, the level of prestige of an artist, an art gallery or the art dealer and the recognition of an artist as a legitimate cultural producer in various art world circles are the symbolic currency to be applied within the field in exchange for monetary gain[11]. The important issue at stake in the field of cultural production "is the definition of the limits of the field, that is, of legitimate participation in the struggles "

---

[8] Restricted field of cultural production refers to the art that has been produced by the autonomous principle of production (the examples are avant-garde art, art for art's sake) and is the opposite end of the unrestricted or commercial art that is committed to economic principles and includes works produced for monetary gain (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002)

[9] Bourdieu dissects the field of cultural production into two subfields: the field of restricted artistic production (i.e. high art) and the field of large-scale production, mass or popular artistic production.

[10] Bourdieu for instance counts academic and linguistic capital to the symbolic capital where the values are held in formal education and/or linguistic competence in a specific linguistic market (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993).

[11] Interestingly, the works of art that are created primarily for financial gain rather than for art's sake is considered to be 'commercial' and thus inferior in the artistic and academic circles (Webb et al., 2002).

(Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 14). When it is suggested that "this isn't art", it means that a cultural product is denied its legitimate existence and excluded from the 'game' of the field (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 14). This is what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic exclusion', "the effort to impose a definition of legitimate practice, to constitute, for instance, as an eternal and universal essence, or historical definition of an art or a genre corresponding to the specific interests of those who hold a certain specific capital" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 14). The field of cultural production then becomes the symbolic site of struggle over the power to enforce the dominant definition of the artist and the artwork and "to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the [artists and the artwork]" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 42). The fundamental stake in the field of artistic production is thus the monopoly of artistic and cultural legitimacy, the monopoly of the ability to consecrate producers and products. An effort, or a strategy, speaking in Bourdieu's terms, to impose a definition of a legitimate practice becomes "the rule of the game" and is imposed on everyone who participates in the artistic field and who wants to acquire the field's symbolic capital, i.e. the recognition, prestige and legitimization of the artwork and the artist, the art gallery and the art dealer. A successful imposition of this definition is an accomplishment, a measure of success in the art world. The rule of the game is then a symbolic struggle "for symbolic domination over a particular use of a particular category of the sign and, thereby, over the way the natural and social world is envisaged" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 14). This symbolic domination is forced on every agent in the field of cultural production and especially on the 'new entrants' as a right to admittance into the field. The artist and the art gallery as agents of the field are confined by the structures of the field of cultural production and therefore are limited to those structures. Due to uneven distribution of symbolic capital, the field of cultural production is the site of struggles with

specific stakes for power, recognition and prestige where agents continuously attempt to transform or maintain "the established relation of forces: each of the agents commits the capital that he has acquired through previous struggles to strategies that depend for their general direction on his position in the power struggle, that is, on his specific capital" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 13)[12].

It is essential in the field of cultural production to consider not only the material but also a symbolic production of the work of art, which essentially constitutes the value of that work. The agents in the field of cultural production, including curators, art dealers, artists, publishers, collectors and the audience/spectator, have an established function of being cultural mediators and producers of the meaning and value of the work of art, creating cultural legitimacy, the ultimate symbolic currency within the field. The authority of these agents is determined by symbolic profit and power, which is sustained by the social apparatus encompassing museums and public institutions, art galleries, art fairs, art schools, art histories, and schools of thought. For instance, one such colossal producer of meaning for the artwork and its legitimacy is the Vancouver Art Gallery. It is the largest public institution in western Canada that captures the contemporary developments of artistic practice and significantly contributes to the construction of the historical art field locally and internationally[13]. The inclusion of an artist in the Vancouver Art Gallery show would legitimize an artist and his/her artistic practice in the art world. This legitimization would provide the artist with a great deal of symbolic capital, significantly increasing the recognition and prestige of owning the artwork by this artist. It is therefore generally desirable for the artist to be exhibited at institutions that have such influence on the field of cultural

---

[12]Bourdieu provides an example the struggles of ever-emerging avant-garde against already recognized 'avant-garde'.
[13] The Vancouver Art Gallery: http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/about_gallery.cfm

production. The field of cultural production is competitive and the competition among the agents within the field concerns prestige, legitimization, artistic celebrity and hence power to influence the processes within the field.

> Given that works of art exist as symbolic objects only if they are known and recognized, that is, socially instituted as works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and recognizing them as such, the sociology of art ... has to take as its object not only the material production but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e. the production of the value of the work or, which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 37).

Structurally, a field always has a degree of autonomy from other social forces and fields. In the field of cultural production this autonomy is measured by a direct connection between the work of art and the immediate social structure this work of art and its symbolic meaning. The cultural field, in other words, determines the processes of production, circulation and distribution of the work of art. However, external determinants, such as economic, political forces and social or cultural phenomena, also have an effect on the processes within the field, but only when these forces are adopted into that field. "The fields structure refracts, much like a prism, external determinants in terms of its own logic, and it is only through such refraction that external factors can have an effect on the field" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 14). Therefore, the level of autonomy in the field of cultural production is determined by the field's ability to interpret and convert these external determinants into its own logic. This is an important point for the current discussion since it tackles the field's ability to adopt external cultural and social phenomena into the field's own logic. Chapter 2 addresses how philosophy, the expansion of corporate capital and the emergence of information technologies were translated into and applied to the field of cultural production and how methods of resistance were developed in the struggle to subvert the established distribution of the field's symbolic capital. The third chapter addresses how the Internet is

currently being translated into the field and, in particular, how the distribution of symbolic capital is affected by the Internet's possibilities.

In summary, the field of cultural production offers a conceptual framework, which establishes and explains the external and internal forces that influence the production, circulation and appropriation/appreciation of the work of art. The level of analysis that the theory of the field offers, allows us to take into account important aspects of cultural practice, strategies and trajectories that are used by individual agents within this field and the relationship between the field and larger fields of power. The theory of the cultural field has an overriding concern to reconstruct an artistic field at a given moment: the work of art is produced in a specific historical situation and within certain institutional frameworks by the agents applying strategies and following certain trajectories specific to the field. The reception, circulation and consumption of the work of art then also takes place in a particular historical moment. Hence, the significance of this framework to this thesis is that the field theory allows us to explain how the contemporary processes of production, circulation, consumption, and most importantly, the distribution of this symbolic capital are currently being configured.

The work of art and the social context: institutional theory

The purpose of the following discussion is to define the work of art in its institutional context, i.e. the producer of its symbolic meaning and to gain an understanding of the symbolic struggle within the field of cultural production over the monopolies of artistic and cultural legitimacy. According to Bourdieu's 'universe of belief', "the work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the collective belief which knows and

acknowledges it as a work of art" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 35). It is a manifestation of the field of cultural production in its totality where "all the powers in the field, and all the determinisms inherent in its structure and functioning are concentrated" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 37). As an echo of Bourdieu, the work of art has also been described by Stephen Greenblatt, who argues, "the work of art is the product of negotiation between a creator, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices. In order to achieve negotiations, artists need to create a currency that is valid for meaningful, mutually profitable exchange…" (Greenblatt inBourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 272). The definition of the artwork must take into account not only the social conditions of the producers (artists, critics, dealers, patrons), "but also the social conditions of the production of a set of objects socially constituted as works of art, i.e. the condition of production of the field of social agents (e.g. museums, galleries, academics, etc.), which help to define and produce the value of the works of art" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 37).

Let us look into the evolution of the social status of the work of art and the artist, which, arguably commenced with the developments of the art market mechanisms as early as the 18th century. "Not until the 18th century, with the rise of bourgeois society and the seizure of political power by a bourgeoisie that had gained economic strength, do a systematic aesthetics as a philosophical discipline and a new concept of autonomous art come into being…" (Burger, 1992, p. 57). The work of art is necessarily a social product, which started its distinct evolution in the Middle Ages[14] and served as a cult object in the social institution of religion. Burger identifies art in terms of its production, function and

---

[14] The duration of the 'medieval' period in the Latin West can be defined approximately from c. 600 to c. 1400 (Bredin, 2002).

reception and offers a historical typology that defines the work of art in relation to its social immediate sphere. So-called sacral art was produced collectively as craft and received also collectively via the institution of the religion. The production, distribution and the reception of the work of art during the Middle Ages was predominantly controlled by the institution of church. Moreover, the status of the artist was defined by the mastery and skill she/he possessed: art was a craft similar to carpentry, shoemaking or writing and part of general trade (Webb et al., 2002). The next distinctive stage in the evolution of art as a social product is marked by the emergence of royalty as a social class such as the court of Louis XIV. Courtly art started to serve the role of a representational object serving "the glory of the prince and the self-portrayal of courtly society" (Burger, 1992, p. 57). Courtly art is part of courtly life as much as the sacral art was part of the life of the faithful. The work of art was allowed a certain degree of emancipation, which commenced the process by which art was establishing itself as part of a distinct social sphere. More importantly, the change was taking place due to the rise of science and the proliferation of universities and academic learning. It was then, during the Renaissance, when the artists started to break away from general economy and acquire a separate social sphere. Therefore, the difference between sacral art and courtly art is in their different approaches towards the processes of art production. With the emergence of 'courtly art', artists created their work as individuals and realized the uniqueness in their work. The reception of the work of courtly art remained collective, yet its content was no longer sacral but sociable. By being classified as cult and as an object of glory for the court, the work of art was put to specific use and defined by its purpose in the society: it was integral to the habitual everyday practice of the faithful and of the royalty. Further, the emergence of bourgeois art around the 18th century marked the separation of the work of art and its production from its traditional social functions. Due to

this developed autonomy, the work of art, its production and reception now had a purely representational function and served no immediate purpose in the society; it rather "satisfies residual needs, needs that have become submerged in the life praxis of bourgeois society" (Burger, 1992, p. 57). The production as well as reception of art became individual acts. However the notion of an artist as an independent agent and a creator could never be sustained. Although being able to retreat into its own social niche, the artists, particularly in the western hemisphere, were increasingly dependent on the patronage system such as private and public grants and funding. The artists could not simply afford to be distanced from the economic and social sphere, as they were dependant on the range of collective social frameworks, institutions, and agents assisting them in producing and exhibiting their final product, the work of art. Evidently, the social function and the status of the work of art and the artist changed over time; however what seems to remain constant is the inexorable presence of the field of cultural production which defines what is to be called art and which establishes the processes of and institutional frameworks for its production, circulation and consumption.

To understand the role of the institution in the production of the work of art and its symbolic value, it is essential to understand the work of art as a social product. Institutional theory, whose theoretical premises were founded by the American philosopher George Dickie in the late 1960s and 1970s, has been an important contributor to the overall understanding of the work of art and its social production. The theory offers an explanation of how objects (man and/or machine made) can be transformed into 'works of art': the theory is not concerned with the internal attributes of the work of art, but draws its inspiration primarily from its external properties, i.e. its relational qualities.

The theory looks at "the institutional contexts in which the arts are created, exhibited, interpreted, taught, acquired, and so forth" (Hagberg, 2002, p. 487). Dickie's Institutional Theory offers that "a work of art in the classificatory sense is a) an artefact, b) a set of the aspects of which has had conferred upon it the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the art world)" (Warburton, 2003, p. 95). Dickie examines an action on behalf of an institution within which the artwork is produced as well as the establishment of its status as a candidate for appreciation. According to Institutional Theory, any object, even without human intervention, can become a work of art and a candidate for appreciation if exhibited in an art gallery. Dickie states that to classify something as art it is necessary to have an understanding of art theory, knowledge of art history and to have an idea about the art world, i.e. the production of art and its meaning must take place "within a framework of historically evolved traditions and mutual understandings" (Warburton, 2003, p. 98). Dickie produces a classificatory definition of the work of art that, although not concerned with its value, acknowledges the diversity of the artistic practices and offers a unifying consensus in line of institutional theory. Embracing circularity, the definition clarifies that "[a] work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an art-world public" (Dickie in Hagberg, 2002, p. 498). Dickie's outlook on how and why the work of art becomes 'the work of art' unveils a mutually interdependent nature in between the work of art, its production and the institutional context in which it exists.

Institutional Theory does not take into account the concept of symbolic capital and symbolic struggle that takes place in the art world as it is concerned with the question of belonging of an object to the category, i.e. art. The theory does not tackle the production of the value of the work of art and whether it is worth creating or exhibiting. In support of

Bourdieu's field of cultural production theory, the Institutional Theory of art is concerned with the art world's nature and context, i.e. "the expanding social and cultural network of institutions or systems, or sub-systems including but not limited to curators, directors, critics, viewers, audiences, collectors, dealers, students, teachers, art schools, performers, writers, actors, translators, publishers..." and its effect on the production, circulation and distribution of the work of art (Hagberg, 2002, p. 497)[15]. The Institutional Theory's definition of the work of art, although helpful in grasping the social matrix within which the work of art is produced and circulated, is open to powerful philosophical criticisms. Dickie's theory focuses primarily on the processes that are fulfilled by the members of the art world, i.e. their ability to call anything and everything to be works of art. This leaves no room to examine the role of the artist in the creation of the artefact nor acknowledges past nor present artistic practices. The artist's intentionality as well as the precedent in artistic practice can close this loophole. A new definition can be formulated as "an art work is a thing (item, object, entity) that has been seriously intended for a regard-as-a-work-of-art – i.e. regard as any way pre-existing artworks are or were correctly regarded" (Levinson in Warburton, 2003, p. 113)[16]. According to this definition, an object can be regarded as a work of art only if it intended to be treated as such by its creator[17].

---

[15] It must be stressed that the notion of the art world, according to Dickie, is a loose concept that includes "anyone at all making a work of art, regardless of their level of skill, knowledge of art practices, awareness of the art scene or visual acumen" (Warburton, 2003, p. 100). The art world is not a trained elitist group, it is a broad concept that is open to all. This is a divergence with Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production. According to Bourdieu, all (and especially new) members of the art world are required to possess a certain amount of symbolic capital (academic training, field experience, symbolic power, etc.) to exert influence on the processes within the field (i.e. to formulate what is to be called a legitimate work of art).
[16] Jerrold Levinson's intentional-historical definition of art has largely contributed to the overall understanding of the social nature of the work of art.
[17] It should be stressed that Levinson's definition also includes the "art-unconscious' intentions of the artists, which can still make something as the work of art and which allows an existence of the 'outsider-art', i.e. when the artist does not intend to be part of the art world, the art she/he creates can still be considered as art (after his/her death for instance).

Janet Wolff's work inspired by cultural studies contributes to this discussion in her examination of the work of art as an open entity, as the product of specific historical conditions and social groups, which "therefore bear the imprint of the ideas, values, and conditions of existence of those groups, and their representatives in particular artists" (Wolff, 1993, p. 49). Wolff, in *The Social Production of Art* defines the artwork in terms of the diversity of social factors involved at every stage of the creation of the work of art[18]. She argues that "[w]here social influences are indirect, the work itself may not be affected, but the conditions surrounding its production, distribution and reception will still be" (Wolff, 1993, p. 34). Similar in this case to Institutional Theory's approach, Wolff's argument does not take into account the intrinsic properties of the artwork nor does it observe aesthetic trends and tendencies. Her argument links the production of art to its immediate social context. The French Impressionist art movement in the 1860s was legitimized and 'entered' the art history due to the conception and development of "the new dealer-critic system" (Wolff, 1993, p. 34), which embraced then emerging middle-class collectors. Impressionist painters would not find the acceptance they did through the existing academic framework with its conservative ideology and its inability to accommodate the increased number of painters who were then considered to be marginal. The new middle class, more adventurous than traditional aristocrats, was interested in exploring new possibilities within the art tradition. The art dealers and the critics succeeded in meeting the needs of the art buyers and in legitimizing the works of art to this newly established audience (Wolff, 1993). Wolff further argues that while the emergence of this dealer-critic system was possible as a result of

---

[18] Wolff extends her analysis of the social production of the artwork to three levels of inquiry: technology, which affects that production, the social framework, and economic factors. For the purpose of this chapter I will limit my discussion of Wolff's analysis of the social framework in which art is produced, circulated and consumed.

'an outmoded' field of artistic production, it ensured the discovery and success of one of the greatest art movements in the Western history of art. Wolff's line of argument reinforces the view that while the Impressionist's works of art may exist separately from their social context, it may not have found its intended audience nor would it be included in the history of art. The field of cultural production ensures that only the artwork accepted within its framework is delivered to the public for its distribution and consumption in the art market. It can therefore be inferred that the agents in the field of cultural production are primarily engaged in the struggle over the monopoly for cultural legitimization, an ultimate form of power struggle over the distribution of the field's symbolic capital.

The art gallery:
an agent of the field

Who are the agents that hold the most power in assigning the symbolic value and meaning to the artwork? Traditionally, when an art dealer or a commercial art gallery accepts the status of an artist and his/her craft, they ensure the symbolic validation of the artwork as well as the promotion of the artist in the art world. Why does an art dealer or art gallery have this status? Historically, the art gallery possesses the monumental aura of the timeless sacred sanctuary and assumes the role of the transformer from the world of profane to the world of the sublime; it claims to offer a metamorphosis through a deep spiritual change that was accessible to the small elite who already had particular dispositions to respond to the work of art and its consecrated nature. The art gallery has been well depicted in Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production*:

> ... [the] holy places of art ... [where] the chosen few come to nurture a faith
> of virtuosi while conformists and bogus devotees come and perform a class
> ritual, old palaces of great historic homes to which the nineteenth century

added imposing edifices, built often in the Greco-Roman style of civic sanctuaries, everything combines to indicate that the world of art is as contrary to the world of everyday life as the sacred is to profane (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 236).

Brian O'Doherty, in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (1999), discusses the art gallery and its highly controlled environment. "Untouched by time and vanity, the art gallery and its contents, similarly to the medieval church, belong to posterity. The roots of this status are rightly to be found "not in the history of art so much as the history of religion..." (O'Doherty, 1999, p. 8). The earliest art galleries were found in ancient Egyptian tomb chambers as well as in early Palaeolithic painted caves. As if protecting the value of their contents, most cave art galleries are located nowhere near the entrances and some require hard effort to get to them. Offering an environment resistant to time, the galleries are deliberately removed from outside world. The early art gallery, purposefully protected from the presence of time, change and decay, represented this 'ultra-space' environment with access to metaphysical realms: " ... [a] segregated space ... a kind of non-space, ultra space, or ideal space where the surrounding matrix of space-time is symbolically annulled" (O'Doherty, 1999, p. 8). In Egyptian culture, the purposes of the art gallery evolved around the Pharaoh and his afterlife, which depended on the assurance of eternity. The gallery's primary function was to cater to the political aspirations of a ruling group and its efforts to maintain its hegemony and ensure its eternity. Thus, this constructed environment of the art gallery, where the effects of time are deliberately disguised, imposes the perpetuity in the world outside of the art gallery too: "it is an attempt to cast an appearance of eternality over the status quo in terms of social values and also, in our modern instance, artistic values" (O'Doherty, 1999, p.9).

Inaccessibility and the elimination of the awareness of the outside world are also prominent characteristics of the contemporary exhibition space, which often architecturally resembles a white cube. As a compensatory reaction to the decline of religion, the white cube emerged from the ideas of pure form and dominated the production and legitimization of the aesthetics. It similarly maintains the unchanging ideals of artistic posterity, aesthetic beauty, the masterpiece formulated within the glorified limits and conditionings of a small, highly educated elite.

"By suggesting eternal ratification of a certain sensibility, the white cube suggests the eternal ratification of the claims of the caste or group sharing that sensibility" (O'Doherty, 1999, p. 9). The white cube represents a separate world and a restricted access to it. It is conceptually designed to filter the world of artistic diversity by the symbolic exclusion of some and the inclusion of others, promoting and maintaining its 'endurance and eternal rightness'. The pristine, and seemingly neutral white cube represents and maintains the interests and ideals of a group who supports it: " it subsumes commerce and aesthetics, artist and audience, ethics and expediency" (O'Doherty, 1999, pp. 79-80). "The white cube's ultimate meaning is this life-erasing transcendental ambition disguised and converted to specific social purposes" (O'Doherty, 1999, p. 12).

Ultimately, a contemporary art gallery, with its monumental representations of 'transcendental modes of presence', produces the symbolic value and meaning for the work of art and thus, imposes cultural authority in the field of cultural production. In order do that, it must earn and maintain its symbolic power by conforming to the small elite, influential agents within the field of cultural production including art historians, art critics, academics at large, more established galleries, public and private art institutions, etc. The artist then, when entering the field of cultural production, must also gain a certain amount of

symbolic power to be recognized as a legitimate cultural producer within the field of cultural production. This is often only possible through the institutional acceptance of an artist by the art gallery. The symbolic struggle to obtain that acceptance and recognition is the issue at stake: due to the restricted access to the field of cultural production and to generally exercised symbolic exclusion by those who define what is legitimate, the distribution of this symbolic power is highly uneven[19]. Due to this dynamic and nature, the field of cultural production is a site of symbolic struggle for the redistribution of this symbolic power.

Artists, particularly in the recent history of art, produced a number of disruptive gestures in their effort to negotiate the field's power dynamic, to address the symbolic struggle, and to resist the limitations of the institutional framework for the arts. One of the most famous examples of such disruptive gestures is Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain"[20]. "Fountain" (1917) is a white porcelain urinal marked with the Duchamp's pseudonym 'R. Mutt'. The artist submitted the artwork to the Society of Independent Artists' Exhibition in New York, and, although Duchamp paid the fee that was required to be a contributor to the exhibition, his "Fountain" was rejected. The president of the board was predictably fierce and by no definition could he define "Fountain" as the work of art and hence rejected it. According to the discourse Duchamp's gesture has generated over time, "Fountain" was an attempt to test the boundaries of the institutional framework for the arts. Answering to the institutional outcry, the 'defence' of "Fountain" was published in May 1917 in *The Blind Man*, the proto-Dada art magazine, which argued that the significance of Duchamp's gesture was

---

[19] In practice, an established art gallery is usually resistant to take risks on the new artists who are not at all recognized as legitimate cultural producers. To be able to produce the symbolic meaning and value for the work of art, the gallery must often exercise symbolic exclusion; it would simply loose its power if it legitimizes every debutant as a legitimate cultural producer.

[20] Fountain is one of the ready-mades, a technical term coined by Duchamp: a set of various objects Duchamp obtained from commercial suppliers or from everyday circulation and made them into artefacts by giving them titles (Hopkins, 2002).

in that he chose the object, took it from ordinary life and replaced its "useful significance ...

[with] the new title and point of view – [which] created a new thought for that object" (from

The Blind Man in Warburton, 2003, p. 3). With "Fountain", Duchamp challenged the

institution of art by questioning what can and should be called art: by nominating an object

as a work of art, Duchamp invalidated the canonical idea of the aesthetically beautiful, hand

produced work of art. Ever since "Fountain" found its way out in public[21], it has generated

much literature in the theory and philosophy of art. In the 1960s, members of the

Conceptual Art movement elaborated on the Duchampian idea of nomination, and made it a

building block by manifesting a change in the nature of art from mere aesthetic appearance

to conception. The disruptive impulse of the Conceptual Art movement and its attempts to

subvert the institutional framework of the arts is the subject for discussion of Chapter 2.

Conclusion

I have established a theoretical framework using Bourdieu in order to gain a better

understanding of the art world and the institution of the arts. Bourdieu's theory of the field

of cultural production has been an instrumental element in my undertaking. It identifies the

relationship of the field of cultural production to the work of art, the artists, and the art

gallery. I have shown that the work of art is a collective social product and its meaning and

symbolic value are the product of the social structures and institutions within which it is

produced, circulated and distributed. We also discovered that the definition of the work of

art and the artist is an issue at stake as it involves a great deal of symbolic power in order to

formulate what is to be called "legitimate art". The field of cultural production then is

---

[21] Fountain has never been officially displayed in public and the only evidence of its existence is its photograph in The Blind Man, an art publication that made a case for "R. Mutt's" defence (Hopkins, 2002, p. 253).

essentially "a site of struggle in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the [artist] and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the [artist]" (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 42). The ultimate relationship among the agents within the field of cultural production is the struggle over the imposition of cultural authority, and the vision of the art world as a whole. Further, the stakes of symbolic struggle in the cultural field and the embodiment of often unrecognizable relations of power within and outside of the field determine a status quo, which is sustained and continuously reinforced by a symbolic power of a vast social apparatus, which includes academia, art history, art critics and museums. Importantly, the autonomy and the dynamic of the field of cultural production is also determined by the external determinants which, when they enter the field, change its structure and dynamic accordingly. As we will discover in Chapter 2, the external determinants, if employed in resistance to the field's established hegemony, can generate a new cultural logic and form social change.

CHAPTER TWO.
CONCEPTUAL ART:
THE RISE AND FALL OF DISRUPTIVE IMPULSE

Having determined the framework of the field of cultural production and its power

dynamic, this chapter investigates an historical instance where this framework was

challenged, subverted and altered. To review, the essential relationship among the agents in

the field of cultural production is defined by the struggle over the imposition of cultural

authority and over the ability and power to formulate what is 'legitimate' art and artistic

practice. I would now like to investigate how the Conceptual Art Movement reflected this

struggle and served to challenge the boundaries of the institutions of the arts. The

emergence of Conceptual art represents a significant aesthetic movement in the Twentieth

Century, and provides a powerful historical case study for an understanding of the theory of

the field of cultural production and its power dynamic. Conceptual art "represents a

foundation on which may be devised a new challenge to 'the authority of the institutional

apparatus framing [art's] place in society'" (Corris, 2004a, p. 13). I will argue here that a

group of cultural producers in the 1960s and early 1970s, in attempting to challenge and test

the limits of the art world and its hegemony to control the definition and meaning of the

artistic production, have developed a movement and a momentum that, due to its critical

engagement with the established cultural practices, radically subverted the institutional

framework of the arts.

I will proceed with applying the theory of the field of cultural production to the

events of the mid to late 1960s and argue that it was philosophy that enabled Conceptual

artists to mobilize a strong movement that expanded the traditional outlook on

contemporary art and its function in the society. By critically engaging with philosophy and

employing it as an intellectual and artistic resource, the artists were able to undermine the

established framework of the field of cultural production and to transform the actual

conditions of artistic and cultural practice. Further, the birth of the Conceptual art

movement was also the time when art was entering the world of commerce, leading to art's

marketing development and to the early evolution of its commodity status (Mattick, 2003). I

suggest here that the concurrent emergence of a new corporate patron and a collector, and

the rapid development of information technologies, mass media and publicity became radical

catalysts for the structural shifts in the field of cultural production. I discuss the emergence

of a new art dealer as a curator and a creator, changing ideology of the art gallery, its

institutional politics, and the effect all of these new phenomena had on cultural practice and

the field of cultural production at large. I conclude this chapter discussing the significance

the Conceptual art movement had on the field of cultural production and why its radical and

disruptive impulse failed to produce long-term structural changes to the institutional

framework of the field of cultural production.

The emergence of Conceptual art: the catalyst for changing practices and attitudes

The precursor for the emergence of Conceptual art was European avant-garde art.

Its emergence in the early Twentieth Century was in part an attack on the status of art in

bourgeois society[22]. "What is negated is not the earlier form of art but art as an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men. ... The avant-garde art directs itself to the way art functions in society, a process that does as much to determine the effect that works have as does the particular content" (Burger, 1992, p. 59). The Western history of art attributes the emergence of Conceptual art and its early development to Marcel Duchamp who introduced his famous 'ready-mades' in the early 1900s and who proclaimed his artistic practice to be definitive of his artistic status. Duchamp's work involved "an attempt to escape the rule of taste by the use of mechanical techniques and the artistic recycling of 'ready-made' objects" (Mattick, 2003, p. 124). His artistic practice was founded on a performative act rather than on the traditional 'work of art': it involved taking objects from ordinary life, such as the famous urinal from a public washroom titled as Fountain, titling them, and then announcing them as the 'works of art'. By conferring the status of the work of art on the chosen object, Duchamp "[rejected] the retinal in favour of the mental" and made the audience rethink the aesthetic properties of the work of art in favour of its idea and concept (Colpitt, 2004, p. 41). He introduced the power of artistic nomination, claiming that since any object can be a work of art, art can no longer be subjected to aesthetic judgements. The artist attacked the aesthetic definition of art and asserted its autonomy from its aesthetic properties; he declared "the total absence of good or bad taste" (Mattick, 2003, p. 124). Although Duchamp left unanswered important questions of who is to be called an artist and how, the significance of his artistic gesture was in the radical idea that the artistic decision-making is a complex social process. His conceptual definition of the work of

---

[22] The term Avant-Garde gained its significance in the early twentieth century. Around 1910 the term was used to describe the contemporary Cubist and Futurist artists as well as 'technically radical' art movements including Fauvism and Expressionism. They all 'threatened' conventional taste and prevailing aesthetic sensibilities and were critical of social and artistic cannons. The term was also widely associated with a radical political edge: in 1902 it was used by Lenin in his formulation of 'vanguard' party and subsequent conception of Bolshevism as a powerful political force (Wood, 2002).

art had enormous consequences for the field of cultural production, which were fully realized only during the Western Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s.

The institutional conditions for the emergence of Conceptual art in the mid 1960s were 'pre-determined' by the process of reception for Duchamp's works into the art institution: "the positivization of the ready-made", a process which involved the direct designation of the ready-made as 'art' after its preceding rejection (of the Fountain)" (Osborne, 1999, p. 57)[23]. Conceptual art can be defined as a set of artistic practices critically engaged with art, politics, media, mass culture and technology (Corris, 2004a). It was conceived in the 1960s with the first generation of artists to attend university (Osborne, 1999, p. 50) who applied the critical potential of philosophy to the current state of the field of cultural production. The established ideology of the arts assumed social conservatism where the institutional framework of the arts controlled the production of the symbolic meaning of the work of art. It must be stressed that the art world in the 1960s was largely influenced by formalism, particularly its father and avid defender Clement Greenberg (Colpitt, 2004). Much art criticism in the U.S. was influenced by Greenberg's idea of artistic judgement, which was limited to the artwork's visual appearance "at the expense of extra-artistic references and literary content, which, in any case, were seldom pertinent to prevailing styles of art" (Colpitt, 2004, p. 28). Formalism became the criteria for art criticism and for evaluation of 'good' and 'bad' art. Greenberg's writings on critical art theory including his essay "Art and Culture" in 1961 became the embodiment and the pillar of the art world's dominating ideology and power. He consequently became the worst enemy of

---

[23] In Chapter 1 my conclusion explains in more detail the fate of Duchamp's "Fountain".

any progressive art of that decade, including Conceptual art[24]. This limiting for the artist

ideology was not welcomed by the first generation of art students, and philosophy began to

function as the means to assert their artistic autonomy and seize control over the meaning of

their artistic production. In other words, Anglo-American analytical philosophy provided "a

radically different art-educational ideal," offering a new image of the artist as an intellectual

creator and critic, "who would aspire to pass judgement on the meaning of the work"

(Osborne, 1999, p. 51). Conceptual art represents: "...a radical attempt to realign two

hitherto independent domains of the cultural field: artistic production and philosophical

production" (Osborne, 1999, p. 50). It is thus argued that Conceptual art and its inception

must be looked at through the prism of philosophy[25] due to the "categorical extremism of

[artists'] positions (they pushed harder against the limits of the established notion of art) ...

[and] because of the affinity of their artistic practices to the practice of criticism" (Osborne,

1999, p. 49). Art with its philosophical investment and subsequent conceptual development

acquired a new task: having abandoned its aesthetic importance, it aspired to transcend its

own institutional context.

> Conceptual art is not just another particular kind of art ... [it is] a
> transformation in the relationship of sensuousness to conceptuality within
> the ontology of the artwork which challenges its definition as the object of a
> specifically 'aesthetic' (that is non-'conceptual') or quintessentially 'visual'
> experience. Conceptual art was an attack on the art object as the site of a
> look (Osborne, 1999, p. 48).

The emergence of an artist as a sole creator of the meaning for his/her artistic

production led to an erosion between the definitions of the artist and art critic and to an

expansion of artistic practice at large. In particular, the art-critical discourse refocused on the

---

[24] This antagonism was well expressed by the early Conceptual artists. For example, John Latham publicly
destroyed a copy of Greenberg's "Art and Culture" by chewing its pages (Colpitt, 2004).
[25] Osborne defines philosophy here as "pure conceptuality, pure thought, pure reason" (Osborne, 1999, p. 47).

ontological questions about the essential nature and 'legitimate' form of artworks. Artists, enthusiastically engaging in such discourse, used its critical potential as a new productive resource for their artistic practice and as a means of gaining and maintaining control over the fate and meaning of their work. In other words, the emerging art-critical discourse, which incorporated both artistic and philosophical productions, allowed Conceptual artists to directly reassign the cultural authority from the institutional framework of the field of cultural production to the cultural producers themselves. If Bourdieu's theory of the field is applied to examine the Conceptual art movement, it can be suggested that the artists attempted to alter the positions within the field of cultural production by producing the symbolic meaning for their own work with their own means of artistic practice. Significantly, the introduction of philosophy into the field of cultural production allowed Conceptual artists, with their novel practices of art production, to challenge the status quo in the art world, which was defined by the established institutional hierarchies and economies of value and meaning.

What was the significance of philosophy for Conceptual art and the field of cultural production? The works of Sol Le Witt, Joseph Kosuth and the British group Art & Language illustrate the connection between philosophy and Conceptual art. These works originated in the mid 1960s to early 1970s, and demonstrate how philosophy served these artists and the entire Conceptual Art movement, reflecting how the artistic movement transcended institutional contexts by pushing the boundaries of cultural production (Mattick, 2003).

Sol LeWitt's 1967 essay "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" marks the beginning of Conceptual art as a movement. LeWitt's essay is:

a distillation of the immanent logic of an object-producing, though not object-based, practice which evolved, primarily, through the exploration of the effects of self-regulating series and systems of rules for decision-making about the production of objects out of preformed materials (Osborne, 1999, p. 52).

LeWitt insisted that any idea, visually realized or not, can qualify as a work of art where its physical properties are not essential, they are simply optional. This philosophical investment has immense consequences for the field of cultural production, particularly the institutional context of artistic production. LeWitt understood the work of art as "a conductor from the artist's mind to the viewer's" (LeWitt in Osborne, 1999, p. 54). LeWitt disregarded the role of the institution to facilitate the communication between the artist's mind and the viewer's. He implied that the institution is not necessary and even derogatory for artistic practice. Importantly, LeWitt's "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" prepared the discursive platform for another Conceptual art pioneer, Joseph Kosuth.

Joseph Kosuth was a Conceptual artist active in the mid-1960's who famously problematized the field of artistic practice and cultural production and whose Conceptual artistic practice focused on the idea that art is definitively philosophical. Kosuth's influential "Art After Philosophy" was first published in 1969, and proclaimed art as an analytic proposition, where the work of art is the work of art and asserted "that Conceptual art originated as a reaction to the subjective aesthetics and general mindlessness of formalist art and criticism" (Colpitt, 2004, pp. 28-29). In his writing, Kosuth facilitated a mental shift from "the wide eyed surprise of 'This is art?' to a new way of claiming 'This is art'" (Osborne, 1999, p. 57). Kosuth was inspired by the spirit of anti-establishment and, by the late 1960s he started working in 'alternative' media rather than "the inherently tainted, corrupted ones of the old masters" (Alberro, 2003, p. 29). His methods involved "the black and white photographic blow-up of a dictionary entry for the word 'water'" (Alberro, 2003,

p. 29)[26]. While offering significant art historical references, Kosuth emphasized the formalized linguistic information by using the definition of random words taken from a dictionary to stress the irrelevance of the content of his work[27]. Kosuth instead insisted that his work was about an idea and context (Alberro, 2003).

Kosuth argued that artists are not only sole creators of the artwork: they are also creators of its symbolic status and meaning. Kosuth attempted to undermine the distinction between the work of art and the artist's critical discourse, which resulted in the work of art becoming 'the product of the artist's 'total signifying activity'" (Osborne, 1999, p. 60). He used the authority of philosophy to ascertain this right and power to creation. Proclaiming an artist as self-curator, Kosuth initiated an important institutional discourse on who is the artist and who decides to designate the artist's status, clearly questioning the legitimizing apparatus of the art world. His invaluable contribution to the field of cultural production cannot be underestimated: Kosuth, through his generous investment in philosophy, introduced 'the death of the critic' at the time when Greenberg's formalist evaluative judgment was at its peak. He thus pioneered the radical anti-criteria of judgement capable of adequately addressing this new art movement. The acquired level of artistic autonomy due to growing irrelevance of the critic offered a truly revolutionary sense of power and control over the artistic production, a novelty that artists had never enjoyed before. Kosuth's artistic practice, although criticized for being reactionary and not adequately developed, became a 'neo-avant-garde strategy' to displace the hegemony of Greenberg's "master narrative and allowed for the artists to assume new authority and no longer feel beholden to the old

[26] Kosuth exhibited this piece at the Museum of Normal Art, which was previously called the Lannis Gallery (Alberro, 2003).
[27] The art historical reference in his *Art as Idea as Idea* (1967) is directed to the white-black Kawara's "date paintings," along with its "directness, colour scheme, [and] incorporation of writing into the field of painting" (Alberro, 2003, p. 30).

paradigm" (Stimson, 2004, p. 289). In other words, the artists no longer had to be "the

pawns in the legitimization of ideals that they did not believe in" (Stimson, 2004, p. 289).

Similarly to LeWitt, Kosuth utilized philosophy as a productive artistic resource. The artistic

practice for both involved the use of language, analytic philosophy, and critical discourse,

which enabled them to demonstrate the radical insufficiency of the aesthetics as the

meaning-producing criteria of the artistic practice. It can be thus suggested that LeWitt's

and Kosuth's philosophical investments became critical supplements that supported

Conceptual art's claim to legitimization.

Kosuth's use of philosophy offered radical potential for the early Conceptualists to

operate on a different, seemingly more autonomous plane. However, his own aspirations to

break away from the institutional frameworks of the art sphere resulted in the urgent

necessity to strategically utilize the mass media and publicity to establish his artistic status,

which Kosuth had to work on from scratch. He did so boldly and successfully by utilizing

the emerging channels of mass media and publicity. Kosuth skilfully employed public

relations and self-promotion: he understood the value and necessity of mobilizing the mass

media and took full advantage of it. "Accordingly, [Kosuth] was often found at the 'right'

places, promoting his career and cultivating 'social capital,' ... 'a capital of social

connections' ... that is often ... [necessary] in winning and keeping the confidence of high

society, and with it a clientele," and that may be drawn on to make an artistic career"

(Alberro, 2003, p. 27)[28]. By utilizing publicity to promote his image as an artist, Kosuth

established himself as a crucial figure in offering the vernacular for a discourse in the art

world. He defined the critical terms that informed and interpreted his artwork by refusing

---

[28] Alberro uses Bourdieu to support his arguments and historical account on Kosuth: the artist has understood
the importance of social or symbolic capital and its value and 'the rate of exchange' in the field of cultural
production.

the traditional division of labour between the critic and the artist and by writing his own art criticism for mass media publications (Alberro, 2003). Arthur R. Rose was Kosuth's pseudonym, which allowed him to write about the art of like-minded artists and to continuously redefine the Conceptual art movement and its terms. This contributed positively to the meaning of his own work and artistic practice; he strategically treated publicity as a "total signifying activity" (Alberro, 2003, p. 42), which resulted in the collapse of boundaries between art and art criticism as well as in a dramatic increase in the art work's additional value and desirability. Alberro argues that Kosuth's strategies as an artist and art critic were similar to that of advertising: "[a]long with promoting the product, [his] campaign included rich overtones about the career, creativity, future – in short, the image -- of the artist" (Alberro, 2003, p. 42).

Aspiring to be in charge of his own career, Kosuth gained attention from leading art critics, collectors and mass media publications including *Time* and *Newsweek*. He personified a new type of 'professional' and career oriented artist who carefully yet aggressively cultivated his image as an artist well beyond the art world. For instance, Kosuth organized a well-publicised lecture series with the participation of influential Conceptualists including Donald Judd, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Smithson, Sol LeWitt, and Dan Graham (Alberro, 2003). Kosuth also opened the Lannis Gallery on no budget together with his fellow artists Christine Kozlov and Lannis Spencer to organize radical art shows and to capitalize on the Conceptual art movement at large. He was a revolutionary figure in the art world as he did something that no artists did before: he skilfully assumed the roles of an artist, critic, curator and gallery owner, and he made sure the world knew his name. To speak in Bourdieu's terms, Kosuth took charge of obtaining large amounts of symbolic capital by the means of media and publicity. He utilized the emerging technologies and resulting power of publicity

in his advantage to acquire the currency of the art world (i.e. the recognition, the prestige and the validation of his artistic practice), currency that was not previously available to the artist's disposal. Kosuth subverted the field of cultural production by simply disregarding the art world's traditional channels for an established formula of the distribution of symbolic capital.

The Art & Language movement was influential for the development of Conceptual art practices in the early 1970s and included artists such as Karl Beveridge, Jill Breakstone, Ian Burn, Corole Condè, Preston Heller, Michael Krugman, Andrew Menard, Philip Pilkington, Dave Rushton, and Paul Wood[29]. The group realized that the nature of the artwork had become increasingly dependent on the framework of supporting institutions and aspired to subvert the traditional notion of professional competence in art. The group saw Conceptual art practices as a rebellion against the institutional framework of the arts and saw the discipline of philosophy as a radical potential and a possibility for a new kind of art; they all employed language and philosophical inquiry as main resource for artistic practice (Corris, 2004a). Further, if Kosuth thought artistic practice meant a set of fixed philosophical positions, Art and Language proposed an inquiry into what these positions were. The members of Art and Language aspired to explore a possibility of making art through a method of a theoretical analysis: "they were mesmerized by the formal possibilities of various systems of meaning, in which the radical openness of purely logical possibility appears to have functioned as a utopian metaphor for the artistic and the social alike" (Osborne, 1999, p. 63). It has been argued that the group's pursuit of philosophy as a method for a new kind of art placed these artists closer to the practitioners of a

---

[29] These members of Art and Language all eventually abandoned the artistic field in favour of political and/or academic fields. Currently, Art and Language is comprised of Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden (Corris, 2004a).

philosophical field. Yet, they were still distant from the field of philosophy in so far as their

written work as a form of art was "insulating them from the legitimating (and delegitimating)

mechanisms of the philosophical field itself" (Osborne, 1999, p. 63). The tensions between

the philosophical, social, and artistic dimension were prevalent within Art & Language and

resulted in "critical aggression and defensive self-parody" (Osborne, 1999, p. 64). It further

marked the culmination and the demise of Conceptualism: "the fantasy of the resolution of

the constitutive ambiguity of philosophy's double coding" (Osborne, 1999, p. 64).

It has been argued that few conceptual artists could renegotiate their artistic status

outside of the established art world and its channels of circulation and distribution. "For

most Conceptual artists, the option seemed to be limited to attempts to colonize the existing

cultural spaces or to take seriously their own rhetoric and proceed to carve out their own

cultural spaces, most likely in the margins of established systems" (Corris, 2004b, p. 102).

The most successful strategies resulted in such cultural spaces as artist-run galleries,

collectives, and art publications produced and disseminated by artists. Nevertheless, early

Conceptual art put in question certain tacit relationships among the various agents within the

field of cultural production. In particular, the relationships between the artists and the

institutionalized framework were significantly problematized. Conceptual artists rethought

their relationship with the institution of the art world and renegotiated their position with

media, art galleries and the collectors. The artists attempted to structurally alter the position

in the field of cultural production by altering their own role in the production of artwork.

The physical and symbolic properties of art were now under the artist's control, not art

galleries, art critics or public art institutions. Duchamp, and later LeWitt, Kosuth and Art &

Language reconfigured the significance and the function of the work of art, where the idea

behind the work, the art-critical discourse and even a theoretical analysis all became a new

form of artistic practice and formed a new cultural logic in the field of cultural production.

The world outside of art:
Themes and issues during the emergence of Conceptual art and their effect on the field of cultural production.

The importance of Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth and Art & Language should not be

underestimated and, although, criticized as radically reactionary, their novel practices set the

platform for further evolution for an artist as a creator of the artwork and its symbolic

meaning and value. However, the momentum that Conceptual art gained in the late 1960s

and early 1970s did not take place in isolation and should also be attributed to the larger

social and cultural phenomena. It can be argued that if the process of art production and its

symbolic meaning was altered due to the introduction of philosophy in the field of cultural

production, however, it was information technology along with publicity and mass media

and the emergence of an educated middle class that altered art's circulation, distribution,

consumption and thus the dynamic of the field as a whole.

The sudden economic growth in the mid 1960s offered positive speculations for the

economy, including the art market. This led to the infusion of corporate funds and the

emergence of a new type of 'corporate' collector, which became one of the most significant

factors in the art world. Corporate collectors preferred the investment potential in

contemporary artwork to more established masterpieces. "Art was being purchased at record

rates, and a new type of patronage was emerging that differed dramatically from the elite

circles that previously dominated the art market…" (Alberro, 2003, p. 7). Corporate

collectors "imagined new, innovative art as a symbolic ally in the pursuit of

entrepreneurship, a partner in their own struggle to revitalize business and the consumer order generally" (Alberro, 2003, p. 13). By supporting new art trends, predominantly including Conceptual art, a corporate art patron was able to create a new positive business image and a sign of commitment to fresh ideas. By the late 1960s art was already part of the every day work life of middle class managerial social groups and allowed the continuous flow of corporate funds into the field of cultural production by developing a new type of art patronage. The field of cultural production was faced with the rise of a new corporate art collector and consequently a new art dealer who took full advantage of media, publicity and the availability of corporate capital.

Art, with its conceptual development was no longer a strategy of escapism of the privileged; it was quickly becoming a part of the every day life of the emerging corporate class, with art's presence in offices and buildings. Collecting art was becoming an exciting, adventurous and risk-taking business, which was fuelled with unprecedented arts publicity and media coverage. Consumer publications such as *Vanity Fair* announced "the art world as an institution had become the centre of attention and the artist a supplier of commodities in an exchange of fashionable goods" (Alberro, 2003, p. 7). Importantly, the monetary gain that the investment into contemporary art could bring was not the only incentive for a new corporate patron. The fame and prestige that this type of patronage could allow was unprecedented. It was the beginning of "the new phase of image-centered capitalism" (Alberro, 2003, p. 7) and the contemporary art scene was in the centre of it all. The media gave purchasers and the artists the same amount of attention. Art now proliferated in workspaces, private collections as well as museums and art galleries, phenomena that made the legitimization of art even less dependable on the opinions of established art critics and academics. By 1973 the exhibition of Conceptual art became a common practice for galleries

and museums; it dominated the 1971 Paris Biennial, the Guggenheim International (NY, 1971) and even Documenta V (1972). Conceptual art was written about in *Artforum*, *Studio International*, *Domus* and *Art International*. By the mid 1970s it was identified as a global practice and, was prominently featured in Western Europe, North America, South America, Eastern Europe and Australia (Green, 2004). The combination of conceptual development in the arts, corporate collectors and corporate capital together with the hungry publicity and mass media capabilities created a platform (although short lived) upon which the artist for the first time enjoyed control over the creation of the symbolic meaning and value of the art work he/she created, his/her recognition and prestige and legitimization of the art work independently of established institutional framework of the arts. Significantly, the emergence of new information technologies allowed communication of the Conceptual art movement around the world as a new global art practice.

As a result of this soaring popularity, the idea of the "artist" and "art gallery" faced significant changes. As previously mentioned, the emerging Conceptual artists in the mid to late 1960s, with the exploration of novel practices and their increasing aspiration to be in charge of their own destinies and their subsequent careers were the precursor to that change. This shift in the artists' consciousness coincided with larger social developments, including the evolution of a middle class who now obtained university degrees and were increasingly becoming part of the multinational corporate world. There was a strong emergence of a "new kind of society … variously described as post-industrial, information and consumer society…" (Alberro, 2003, p. 2). Further, as Alberro suggests, it was "the market, among other things, by novel modes of communication and distribution of information, new types of consumption … and the proliferation of advertising and the media" that made dramatic changes in the field of cultural production. 'Informatization' in particular, a phenomenon

that described the advanced 'image' capitalism in the 1960s and "Conceptualism's unusual formal features and mode of circulation in many ways utilize and enact the deeper logic of informatization" (Alberro, 2003, p. 3). This is an important theme that my thesis will elaborate on later in the chapter as well as in Chapter 3.

These developments of the mid to late 1960's in the field of cultural production marked a distinct deviation from highly academic art criticism; the symbolic validity of the work of art now relied more on the role of the curators, art dealers and artists themselves, "whose advise often emphasized the exchange value of works of art alongside their aesthetic value" (Alberro, 2003, p. 8). The new generation of collectors began to purchase the art works prior to their legitimization by museums, established art critics and the institutional framework of the arts at large, escalating artists' recognition in the art world and improving their financial success. This "fundamental reconception of patronage" (Alberro, 2003, p. 6) changed the dynamic and structure of the field of cultural production. To speak in Bourdieu's terms, the pre-existing formula of the distribution of symbolic capital, i.e. the artist's recognition, prestige and the symbolic meaning and value of their artistic practice, was dramatically subverted and put in the hands of a new generation of artists, art dealers, curators, and young adventurous corporate collectors. Their roles were becoming interrelated, and their previously strictly defined roles were beginning to blur. The symbolic value and meaning of the artwork and the validation and recognition of the artist were now determined by popularity and marketability hyped with the help of publicity and mass media.

This provides a classic example of how the field of cultural production reacted to the emergence of the larger social phenomena: the tension between the artists and their institutional cage of the art world, defined by the formalists' ideals and judgements, erupted in the radical subversion of the art world's earlier established power to validate 'legitimate'

art. It dramatically empowered the artists to gain legitimacy on their own terms without the approval the traditional framework of the art institution.

The new art dealer
and the symptoms of globalism

To illustrate these radical developments taking place in the field of cultural production during the Conceptual art movement, it is timely to mention New York based conceptual art dealer, curator and entrepreneur Seth Siegelaub. During his active career from 1964 to 1971, Siegelaub skilfully utilized publicity and corporate patronage, organized highly influential art exhibitions and played an important role in the transformation of art exhibition production practices. Siegelaub questioned the traditional boundaries and frameworks of the field of cultural production and was at the forefront of structural shifts that were taking place in the art world starting from the mid 1960s. Before his departure from the art world in 1971, Siegelaub significantly transformed the art exhibition concept and the processes of distribution, circulation and consumption of the work of art and thus offered a powerful alternative to the field of cultural production, its dynamic and structure.

Siegelaub mastered the commercial marketing of conceptual art work, capitalizing on "the relationship between the highly innovative exhibition and distribution practices he developed in the late 1960s and the ongoing aesthetic dialogue in the work of the artists associated with him during this period" (Alberro, 2003, pp. 4-5)[30]. A more detailed examination of his methods sheds light on the changing status of the artist and the new

---

[30] Among others, Siegelaub represented Joseph Kosuth, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner, Douglas Huebler, and Ian Wilson, influential Conceptual artists of the 1960s.

cultural logic that these novel methods of distribution, circulation and consumption of the work of art introduced to the field of cultural production.

Siegelaub's success can be largely attributed to his strategies of publicity. Often organizing shows out of his apartment and maintaining an invitation only policy, he was meticulously attentive to the image of the artists, their identities, and ways to publicize his art exhibitions. Siegelaub

> would host a soiree, or salon, at his apartment, to which he would invite a select group of collectors, critics, and museum curators to mingle with the artists he represented. This tactful organization of an exclusive "inner circle" was the way Siegelaub now did business and showcased his artists' work (Alberro, 2003, p. 120).

That was his way of obtaining critical social capital for the development of a successful career in the art world. He developed a well-constructed publicity strategy by developing a public relations network and tactics to promote the image and the idea behind that image. The social capital that this network provided allowed Siegelaub to use the new growing source of corporate patronage to his advantage. He convinced his corporate entrepreneurs that the support of the arts would legitimize and ultimately increase their economic and social power. He argued that "increased sales would follow from the type of image, prestige, and legitimacy that a corporate patron would gain through collecting [and supporting] arts" (Alberro, 2003, p. 14). Bridging corporate and art fields together, Siegelaub introduced the simultaneous and mutually beneficial exchange of cultural and corporate capital to the corporate world and the art world respectively, which allowed the corporate patron to create an image of benevolence, social progressiveness and legitimacy, and eventually translate this cultural capital into greater economic capital. This mutual exchange

and consequent influx of corporate money into the sphere of the arts, allowed Siegelaub to transform an art gallery into a progressive modern business institution.

Importantly, Siegelaub and the artists he represented a shared strong resentment toward the institutional hierarchy of the art world, its established conventions and its inherent constricted judgement. This hostility in part resulted in their abolition of art criticism as a main vehicle for cultural legitimization; it also resulted in rethinking the architectural setting for artistic production and distribution that was traditionally realized strictly in terms of the art gallery setting. In turn, Siegelaub's innovative and aggressive strategies of utilizing publicity and his bold deviation from traditional structures of the art world allowed for a gradual expansion of artistic expression. In particular, this expansion was expressed in the abolition of the traditional art gallery and the distribution of art and dissemination of art ideas through catalogue and symposia.

Siegelaub operated his own art gallery, the Seth Siegelaub Contemporary Art Gallery, from 1964 to 1966 and then continued his career as an art dealer by organizing highly influential art exhibitions out of his apartment in New York[31]. The economic growth deeply affected the field of cultural production and resulted in an influx of corporate capital in the art world, which led to its unprecedented growth with an increasing number of art galleries and dealers. Faced with fierce competition, Siegelaub was not able to cover the gallery's overhead. He and his artists were inevitably confronted with the possibility of "abandoning the institution of the gallery or museum with all of its restrictions in favour of a supposedly

---

[31] In the early 1968 Siegelaub organized two influential shows with the artists including Andre, Barry and Weiner. The first one took place in a highly controlled environment of the Laura Knott Gallery and the second at Windham College which, due to lack of actual gallery space, produced only temporal outdoor and site specific works. This, as Siegelaub, envisioned, broke and subverted the traditional framework of art exhibition practices. The "January 5-31, 1969" group exhibition was famous in that it provided art criticism of the artists included in the show: Kosuth, Barry, Weiner, Huebler among others (Alberro, 2003).

uninhibited, unrestricted, open, external space where none of these limitations apply"

(Alberro, 2003, p. 24). Restrictions here imply the formula of cultural legitimacy, which lies

at the heart of the symbolic struggle in the field of cultural production. Siegelaub proved that

in the 1960s an artist does not have to belong to an art gallery to have a successful career and

to be culturally legitimate. Siegelaub's site of exhibition became 'ephemeral', and he broke

down the idea of an art gallery: "... [w]hat is [an art gallery's] function? Its primary function

is that it's a place for artists to put their work out. But it breaks down to many aspects. ...

There's space, there's money, there's exposure or publicity. And I've just, in a sense,

eliminated space. My gallery is the world now" (Siegelaub in Alberro, 2003p. 153). Siegelaub

predicted a phenomenon that would be realized only in early 2000's: a nomadic virtual art

gallery that literally transcends the dimensions of time and space.

The emerging figure of the curator and a creator of the artwork was strongly

facilitated by Seth Siegelaub who was then an art dealer as well as an influential exhibition

organizer[32]. Siegelaub explored and challenged the boundaries of the institutional framework

of the art world by denying the traditional format of an art exhibition and by introducing the

catalogue as a new form of art dissemination. "This phenomenon would expand with the

international art world over the next two decades, part of the growing commercial and

institutional activity" (Altshuler, 1994, p. 236). As previously noted, the mode of

presentation for Conceptual art became increasingly linguistic and ideas about the work of

art were increasingly more important than their realization. The catalogue introduced by

Siegelaub connected verbal means and documentation with the definition of exhibition:

"The nature of Conceptual art allowed Seth Siegelaub to make the catalogue into a new kind

---

[32] These efforts were made first by the artists themselves including "the Early Dada, Spring of Earnst, Baargeld, Duchamp's 1938 Paris installation, ... transformations of the galerie Iris Clert by Klein and by Arman, Oldenburg store" (Altshuler, 1994, p. 236).

of exhibition space" (Altshuler, 1994, p. 238). Siegelaub was able to effectively express his

antiestablishment dispositions through the lack of gallery space and ability to have a 'show'

by distributing a catalogue of the documented artwork. For instance, the show "Douglas

Huebler: November 1968" was executed solely in a form of a catalogue. By utilizing the

concept of a catalogue in his exhibition, he subverted the 'normal' relationship among the art

exhibition, the catalogue and their functions. The physical artworks were now purely

illustrative and included in the catalogue, emphasizing the insignificance and redundancy of

the physical realization of the artwork since it was expressed purely through language and

ideas. Through the implementation of a catalogue as a form of exhibition, Siegelaub

harnessed a new way of viewership and experience by producing catalogues where

documentation became an integral part of the artwork: "whoever possessed the journal [for

the Huebler show] had a stake in the artist's production" (Alberro, 2003, p. 153). By

developing alternative and radically new forms of distribution systems and utilizing the

infrastructure of publicity, Siegelaub "made an unlimited viewership a real possibility"; it was

a new condition, which made art "unprecedently uncircumscribed and mobile", and which

radically subverted the traditional structures including the art gallery and its processes of

hierarchization through the inclusion in and exclusion from cultural legitimacy (Alberro,

2003, p. 153).

The catalogue, as an artistic site, served to establish and communicate the work of art

to the rest of world as part of the artwork. By publicizing and distributing his artists' works

in the catalogue, Siegelaub emphasized the role of information in artistic practice and

arguably commenced the process of geographical (although purely artistic) decentralization.

This was aided by the formal properties of Conceptual art, where ideas, context and

information were an essential element of its production: "the deterritorializing properties of

conceptual art liberated it not only from traditional institutional sites of display, but also from geographical centers" (Alberro, 2003, p. 153).

Further, Siegelaub's most innovative methods of art distribution and circulation involved the organization of symposia, as public events, simultaneously taking place with the exhibitions he organized. On June 17, 1969 he arranged for his artists to communicate with each other and the audience over a telephone connecting New York, Ottawa and Vancouver. "This multicontext electronic conversation was transmitted to an assembled audience over the public address system in the SFU Theatre" (Alberro, 2003, p. 156). Following artists' exchange, the audience was invited to participate in the discussion with the artists and to take part in the artistic process.

It can be argued that Siegelaub was a forerunner of the idea that would come to realization only in the late 20th century: globalized art world. With his ideals for decentralization, deterritorialization, and a more inclusive art world, Siegelaub recognized the early symptoms of advanced globalization that the social and economic systems were beginning to manifest in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The methods that Siegelaub used to distribute the works of art paralleled the "transformations in the dissemination of information brought about by contemporary globalization" (Alberro, 2003, p. 159). It is important to note that Siegelaub's ideal of decentralization and deterritorialization via information shared close affinity with the emerging communication discourse initiated by Marshall McLuhan, who pioneered with enthusiasm the ultimate importance "of the medium of communication over the contents of media messages, encapsulated in his formula 'the medium is the message', transferred meaning onto the medium itself through the technological structure" (Alberro, 2003, p. 154).

Siegelaub's view of the world as his gallery has undeniable parallels with the larger social phenomena at the time. In particular, the processes of cybernetic and informational revolutions in the economic field in the 1960s and 1970s mechanized technologies of communication which resulted in capital and information that could be transferred instantaneously around the globe and marked a new stage of globalization. The time-space compression, which this new stage of globalization allowed, also translated into cultural 'compression' (Alberro, 2003).

Siegelaub took advantage of the time space compression idea as part of the larger social phenomenon of globalization to break away from the art gallery as an institution where artists traditionally exhibited their art. Evidently, Conceptual artists' methods of art production and Siegelaub's methods of art distribution were developing along with the Western processes of globalization, which integrated the field of cultural production "into advanced capitalism's generalized commodity system" (Alberro, 2003, p. 154). He was a pioneer of cultural globalization, although initially this fate was not as clearly apparent. It was around this time when Siegelaub's perception of the art world and his role in it started to change. Siegelaub became interested in communication processes between the artist and the rest of the world independently of the artists' geographical location. He was a facilitator of a change in the field of cultural production, allowing artists on their own behalf to communicate, advocate and legitimize their art and artistic practice on a global scale.

At the heart of Siegelaub's ideas and methods was the complex relationship between the art world and market and his aspirations for subverting the hierarchical relation of the artist to the field of cultural production. His new methods of exhibiting art, which undeniably were born out of Conceptual artistic practice, "not only delimited the size of the audience, but also shifted the emphasis from objects to ideas" (Alberro, 2003, p. 155).

Siegelaub was an effective facilitator in his artists' struggles to eliminate the object of art or to dematerialize it, which meant "to become aware of that idea was to posses it" (Alberro, 2003, p. 155). Importantly, in his efforts to dematerialize the work of art and abandon the traditional institutional framework for the expansion of artistic production and distribution of the work of art, he did achieve a broader inclusion of audience in the field of cultural production[33]. However, although Siegelaub and his artists, with their novel modes of production of the work of art, attempted to reach their autonomy in regard to the processes of cultural legitimization and abandon a traditional white cube and the traditional art criticism, their efforts resulted in comodification of the work of art and its inclusion into the world of corporate finance, the rules of publicity and mass media. Abandoning the institutional framework of the art world they followed the "social structure of advanced capitalism" where the commodity form simply cannot be abolished: "the basic capitalist economic structure remained in place and governed how the art market did business" (Alberro, 2003, p. 157). Siegelaub's aspirations for the cultural autonomy and the possibility of artist's exclusive monopoly over cultural legitimization of their work were unsustainable as the art market already decided in the early 1970s on the fate of the artists with commercial success or failure. The fate of artistic creation was increasingly depending on the market structures.

---

[33] Although Siegelaub aspired the abolition of the traditional framework of art gallery, he still respected the impact of an art show organized in a traditional art gallery space. In February 1968 he arranged a show with Andre, Barry and Weiner at Bradford Junior College in Massachusetts bringing together the most radical of artists to this conservative New England academic institution (Altshuler, 1994).

The end of Conceptual era

While Conceptual art provoked a radical change to the field of art production, the movement was also subject to criticism. One such criticism suggests that although Conceptual art embodied the ideals of the 1960s counterculture and subverted the status quo, it still "reside[d] ... at the margins of the dominant culture" (Corris, 2004c, p. 269). While Conceptual art initially called for changes in social relations of art production, circulation and distribution and suggested a new formulation of artistic agency, it was "an intellectual fetish that tore ideas from their social context and did much to further mystify the role and nature of the art object in the marketplace" (Stimson, 2004, p. 269). It is argued that Conceptual art was a result of financial cutbacks to the galleries and museums, which resulted in the need for a cheaper product. An attempt on part of Conceptualists to reduce the work of art to an idea and to avoid the process of its symbolic production by the institution of art, namely from the art gallery, was founded "on naïve assumptions about the radical potential for avant-garde autonomy". Conceptual art became "limited to the freedom [of artists] to define art for themselves" (Stimson, 2004, p. 288).

Further, the infusion of corporate capital was a problematic factor for the new art and the effort for the subversion of traditional cultural practices. The 1969 exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form" in Berlin was funded by Philip Morris Europe (Altshuler, 1994). The only commonality that the art world and the exhibition shared with the corporate form was 'innovation'. The support of experimental art was an essential part of the company's commercial agenda. However, if artists believed they were subverting the traditional forms of the art world by the forces of corporate capital, the power of the art world remained intact: the works that were meant to be non-commercial "soon would be sold and resold in a growing international [art] market" (Altshuler, 1994, pp. 254-255). It can

be argued that there is ultimately "no form of art that cannot be absorbed by a voracious art market" (Meyer, 1973, p. 131). If art is considered outside the field of cultural production (the art which completely subverts the practices of the field), it must be placed outside of a gallery and museum business; it cannot be collected and bought. "[C]onceptual art has been successfully assimilated by the international art market in the forms of books, statements, photos, and Xeroxed and teletyped diagrams" (Meyer, 1973, p. 131). "In a state of decadence ... the establishment [of the field of cultural production] appears quite eager to catch up with the rebellious expression and to purchase the latest slap" (Meyer, 1973, p. 130). "Objects become collector's items and Anti-Art is victimized by the acquisition compulsion" (Meyer, 1973, p. 133). The oppositional impulse of the 1960's artists over the next two decades was largely embraced and consumed by 'commercial and institutional expansion'. Assimilation of the novel artistic practices into the mainstream becomes "an essential condition for the perpetuation of an avant-garde" (Altshuler, 1994 p. 255). This in fact soon became the norm: "[b]y the eighties large numbers of exhibitions would be sold out before they opened, their contents long known by many" (Altshuler, 1994, p. 255). Even the most oppositional practices and impulses could not resist the system of the global image capitalism. In other words, Conceptual artists failed to establish larger and more sustainable countercultural practices beyond the radical impulse for self-determination. Although radical and transformative, the Conceptual art movement remained largely as the trial "confined to the laboratory of the art world" (Stimson, 2004, p. 289).

Nonetheless, the impact of the Conceptual art movement on the field of cultural production should be measured in terms of its disruptive function within a given social framework (Meyer, 1973). Conceptual art opposed and undermined the cultural authority to some degree. It offered important momentum when the artists themselves attempted to

52

influence an institutional hegemony in the field of cultural production due to the prevailing

desire to take control over their destinies and not follow the ideals dictated by the

dominating authorities. The Conceptual art movement was a movement of emancipation,

which underlined that the institutional framework of the arts offered nothing more but a

"structure that perpetuates the difference between the educated and the underprivileged"

(Rollig, 2003, p. 100). For example, the Art Workers' Coalition was a forceful response to

this structure on part of the leading Conceptual artists and was established in 1969[34]. The

Coalition's work was to facilitate a discourse among artists and the audience to deconstruct

and subvert the excusive and hierarchical ways for the disseminating, displaying and even

collecting the artefacts of the unrepresented segments of society in the North American

museums (Lippard, 1973). Further, the emphasis on a more progressive distribution of art

through collective statements and innovative working structures allowed "to shift focus from

the object and its place in the history of art to the more immediate contextual frame where it

was legitimized and consumed" (Stimson, 2004, p. 289). The Conceptual art movement

offered structural alternatives (although short lived) to the art world and crystallized the

eruptive nature of the relationship between the artist and the legitimating apparatus of the art

world and the field of cultural production as a whole.

[34] The Art Workers' Coalition was born on January 28, 1969 as a protest against the Museum of Modern Art in a form of "Thirteen Demands" to address the general state of relations between the artist and the museums' politics. The initial members of the coalition included Conceptual artists including Carl Andre, Hans Haacke and Tom Lloyd. It was a mobilization campaign to assert the social power for the artists and their worth in the field of cultural production (Alberro, 2003, pp. 200-201).

CHAPTER THREE.
RECONFIGURATION OF THE
CONTEMPORARY FIELD
OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Chapter Three addresses how the field of cultural production and the distribution of

its symbolic capital are being reconfigured with the introduction of digital technologies,

namely the Internet. I propose that the allocation of symbolic capital is being subverted and

redistributed due to the contemporary phenomena of the Internet and its effects. I

investigate the contemporary models of resistance being developed with the help of the

Internet among agents in the sphere of the arts in response to the current dominant culture,

its institutional framework and present alliances of power in the field of cultural

production[35]. I suggest here that if during the Conceptual art movement the artists employed

philosophy, corporate capital and information technologies to alter the cultural logic within

the field of cultural production, it is the Internet and its effects that are used by the various

agents in the field to challenge and subvert the present institutional framework of the arts.

I will begin by revisiting the Conceptual arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s to

establish its legacy and meaning for the current field of cultural production. I suggest that

the contemporary online-based nomadic gallery echoes Seth Seguelab's art gallery as the

world. Current developments in the field of cultural production have also been prophesized

by Marshall McLuhan, who predicted that electronic media would eventually allow an

---

[35] By the alliances of power in the field of cultural production I mean a formula by which the symbolic capital is
distributed among the agents within the field (i.e. the existing struggles over the distribution of prestige,
recognition and the process of legitimization of the work of art, the artist and the art gallery).

interconnected global village (Shanken, 2004, p. 235). I will discuss the social properties of

the Internet and its effects and suggest that when the Internet, as a larger cultural

phenomena, enters the field of cultural production, it offers a radical potential for various

members of the artistic field to alter the established institutional framework of the arts and

to alleviate the struggles that persist over the distribution of the symbolic capital, i.e. the

prestige, recognition and legitimization of the artist and the work of art; the Internet creates

a new, unprecedented dynamic in the field of cultural production. To demonstrate this

argument, I will discuss the contemporary field of cultural production and the growing

influence of market forces, and bring in the recent emergence and relative success of digital

nomadic galleries, which operate exclusively on-line and suggest an effective strategy of

resistance, a structural alternative of operation and an oppositional cultural practice in the

field of cultural production. To support my arguments, I will present findings from

interviews conducted with Paul Butler, the owner of Other Gallery, a 'web-based' nomadic

gallery; Sarah Macaulay, co-owner of Blanket Gallery, a gallery with a physical location in

Vancouver as well as virtual presence on line; and Keith Jones, a local artist who is

represented by both galleries. I will also offer my own perspective as an emerging art dealer

and a co-owner of Blanket Gallery. Overall, my aim in this chapter is to reveal the new

cultural logic that is being formulated in the field of cultural production due to the

emergence and wide use of the Internet.

The legacy of Conceptual art
and its prophesy for the global art world

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the field of cultural production in the mid to late

1960s and early 1970s was largely affected by the Conceptual art movement and its use and

interpretation of a number of larger social developments. These developments included the introduction of philosophy into artistic practice (and the arts' conceptual development shortly thereafter), the emergence of the corporate collector with the influx of corporate capital in the field and the emergence and rapid development of information technologies accompanied by the new effective means of publicity and mass media. The disruptive impulse of Conceptual art, however, has subsided due to its inability to further subvert the field of cultural production and offer an effective and sustainable oppositional cultural practice. The experiment of Conceptual art was thus confined to the 'laboratory' of the art world. Nevertheless, Conceptual art has left an important legacy for the present developments in the field of cultural production. Artists such as Joseph Kosuth and Sol LeWitt, curators and art dealers such as Seth Segualab and Kynaston McShine and academics such as Marshall McLuhan, to name a few, with their bold and innovative ideas, paved the road for the emergence of new cultural practices today (Allan, 2004).

I will start my revisit of the Conceptual art movement with the Conceptual art show called *Information*, organized by Kynaston McShine from July 2 to September 20, 1970 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York[36]. This exhibition has a long-lived legacy and important meaning to the present day. *Information* was curated with the emphasis on the politics and idea of globalization and the emergence of a 'global village'[37] where "artists, curators and art dealers have performed a mutual exchanging of roles while still maintaining their respective titles" (Allan, 2004, p. 145). The significant part of the show was the creation of a catalogue, which operated as a composition of artworks and which became an important

---

[36] Information was part of a series of shows held in North America and Europe and followed earlier group exhibitions of Conceptual art and related tendencies.
[37] The term was coined by Marshall McLuhan in his *Understanding Media*. McLuhan was largely involved in the Information show.

form of extensive dissemination of information, ideas, photographs, and documents

pertaining to the theme of the show. *Information*, although based in New York, was global in

its outreach. The catalogue's essays and visual content stressed global interconnectedness,

where "margins cease[d] to exist on the planet" (Allan, 2004, p. 154). With the catalogue, the

artists did not have to be physically present in an art centre of the world and could

contribute to the show easier without the traditional protocol prescribed by the art world

essential for recognition. "A democratized global art world was posited that functioned

through integrated communication systems, but where artists may live elsewhere while art-

world intermediaries remained operating from the centres" (Allan, 2004, p. 154). *Information*

was an unprecedented event in the field of cultural production as it decentralized the

production of the actual artwork and its symbolic meaning, its circulation and distribution.

Information allowed, to a certain degree, to temporarily remove common incidences of artists'

marginalization and exclusion due to their geographical remoteness. The significance of

Information to the field of cultural production was in that the Information's catalogue

subverted the distribution of symbolic capital by elevating symbolic exclusion due to

geographic dislocation, and allowing the recognition and legitimization for artists with a

widely distributed and integrated communication system (i.e. the catalogue).

The ideas expressed in the *Information* catalogue were significantly influenced by

Marshall McLuhan's theories on a globalized and interconnected world. The *Information*

archive contains over twenty issues of "The Marshall McLuhan DEW-LINE newsletter of

1969-70, published in New York" (Allan, 2004, p. 152). McLuhan is the only non-art-world

member included to this degree in the exhibition archive: he contributed images of

contemporary travel and technological devices including telephones, typewriters, computers,

televisions, cars, jets, and telex machines. McLuhan communicated the theme of global

interconnectedness from the cover of the catalogue, "while inside, globalization [was] linked positively to countercultural manifestations" (Allan, 2004, p. 152). In his influential 1964 book, *Understanding Media*, McLuhan declared that "the medium is the message" and " that the introduction of new technologies creates new living environments that are themselves active historical processes" (Allan, 2004, p. 152). McLuhan argued that "technology is a factor allowing an expansion of consciousness and sensibility from the individual to the globe and electronic speed created a closer global proximity, multiplying interrelationships between peoples, and thereby causing a relaxation of national sovereignties" and deterritorializing world (Allan, 2004, p. 153). McLuhan's contribution to Information echoed Seth Siegelaub's "metaphors of a shrinking world of complex connectivity" (Alberro, 2003, p. 153) and his idea "that would come to fruitition only at the end of [the twentieth] century: the global art world" (Alberro, 2003, p. 161).

The 'shrinking world of complex connectivity' has come to fruition and is now being manifested in the field of cultural production through the emergence and rapid development of digital technologies, namely the Internet, and its opportunities for new forms of spatiality and mobility. One such contemporary manifestation is the emergence of the online, 'nomadic' art gallery, which operates virtually with no physical location: the art gallery's space is literally non-existent. It is called 'nomadic' since it is a physically mobile entity without home, representing and promoting its artists internationally and travelling around the world to international art fairs and collectors[38]. It can be argued that the nomadic, on-line based art gallery subverts the established hierarchy of the art world and the traditional formula of art

---

[38] The art world is influenced by market forces with the demands on internationalisation and globalization, where art fairs, biennials, triennials, and other various art festivals drive the art market value on the works of art. As such, for the art gallery it is increasingly important to be highly mobile to be able to earn the symbolic capital including the prestige and recognition of the art gallery among collectors and general clientele; this theme will be discussed later in this Chapter.

gallery operation. By having virtually no overhead (i.e. economic capital expense due to rent), the on-line based nomadic gallery is liberated from the chains and burdens of the physical space; it is able to follow its vision and represent artists around the globe. However, before discussing this phenomenon in more detail, let's examine the Internet as a visual medium and as it pertains to the field of cultural production.

The Internet
and the contemporary social context

The Internet became a visual medium and the instrument of artistic activity in the late 1990s. Arguably, the Web became so popular due to its ability to create and distribute visual images and "its emergence at the same time that consumer grade computers began to support graphic user interface software, making it possible to both generate and display images and icons" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 339). David Rodowick captures and prophesizes:

> The manufacture of physical objects … is being augmented by the new globally managed commodities – data (access to information and entertainment)… Like the proliferation of automobiles in the post-war period, however, with their concomitant transformation of social time and space, as information becomes increasingly commodified, it rapidly becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. Access to the Internet will soon become no less essential to the quotidian transactions of daily life than it already is for the global movements of international stock markets and commodity exchanges, which take advantage of the untrammelled speed and borderless nature of information for their own particular forms of arbitrage (Rodowick, 2001, p. 215).

The emphasis on visual sensorium dramatically changed the fate of the Internet. The fast development of computer imaging, multimedia and hypertext with its ethos of

universality made the Web a commercial domain in the early 1990s[39]. It is now essential to

have a website if one wants to communicate his/her ideas in the world. It is also a common

occurrence to have a website for a business; commercial web domains utilize images to

capture the attention of potential consumers.

A simple website can draw an audience across the globe. The availability of visual

interactive communication at a high speed made the World Wide Web (WWW) a master tool

with a decentralized structure that can connect the globe. As a result, the WWW produces

social systems such as organizations and functional systems, "which produce and reproduces

themselves through sequences of communication" (Rasmussen, 2003, p. 445). Its

importance is in the self-production of societal function systems, such as art, politics,

economics, and science" (Rasmussen, 2003, p. 445). Sociologically speaking, the WWW

offers "a society consisting of ... autonomous ... social systems ... a global society of

societies without global control" (Rasmussen, 2003, p. 462). This society or sociological

systems focus on communication and differentiation, it mediates all kinds of communication

such as organizations, personal interaction and ranges from financial markets, artistic

experimentation and representation, to games and scientific publications. "The Internet is a

set of media that manipulates system communication in time and space" (Rasmussen, 2003,

p. 464). In other words, the Internet allows the various kinds of communication in new

temporal and spatial modes.

The web facilitates a broad range of expressive activities and thus allows new

possibilities for political and artistic expression across geographic distances. These

---

[39] "The Web is a region of the Internet linking vast quantities of information stored in files of computers around the world" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 338). Moreover, "[t]he ethos of universality and the idea of a web-like structure that would make all information universally available are widely regarded as having originated with computer pioneer Vaannevar Bush" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 339).

possibilities arguably "collapse distances and democratize knowledge" (Sturken &

Cartwright, 2001, p. 345). "Technical and symbolic media of communication ... allow for

innumerable networks, independent of knowledge of the individuals involved, their social

status, their social context, morality, integrity, and so on" (Rasmussen, 2003, pp. 464-465). It

can also be suggested that the web, by providing this decentralized system of information

and knowledge, also allows for the creation of "independent symbolic meaning," to speak in

Bourdieu's language. The circulation of images and the social production of meaning are

tightly interconnected: " the movement of cultural products and visual images throughout

the world is always about the production of different kinds of cultural meanings" (Sturken &

Cartwright, 2001, p. 345). The web is now a tool that allows that production of meaning

because it 'converges' image, text, sound and objects simultaneously and transmits them with

a message at a click of a mouse. It can be argued that the web, with its new forms of

spatiality and information mobility, liberates a cultural producer in his/her attempt to

produce, consume and circulate visual data and its meaning. The Internet and the WWW

"have dramatically changed the power relations between [cultural] producers and consumers

[and the audience] in the mass media" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 341). To reiterate this

statement into the context of the present discussion, it can be argued that the distribution,

circulation and dissemination as well as consumption and even production of the symbolic

meaning of the work of art can be altered now with the help of digital technologies. It can be

suggested then that the Web, with its decentralized system of information and knowledge,

allows agents within the field of cultural production to radically reconfigure the distribution

of symbolic capital and thus alter the field's power dynamic.

Who is using this powerful tool? 'Digital Nation' is the term that is used by Bucy in

his *Living in the Information Age*. He describes the emerged group of people whose social and

cultural lives revolve around the web. The Digital Nation's 'citizens' are technologically affluent people and belong to "forward-looking, technologically advanced communities" (Bucy, 2002, p. 231). They are usually educated in unconventional ways and their access to information is almost unlimited[40]. They are not afraid to challenge authority and embrace interactivity, get informed and form their opinions in active ways. Bucy argues that the members of a Digital Nation are true revolutionaries exactly because they employ technology to liberate themselves in unprecedented ways: Digital Nation explores their own notion of culture which is, at least in part, liberated from the established relation of power in the field of cultural production exactly due to the decentralized nature of the Web and the knowledge and information it offers.

To translate Bucy's theory to the context of present discussion, it can be suggested that with the formation of notions and definitions of artistic legitimate practices, aesthetic codes and validation of art at large, one's own understanding and exploration of culture becomes the subject of one's own experience. Knowledge becomes highly fragmented and subjective: it becomes a subject to what the web offers in almost unlimited amount -- information. This suggests that the members of 'Digital Nation' including an emerging generation of artists, audience, art dealers, critics and academics in the field of cultural production can, to an extent, subvert the distribution of symbolic capital and alleviate the struggle to maintain and/or alter the established relation of power within the field.

---

[40] "Without access, there is no interface to digital culture – one cannot be included in its social networks or forms of exchange whether for good or ill" (Rodowick, 2001, p. 215). This question of access is important, but beyond the scope of this thesis. For more information on this topic see Richard A. Lanham's *The Electronic Word* (1993) and Erik P. Bucy's *Living in the Information Age: A New Media Reader* (2002).

The current structure
of the field of cultural production

As introduced in Chapter 1, the field of cultural production is determined by the agents and their institutional framework, symbolic capital and the struggle to maintain or subvert the distribution of this capital. For this thesis, symbolic capital includes the prestige, recognition and legitimization of the work of art, and represents the instrument and object of symbolic struggle within the art world and the community at large. This struggle is usually manifested in the form of symbolic exclusion from a 'legitimate' existence of an agent in the field and executed by the institutional framework of that field. In the case of the field of cultural production, this framework (which carries a multitude of cultural practices and politics) is defined by and limited to the established places, such as art schools, public and commercial art galleries, art criticism and art history at large.

External determinants can alter the limitation of symbolic exclusion, allowed for within the framework of institutional practices. In the mid to late1960s and early 1970s these external determinants allowed the artists to develop modes of resistance and form their own meaning for the artwork they produced. As discussed in Chapter 2, it was philosophy that facilitated the reconfiguration of artistic expression, which became known as a strategy of resistance against the bourgeois established formalist ideals and prescribed formulas for representation and legitimization of the arts. The emergence and subsequent entry of the corporate collector into to the field of cultural production led to a subversion of the power of traditional institutions such as art schools and museums, allowing the artist to validate the work of art outside of the institutional framework of the art world. Finally, the emergence of information technologies and new modes of publicity and mass media reconfigured the distribution and circulation of the works of art, while subverting, if not completely

abolishing, the symbolic exclusion and marginalization of the artist[41]. These models of

resistance, although unprecedented and radical in their character, were not effective in

sustaining their disruptive impulse and did not offer a structural alternative to the established

cultural practices of the art world. The importance of the period, however, was that the

artist for the first time took charge of his/her career, and made the artist's job

interchangeable with that of a curator, art dealer, educator, and entrepreneur. The artist

became known as "a 'cultural producer,' a practitioner of one form of cultural authorship

among many" (Kocur, 2005, p. 7).

In the mid 1980s the artist's practice began to be defined as 'interdisciplinary' and

experienced a shift in favour of physical mobilization of the artists and the art dealers

themselves in service of institutional and art world interests (Kocur, 2005)[42]. I would further

argue that today, the field of cultural production, its dynamic and its institutional frameworks

are being increasingly affected and determined by the market forces which, in the case of the

art world, demand internationalisation and globalization where art fairs, biennials, triennials,

and other various art festivals drive the art market value for the works of art[43]. The new

millennium marked the stage where the artist is an autonomous agent who is positioned

outside of the critique of art institutions and the traditional framework in the field of cultural

production. The artist and the work of art, its success and its exposure are almost entirely

now subjected to the forces of the international art market. I would also suggest that the

---

[41] In this case, symbolic exclusion occurred due to geographical dislocation in relation to the centres of the art world such as New York, and symbolic marginalization - the inability to fit in an established category where the use of which is symbolically dominated by the structures of art world.

[42] This physical mobilization, or 'nomadism', is arguably a result of the global economy with its prevailing demands for mobilized labour and is determined by specific current social, economic and political environments, the discussion on which is beyond the scope of this work (Kocur, 2005).

[43] For instance, one of the largest art market centres is in Miami, FL, USA, which during the first week of December holds five art fairs including Art Basel Miami, NADA, Scope, Aqua, and Pulse, attracting a high influx of capital and exposure for a participating gallery. Differing in its prestige, clientele and entry fees, these events represent the current dynamic of the art world in its totality.

processes of legitimization, recognition and validation of the artist and artistic practice are now more dependent on the market structures than on the intuitions of museums and public art galleries, art schools and art history, a framework, which prior the emergence of the Conceptual art movement held the monopoly over the authority to define what legitimate art is. The international art market has become an influential framework within the field of cultural production, which dictates what kind of art is to be recognized and legitimized through the artist's commercial viability and success. The symbolic struggle of the field of cultural production is now defined by the symbolic exclusion of the agents of the field from the international art market and through the unequal distribution of the field's symbolic capital, which, as established includes prestige, recognition and validation of the works of art and the artist.

It can further be argued that the implications of the market driven art world for the field of cultural production are more tangible not so much for the artist, but for the art gallery as a key institution that acts on behalf of the artist. In other words, the recognition and prestige of the artists and their subsequent success depends directly on the prestige and viability of the art gallery and a degree of its 'symbolic inclusion' in the international art markets. For the art gallery, it is increasingly important to be highly mobile to be able to earn the symbolic capital including the prestige and recognition among art collectors, and community at large. This growing demand to be part of the international art market poses a considerable financial constraint on all agents within the field, and, in particular, on commercial art galleries, in the form of continuous financial capital investment[44]. This constraint may further be exacerbated by high overhead and extreme competition for art

---

[44] From my personal experience as an art dealer, to be part of an art fair can cost anywhere from CND $2,000 to CND $60,000 (and probably more) depending on the scale, prestige and the location of the event.

collectors and patrons and result in an inability of the art gallery to be part of the international art market structures and to gain the symbolic capital necessary for success.

I would like to propose that the emergence and rapid development of digital technologies, namely the Internet with its new forms of spatiality and mobility act as a powerful external determinant in the contemporary field of cultural production. When this external determinant enters the field, it alleviates, at least in part, the limitations and constraints posed on the art gallery by the market forces, thus subverting the current distribution of symbolic capital. The field of cultural production, with its increasing demands to be part of the international art market structures, is being currently reconfigured due to the application and specific use by the agents within the field of the Internet and its possibilities for new forms of mobility and spatiality. This process of reconfiguration currently manifests itself in the emergence and the phenomena of the online-based nomadic art galleries. The online-based nomadic art galleries offer a radical potential to subvert, at least in part, the contemporary distribution of symbolic capital and may form a new cultural logic for the field of cultural production at large.

Other Gallery:
a new cultural logic

I discuss Other Gallery as an emerging online-based nomadic gallery (i.e. its home exists only in the virtual domain: www.othergallery.com). I further compare Other Gallery to Blanket Gallery, an emerging art gallery in Vancouver that operates in more traditional terms: Blanket Gallery has a physical space where it holds art shows and gallery visits; it also has a virtual presence, www.blanketgallery.com. The similarities and differences between the two galleries are supported by interviews from Paul Butler, the owner of Other Gallery, Sara

Macaulay, the co-owner of Blanket Gallery findings, and Keith Jones, a young and emerging artist who is represented by both galleries. This discussion highlights the emerging phenomena of online-based nomadic galleries at its early stage and formulates a new development and a cultural practice in the field of cultural production. Overall, I argue that the online nomadic gallery offers radical potential for the redistribution of symbolic capital and the transformation of power in the field of cultural production. I would like to demonstrate how a technological advancement such as the Internet, with its possibilities for new modes of spatiality and mobility translates into a new social and cultural experiment.

Other Gallery was established in the early 2000s by Paul Butler, an artist from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The gallery operates exclusively online and is a nomadic establishment as it travels to international art fairs and urban art market centres (www.othergallery.com). According to Butler, (Appendix I), the remoteness of his physical location (Winnipeg) from art world centres was an essential factor in his decision to establish an online based nomadic gallery: "People don't come to Winnipeg that much so I thought I would use the website as a virtual home base, and travel to the buyer [collector, client, etc.] instead" (Appendix I). This indicates that the geographic location of an art institution, such as an art gallery, is a crucial factor for 'symbolic inclusion' in the contemporary art world and the art market. Butler, a technologically equipped young entrepreneur in his early 30s, took the initiative and established a virtual art institution which focuses on emerging Canadian art, naturally becoming a part of the international art market by travelling to its largest centres[45]. The main advantages of the gallery's exclusively virtual presence is that Butler does not "have to physically watch the space, which helps since [he is] a one man operation who is

---

[45] While Butler maintains a virtual gallery presence, his physicality remains essential. The art world requires him to be physically present at a number of art fairs and in the art world at large. His virtuality is not obsolete.

constantly on the road either with the gallery, or [his] own personal practice" (Appendix I)[46].

It is evident that an online nomadic art gallery allows an unprecedented level of autonomy

and mobility: the art dealer can break free from the burden of a physical static space and its

overhead and disseminate the works of art and promote his artists around the globe without

facing an immediate financial failure or having to wait for the audience and clientele to come

to remote locations such as Winnipeg. The online based nomadic gallery liberates Butler in

that "[he is] not chained to a space so [he] can physically meet with the rest of the art world

...[l]ike a travelling salesman" (Appendix 1). Butler's strategy is to become highly mobile by

breaking free from the chain of a fixed location and the necessity to be present in one centre.

This strategy allows Butler to mobilize his efforts as an art dealer in effective and quick ways

and to adapt to a fast changing environment of the art world in no time.

This freedom also translates into the freedom for an art dealer to select his artists

and make them as part of the gallery's vision and identity. The artwork Butler represents and

promotes "[is] refreshing ... [and] very sincere. It's not trying to be something – it just is. I

find a lot of artists are desperately trying to fit into the last sliver in the pie of art real estate. I

personally find some of the work out there cold and uninviting. " (Appendix I). The young

entrepreneur implies that it is a common practice for an art gallery to take on the trendiest

and most commercially successful artists to fit in a certain category, simply to achieve

commercial success. Butler emphasizes the freedom with which he selects his artists – the art

does not have to fit in any current symbolic category that the art world prescribes, it just

literally is. Butler continues, "[the artists are] all friends of mine whose work I love. Not

---

[46] Paul Butler is an artist and is represented by the galleries including othergallery.com as well as Blanket gallery
(www.othergallery.com/artists and www.blanketgallery.com/artists).

every friend whose work I love fits in to the gallery's aesthetic though" (Appendix I)[47]. This

shows that Butler's criteria is based on his personal choice, and is not necessarily influenced

by the current trends of the art market. Currently, Butler's gallery effectively works with

twenty international artists, a significant number and responsibility which may have been

compromised, if Butler had a physical location in his hometown, Winnipeg. The overhead

that the physical location of the art gallery imposes in a form of the rent would compromise,

due to financial constraints, the ability of Other Gallery to travel to the international art

market centres[48].

Butler not only revolutionizes the field of cultural production by disregarding the

traditional necessity of a gallery's physical location; he subverts the distribution of the

symbolic capital by travelling to art fairs such as the Toronto International Art Fair[49], Aqua

Art Miami[50] and by organizing public art events in Berlin, Germany, Dundee, (Scotland) and

London, to name a few (www.othergallery.com/news)[51]. The nomadic nature of his

establishment is exactly what Butler sees as his main advantage: "[he is] constantly adapting

to new spaces and scenes. [He has] the advantage of seeing what goes on everywhere and

[of] not getting stuck in our own space of mind" (Appendix I). Metaphorically, Butler

parallels the absence of physical space as liberation from 'getting stuck ... in [one's] space of

---

[47] As an art dealer and a gallery owner (Blanket Gallery), I would argue that my process of selection is similar. Like Butler, I choose artists on basis of my own personal vision and according to a certain preferred style that my gallery follows.
[48] In 2006 alone Butler is planning to go to Toronto, Canada, Dundee, Scotland, New York, USA, Los Angeles, USA, Montreal, Canada to promote his gallery and artists as well as his personal artistic practice (http://www.othergallery.com/news.html)
[49] http://www.tiafair.com/
[50] Aqua Art Miami (http://www.aquaartmiami.com/)
[51] These art events are called 'Paul Butler Collage Party' and "is basically an excuse to get together with friends and make art socially. It creates an informal environment in which artists can freely connect, exchange ideas and create art. The Collage Party provides a venue for the artists to present this work to the public - including critics, curators and dealers - while also giving the public a glimpse into the creative process and conception of the work" (http://www.theotherpaulbutler.com/collageparty.html, retrieved January 31, 2005)

mind'. Similarly to Siegelaub, who in the late 1960s propagated a closer global proximity, Butler sees his gallery as the world. By being 'nomadic', Butler earns the recognition and prestige for his gallery and his artists, the symbolic capital which necessary for an effective and successful operation in the art world. Given that Butler is an emerging art dealer and the artist based out of Winnipeg, the process of earning this symbolic capital may have been significantly more complex due to financial liabilities that a traditional art gallery and its operational costs impose on debutants of the art world.

Paul Butler further subverts the field of cultural production by promoting his artists along with his own art. Similar to Kosuth and Siegelaub in the 1960s, Butler amalgamates the roles within the art world and makes them not mutually exclusive: he is an artist, an art dealer, a gallery owner and a curator[52]. When asked about the attitude of the art world to his craft as an art dealer, he responds:

> they're shocked that I am so young and many feel that being an artist myself
> is a conflict. They're starting to come around though. Originally, I think the
> fact that an artist was representing artists was a threat to dealers because it
> could potentially put them out of their jobs in the future (Appendix I).

By interchanging the relatively fixed roles in the art world, Butler creates a radical potential for a subversion of the distribution of symbolic capital: he gains recognition and legitimization of his own art work as well as the work of the artists he represents without having to have a physical art gallery space. The identity he develops is based on the mobile or nomadic nature of his establishment. Butler does not wait till the symbolic capital is assigned to him by the prescribed formula of the art world and art market. He simply goes after it.

---

[52] One must have curatorial skills when travelling to art fairs; often an art dealer has to 'recreate' a gallery feel in a fair's booth or room.

Yet, Other Gallery still has difficulties and struggles similar to a traditional art gallery: "[l]ike a restaurant, you have to survive the first couple of years before you become familiar enough for people to trust that you are a stable investment. Government funding helps. And a stubborn sense a pride too" (Appendix I). Butler echoes the symbolic struggles that Bourdieu so well captured in his theory of the field: the struggle over consecration and legitimization of the artist and artistic practice in various art world circles. To live through this struggle, to maintain a vision and to earn the symbolic capital are an absolute prerequisite for every debutant of the art world and the field of cultural production at large.

To make an effective analysis of an online-based art gallery, it is useful to offer the perspective on an art gallery that operates in more traditional terms. When asked about the advantages of having a real space location, Sarah Macaulay, co-owner of Blanket Gallery, suggests

> ...[a]s time has passed it has become apparent that having this presence has been useful in establishing an identity. I think that having just an online presence would be a bit too nebulous. Clients seem to identify with the art dealer/gallery… they learn to trust the value judgements of the organization. It's a kind of branding I suppose. The development of social capital is critical in this regard, and I don't think that we would have been as successful without the gallery space. Also, with rent to pay, there is an added motivation to be critical when selecting artists … There is a social aspect to having a gallery, openings, etc. that is unique to the experience of the gallerist (Appendix II).

This perspective somewhat echoes Butler's take on the disadvantages of having an exclusively online based gallery. He states: "I can't give my artists actual solo shows which would be nice for the both of us" (Appendix I). Keith Jones, a Vancouver based artist, is currently represented by both Other Gallery and Blanket Gallery. The artist supports this argument, suggesting that an online-based gallery does not offer a physical experience of having a show. The audience is not able to "witness the works in their actual physical form"

(Appendix III). All three perspectives lead to a conclusion: a physical space is advantageous in many ways to follow the established formula of the art world and to gain social capital (i.e. symbolic currency), to brand and build the gallery's identity and similar symbolic assets. The measure of success in the field of cultural production is the acquisition of symbolic capital and its growth. Butler, however, subverts this beaten path in that he successfully does just that without having a physical space. According to Jones, Other Gallery allows "[p]eople from all over ... to see your work which I think is great" (Appendix III). Of course the idea that only local art market and audience have access to a gallery's artists is lost since it is a common practice to have a web site for an art gallery. Blanket Gallery also offers that advantage by maintaining a website: www.blanketgallery.com. However, Butler proves that the abolition of a physical space is possible and even effective for his art dealership and his artistic practice. Importantly, Butler's nomadism becomes a new and alternative cultural practice and may serve as a strategy for debutants in the art world to subvert limitations posed by the current art market infrastructure.

Marketing artists remains important to any art gallery's success. Macaulay "... select[s] an artist, book[s] a show with [the artist] and connects [him/her] with collectors and the media. In the long-term, it also means marketing [an artist] to a larger audience through the participation in art fairs" (Appendix II). Macaulay's answer implies that there is a necessity to connect the artist with the rest of the art world and that the artist may have to fit within the established framework of media and the art world[53]. She suggests that this process is "long-standing and isn't fundamentally changing" (Appendix II). In her opinion, on-line presence increases accessibility to art and the artists. However, even online galleries still "rely

---

[53] Historically, this established framework allows an odd 'avant-garde' radical artistic expression to become a part of the art world immediately. However, it is a rare exception to the rule.

on art fairs to disseminate information and sell work" (Appendix II) It is clear that Butler, while having an advantage of choosing his artists and follow his vision in a more liberal fashion than Blanket, still must connect his artists with the media and the art world at large to gain the symbolic capital of the art world. He does so exactly by travelling to the art centres of the world and participating in the art fairs. In his forecast for Other Gallery, Butler wishes: "[b]igger and better international art fairs. More collaborative projects with international galleries … (Appendix II)." A similarity in foreseeing the future is striking when Macaulay asked a similar question:

> [w]e plan to continue searching out artists so that we can eventually work with a solid stable [of artists] and promote their careers over the long-term. We look forward to attending art fairs in North America as well as Europe. In the long term, I see Blanket moving towards the development of stable relationships with collectors, public institutions, and artists (Appendix II).

Evidently, both art dealers see a tremendous need to be mobile in the international art world, which inevitably involves travelling to art fairs and large urban centres of the art market. As an emerging art dealer, I would also argue that the gallery's success in the contemporary field of cultural production requires dedication and sacrifices in the struggle for the consecration of the artists that a gallery represents; it particularly requires a continuous and effective presence on an international art scene and participation in the art market infrastructure. With the rapid emergence of young and daring art dealers and artists as well as high demands of the international art market for internationalization and globalization, the struggles over symbolic capital require a careful strategy and creative innovation. I would further argue that the winners in these struggles will be those who experiment with the new social, cultural, and technological developments and translate them in new cultural strategies in an effort to subvert the symbolic domination that is widely present in the art world and its institutional framework.

Marshall McLuhan in the late 1960s prophesized the interconnectedness of the globe, which is now being manifested via a globalized and highly interconnected art world. Other Gallery is a contemporary example of how technology can be employed to achieve such interconnectedness. Butler, by abolishing a physical space of a traditional 'white cube', represents artists from around the world and acts as an intermediary of the art world from its centres including Miami, Los Angeles, New York, Berlin and London. Butler fulfils McLuhan's prophecy in that he develops a new cultural practice and subverts an established distribution of the art world's symbolic capital. By abolishing a fixed physical location, he decentralizes the process of distribution and circulation of the work of art and avoids, at least in part, the symbolic exclusion -- a common practice in the art world. Butler paves the way for new forms of institutional expression in the field of cultural production and thus subverts the principle of legitimation in creating access to the work of art global and unlimited: he makes the distribution and circulation of the art works less regulated by the institutional framework of the art world. The WWW for Butler becomes a symbolic platform where the artistic community can develop and evolve, and, at least in part, be liberated from the imposition of symbolic domination of the contemporary field of cultural production.

CONCLUSION

This thesis deconstructed the field of cultural production, examined the contemporary institutional framework of the arts, and identified the symbolic struggles currently taking place over the monopoly and power to legitimate and validate art and artistic practice. I argue that the field of cultural production today resembles a market structure with increasing demands on all agents in the field for internationalization and globalization. My experiences as an art dealer serve as evidence for this argument: to earn the symbolic capital necessary for success in the art world, Blanket Gallery must reach out and travel to larger art markets to expose and promote the artists it represents and to collaborate with more established galleries. Blanket Gallery is now planning to travel to LISTE in Basel, Switzerland, one of the most influential art fairs for emerging international art galleries. The gallery is also planning to go to Aqua art fair in Miami, Florida, USA to further promote emerging Canadian art on a global scale. The efforts I am currently making to establish myself as a credible and knowledgeable art dealer will soon be translated into the acquisition of larger amounts of symbolic capital for my gallery and into success and international recognition of the artists I intend to work and grow with for years to come.

Employing cultural theory as my main analytical vehicle, I presented a theoretical framework founded by Pierre Bourdieu. His theory of the field guided me throughout this journey and helped me crystallize the correlation between the work of art and the institutional context within which it is produced, circulated and distributed. Moreover, I have grasped important concepts such as the field, symbolic capital, its unequal distribution,

symbolic struggles and symbolic exclusion – concepts, which not only shed light on my personal experiences as an art dealer but also provided a theoretical perspective on the operation of the art world at large. I further established the dependency of the work of art on the gatekeepers of the art world – a highly controlled network of individual cultural producers and institutions that determine and impose their own ideals of what legitimate art is. The result of this dependency is critical for understanding contemporary cultural politics: the field of cultural production ensures that only the artwork accepted within its framework is shown to the public at large.

The Conceptual art movement fought to establish artistic autonomy in relation to the field of cultural production, letting artists be in charge of the symbolic meaning and distribution of their artwork. With cybernetic and information technology's rapid development, new possibilities arose, and the fledging global art market started to materialize. The Conceptual art movement employed the larger social phenomena of globalization to alter the dynamic of the field of cultural production in unprecedented ways. It subverted the idea of the institutional nature of an art gallery space and methods of art production. In view of the fact that Conceptual art has been so widely accepted and internalized within art history and the institutional apparatus of the arts, it is plausible to argue that this movement was a mechanism where the field of cultural production was adapting itself to the new social circumstances.

Chapter Three proposes that when the Internet is applied to the field of cultural production, this technological development allows agents within the field of cultural production to alleviate the struggles that persist over the distribution of the symbolic capital, i.e. the prestige, recognition and legitimization of the artist and the work of art. By investigating the social properties of the Internet, I argue that this technological innovation

allows the creation of knowledge and circulation of information in unprecedented ways. The Internet's egalitarian structure makes the process of learning and forming opinions a subjective non-regulated experience, which allows new possibilities for the production of cultural meaning; it liberates cultural producers in their attempts to create, circulate and distribute cultural goods and their meaning. This argument is also strengthened by my experiences as a gallery owner. The website I personally created and maintain provides detailed information on the gallery's curatorial program as well as the artist's backgrounds and various data pertaining to their cultural production (www.blanketgallery.com). The Internet allows me, also as a young curator, the freedom to promote emerging young artists and to facilitate the creation of new cultural meanings exclusively on behalf of my art gallery. The audience from different parts of the world is already responding to my global outreach: I now collaborate with more established galleries in Los Angeles, Atlanta and Washington, USA and remain in contact with various individual collectors globally.

As argued, the contemporary field of cultural production is increasingly determined by market forces: it is now the art market that dictates what legitimate art is. The current network of art festivals including art fairs, biennials, triennials, and so forth, function as a responsive and effective means of art distribution and a structure for art dissemination and its consumption, a network that "can effectively meet the accelerated rate of exchange and consumption parallel to the global flow of capital and information today" (Bradley, 2003, p. 89). I have also determined that the symbolic struggles in the field of cultural production today are the struggles over the inclusion in the art market; symbolic capital of the field of cultural production now can often be equated with the currency of the market economy, i.e. cash. To illustrate ways in which the field of cultural production is currently being challenged, I show that the emerging phenomenon of the nomadic online-based art gallery,

effectively operates in the art market and exists exclusively on-line. I establish that a particular kind of cultural politics is currently evolving, with cultural producers attempting to subvert the present superstructure of the art business. In particular, I show that the Internet and new forms of spatiality and mobility are used by cultural producers to challenge the established framework of the field of cultural production. The spirit of Paul Butler, with his vanguard establishment of Other Gallery, is the evidence of profound change in the art world's cultural politics and the field of cultural production at large. He has shown that the legitimizing and recognition of artistic practice, emerging art galleries and formation of cultural knowledge are now liberated, at least in part, from a traditional ideology of the 'white cube' and a subject to individual learning and increased accessibility in the field of arts due to the Internet and its effects.

The phenomenon of a nomadic online-based art gallery well exemplifies how members of the arts are currently employing technological developments to liberate themselves, at least in part, from the burden of established institutional frameworks and to develop strategies of resistance that defy social and cultural hierarchy of the field of cultural production. The field of cultural production, as an ever-evolving organism, is currently developing a new cultural logic due to the particular use of technological innovations within the market driven framework of the art world. It is thus reasonable to suggest that the development of this new cultural logic is not necessarily a result of disruptive subversion like the Conceptual art movement, but a natural adaptation of cultural producers to the market driven field of cultural production and its high demands on mobility and globalism. The emergence of online-based nomadic art galleries is a mechanism by which the field of cultural production is now adapting itself both to the new cultural logic and to the new generation of technologically affluent cultural producers. Due to its very recent inception,

the online-based nomadic art gallery and its long-term effects on the field of cultural

production are yet to be learnt and discussed in retrospect. For now, the purpose of this

thesis is fulfilled: it introduced the changing cultural politics of the art world and provided

an informed inquiry into recent phenomenon within the field of cultural production. My

hope is for this work to facilitate a productive discourse among cultural producers and the

public at large, while celebrating a moment of cultural emancipation.

APPENDICES

Appendix I:
Interview with Paul Butler
(Other Gallery)

This interview was conducted by e-mail.

Q. What led you to establish an online art gallery? How did you come up with the idea?

A. People don't come to Winnipeg that much so I thought I would use the website as a virtual home base, and travel to the buyer instead.

Q. What are the advantages of having an online 'nomadic' gallery?

A. I don't have to physically watch the space which helps since I'm a one man operation who is constantly on the road either with the gallery, or my own personal practice.

Q. What are the disadvantages?

A. I can't give my artists actual solo shows, which would be nice for the both of us.

Q. What is your process of artist's representation in the online gallery?

A. They're all friends of mine whose work I love. Not every friend who's work I love fits in to the galleries aesthetic though. I can't take it all on so I've had to focus on the particular style of drawing/collage/painting with a sense of humour.

Q. What are the difficulties and struggles?

A. Like a restaurant, you have to survive the first couple of years before you become familiar enough for people to trust that you are a stable investment. Government funding helps. And a stubborn sense a pride too.

Q. How do you think this process is different from a traditional white cube?

A. We're constantly adapting to new spaces and scenes. We have the advantage of seeing what goes on everywhere and not getting stuck in our own space of mind.

Q. How do artists react when you propose to represent them in your gallery?

A. It doesn't happen over night so I haven't noticed an reaction to date. Like I said before, we're all friends so it doesn't always come a as a surprise.

Q. How do you, as an art dealer, develop your relationship with collectors?

A. Stay patient. Try not to assume what they 'need'. I just make what I see important accessible and they come if they want to.

Q. What is generally the attitude towards you as an art dealer in the art world (from fellow art dealers, artists, public institutions etc)? Why do you think it is?

A. They're shocked that I am so young and many feel that being an artist myself in a conflict. They're starting to come around though. Originally, I think the fact that an artist was representing artists was a threat to dealers because it could potentially put them out of their jobs in the future.

Q. What is generally the attitude towards your artists in the art world? Why do you think it is?

A. Refreshment. Our work is very sincere. It's not trying to be something - it just is. I find a lot of artists are desperately trying to fit into the last sliver in the pie of art real-estate. I personally find some of the work out there cold and uninviting. Insecure really.

Q. Does the absence of physical space liberate and/or limit your ability to operate in the art world as an art dealer and as an artist?

A. It liberates us. I'm not chained to a space so I can physically meet with the rest of the art world. Like a traveling salesman.

Q. What is your plan for othergalelry.com? How do you see it evolving?

A. Bigger and better international art fairs. More collaborative projects with international galleries. And some staff to help me out - that's immediate.

Q. Will you ever attempt to have a physical space for your gallery? Why?

A. I can't see myself globe trotting forever. It would be nice to settle into a space eventually.

Q. Where would it be? why?

A. I'm not sure really. Probably the city that I personally feel the most comfortable in. I need to be happy after all.

Appendix II:
Interview with Sarah Macaulay
(Blanket gallery)

This interview was conducted by e-mail.

Q. What led you to establishing your own art gallery (in a traditional sense... having shows, represent artists and have a physical location as opposed to let's say a virtual gallery)?

A. I felt that there was a significant art market that wasn't being tapped into. There is a social aspect to having a gallery, openings, etc. that is unique to the experience of the gallerist.

Q. What are the advantages of having a physical location (as opposed to an online only presence)?

A. I (we) chose to follow the traditional model of having an actual location for a variety of reasons. The first reason was rather incidental in that we found an affordable location. As time has passed it has become apparent that having this presence has been useful in establishing an identity. I think that having just an online presence would be a bit too nebulous. Clients seem to identify with the art dealer/gallery... they learn to trust the value judgements of the organization. It's a kind of branding I suppose. The development of social capital is critical in this regard, and I don't think that we would have been as successful without the gallery space. Also, with rent to pay, there is an added motivation to be critical when selecting artists.

Q. What are the disadvantages?

A. The disadvantage of having an actual space is that there is the issue of physically having to 'be there' during open hours. This is only a disadvantage to me at this point because I have to work another job as well as look after my young son. There is the extra cost of having an overhead as well.

Q. What is the importance of your gallery's web presence (I mean www.blanketgallery.com)?

A. It is useful to market our artists outside of Vancouver. Interested parties can investigate our stable of artists and this can be instrumental in either selling work, attracting artists, or making valuable connections with the media and other galleries and arts organizations.

Q. What is the process of artist's representation in your gallery? What are the difficulties and struggles?

A. We select an artist, book a show with them and connect them with collectors and the media. In the long-term, it also means marketing them to a larger audience through the participation in art fairs.

Q. Do you think this process is changing in the contemporary art world? If yes, how?

A. I think that this process is long-standing and isn't fundamentally changing. There are online galleries…but these same galleries rely on art fairs to disseminate information and sell work.

Q. How does digitization (i.e. virtual presence) affects the art gallery? In what way?

A. It increases accessibility. I know of some galleries that will have a web page… but no website with images etc…this has the effect of making their venture less accessible hence more exclusive.

Q. How do you think it is affecting the processes of production (by production I mean the art work's symbolic meaning), circulation and distribution of the works of art?

A. As I mentioned, it makes information more accessible. I spoke to one collector the other day who prefers to buy art online from reputable sources because he finds the gallery setting intimidating. I really don't know if it really affects the processes of production. Certainly many artists use technology to produce work, but I am not sure that online marketing really has an affect.

Q. How do you, as an art dealer, develop your relationship with collectors?

A. By continuously keeping them abreast of what is happening at the gallery. This includes e-vites, phone calls, personal contact and mail. It also means social engagement…attending functions and generally having a presence.

Q. What is generally the attitude towards you as an art dealer in the art world (from fellow art dealers, artists, public institutions etc)? Why do you think it is?

A. In Canada there is a certain distain towards the marketing of art. There is a vital not for profit scene that facilitates critical debate etc…and that is very much part of the consciousness in terms of dissemination of information. So, the marketing of work…outside of this arena is not a comfortable place for a lot of people. It's a sensitive subject, and I can see why. The system that is operative now, the gallery system, as opposed to historic models of patronage, puts the artist more at risk personally.

Q. What is generally the attitude towards your artists in the art world? Why do you think it is?

A. People are generally very excited to see what our artists are doing because they represent an underrepresented cross-section of the art scene in Vancouver. The price point for a lot of our work is within the means of a lot of people, and the idea of catching someone before they blow up is exciting.

Q. What is your plan for Blanket? How do you see it evolving?

A. We plan to continue searching out artists so that we can eventually work with a solid stable and promote their careers over the long-term. We look forward to attending art fairs in North America as well as Europe. In the long term, I see Blanket moving towards the development of stable relationships with collectors, public institutions, and artists.

Appendix III:
Interview with Keith Jones

This interview was conducted by e-mail.

Q. Why and how did you decide to be part of Other Gallery?

A. I had learned about the gallery through my friends local artists Jeff Ladoucuer and Jason Mclean. They urged me to send samples of my work to the gallery. Then I was asked to join in on a collage party that Paul Butler, who runs the gallery, put on. I brought some work to show him in physical form which he liked and asked me if I wanted to be on the gallery site.

Q. What are the advantages of being represented by an online nomadic gallery (I am talking about othergallery.com)?

A. People from all over get to see your work which I think is great.

Q. What are the disadvantages?

A. Nobody gets to witness the works in their actual physical form. I believe buyers may be less confident in the idea of purchasing something based on a jpeg. But who knows?

Q. What are the advantages of being represented by a gallery that has a physical location (I am talking about Blanket)?

A. People can view the work in full form. They get to experience the impact it holds on a wall in a room. They can walk up close and look at some teeny tiny little thing in the picture and see the grains and textures of the piece.

Q. Disadvantages?

A. I don't know if there are any disadvantages. Physically located galleries usually have websites so the idea of people from all over not seeing your work is lost. Perhaps the

layout and design of a physical gallery can cause disadvantages. But the way a website is laid out can cause disadvantages as well.

Q. What are the major differences between the two for you as an artist?

A. I guess the fact the in a physical gallery I get to have an opening and see the pieces framed on a wall. I get a chance to stand back and see what I've done.

Q. In what ways do you think your dealers in both othergallery.com and Blanket are different when it comes down to artist representation?

A. Well with Blanket I get to have meetings and discuss things in person, where as with Other Gallery I don't as much.

Q. Do you think these ways are affected by the absence (othergallery.com) and the presence (Blanket) of a physical space?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think your career as an artist will change in some ways now that you are represented by a gallery with a physical location?

A. I feel so. 1 think dealing with a physical gallery is better.

REFERENCES

Alberro, A. (2003). *Conceptual art and the politics of publicity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Allan, K. (2004). Understanding *Information*. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 144-165). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Altshuler, B. (1994). *The avant-garde in exhibition: new art in the 20th century*. New York: Abrams.

Bourdieu, P., & Johnson, R. (1993). *The field of cultural production: essays on art and literature*. Cambridge England: Polity Press.

Bradley, J. (2003). International Exhibitions: A Distribution System for a New Art World Order. In M. Townsend (Ed.), *Beyond The Box: Diverging Curatorial Practices* (pp. 87-94). Banff: Banff Centre Press.

Bredin, H. (2002). Medieval Art Theory. In P. Smith & C. Wilde (Eds.), *A Companion to Art Theory* (pp. 29-39). Oxford: Blackwell.

Bucy, E. P. (2002). *Living in the Information Age: A New Media Reader*. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Bürger, P. (1992). On the Problem of the Autonomy of the Art in Bourgeois Society. In F. Frascina & J. Harris (Eds.), *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts* (pp. 51-63). London: Phaidon.

Colpitt, F. (2004). The Formalist Connection and Originary Myth of Conceptual Art. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 28-49). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Corris, M. (2004a). Introduction: An Invisible College in an Anglo-American World. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 1-18). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Corris, M. (2004b). Introductory Note by the Editor. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 99-107). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Corris, M. (2004c). Introductory Note by the Editor. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 269-281). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Green, A. M. (2004). "When Attitudes Become Form and the Contest over Conceptual Art's History". In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 123-143). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hagberg, G. L. (2002). The Institutional Theory of Art: Theory and Antitheory. In P. Smith & C. Wilde (Eds.), *A Companion to Art Theory* (pp. 487-504). Oxford: Blackwell.

Hopkins, D. (2002). Marcel Duchamp's Readymades and Anti-Aesthetic Reflex. In P. Smith & C. Wilde (Eds.), *A Companion to Art Theory* (pp. 253-264). Oxford: Blackwell.

Kocur, Z. (2005). Introduction by the Editor. In Z. Kocur & S. Leung (Eds.), *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985* (pp. xxiii, 444). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Lippard, L. (1973). The Art Workers' Coalition. In G. Battcock (Ed.), *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology* (pp. 102-115). New York: Dutton.

Mattick, P. (2003). *Art in its time: theories and practices of modern aesthetics*. New York: Routledge.

Meyer, U. (1973). The Eruption of Anti-Art. In G. Battcock (Ed.), *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology* (pp. 116-134). New York: Dutton.

Miles, M. (2000). Cafe Extra: Culture, Representation and the Everyday. In I. Cole & N. Stanley (Eds.), *Beyond the Museum: Art, Institutions, People*. Oxford: Museum of Modern Art.

O'Doherty, B. (1999). *Inside the white cube: the ideology of the gallery space* (Expanded ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Osborne, P. (1999). Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy. In M. Newman & J. Bird (Eds.), *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (pp. 47-65). London: Reaktion.

Rasmussen, T. (2003). On Distribution Society: The Internet as a Guide to a Sociological Understanding of Communication. In G. Liest'l, A. Morrison & T. Rasmussen (Eds.), *Digital media revisited: theoretical and conceptual innovation in digital domains* (pp. 443-468). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Rodowick, D. N. (2001). *Reading the Figural, or, Philosophy After the New Media*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Rollig, S. (2003). Contemporary Art Practices and the Museum: To Be Reconciled at All? In M. e. Townsend (Ed.), *Beyond The Box: Diverging Curatorial Practices* (pp. 97-107). Banff: Banff Centre Press.

Shanken, E. A. (2004). Art in the Information Age: *Technology and Conceptual Art*. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 235-250). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stimson, B. (2004). Conceptual Work and Conceptual Waste. In M. Corris (Ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (pp. 282-304). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2001). *Practices of looking: an introduction to visual culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Warburton, N. (2003). *The Art Question.* London: Routledge.

Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu.* London: SAGE.

Wolff, J. (1993). *The Social Production of Art* (2nd ed.). Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press.

Wood, P. (2002). Modernism and the Idea of the Avant-Garde. In P. Smith & C. Wilde (Eds.), *A Companion to Art Theory* (pp. 215-228). Oxford: Blackwell.