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# The Critical Theory of Artistic Capitalism

**Abstract:** This article takes up Lipovetsky's discussion on artistic capitalism in *L'esthétisation du monde. Vivre à l'âge du capitalisme artiste*, to trace its definitions and methodological construction, but also in order to create a critical theory of artistic capitalism, based on the following working-hypothesis: the production of art and the production of self, understood in the sense of a Foucauldian project of the aesthetics of existence, represent correspondent purposes in artistic capitalism. My research will be focused on examining previous attempts of developing such a critical inquiry, claimed by Luc Boltanski, Eve Chiapello, and Luc Ferry. It is my thesis that the failure of a homogeneous critical theory of artistic capitalism is owed to different inconsistent interpretations of contaminating ethics with aesthetics in order to create an ideal of morality and authenticity for the existence of the individual inspired by contemporary techniques of art production, aspects that were conceived by Lipovetsky as parts of the process of the "aestheticization of the world".

**Keywords:** artistic capitalism, aestheticization of the world, production of art, society of consumption, critical theory, culture

## 1. Introduction

Considering art under capitalism, nowadays, depends on overcoming the traditional attempts of limiting its reception to a concentration of creativity invested with a social function and dominated by market constraints. If the canonical gesture of modern art was "tearing away from materials, ideologies and formalisms"<sup>1</sup>, creating an opposite attitude of the early-capitalist art, that of constituting a "symbolic legitimation" (Bourdieu 1993, 128) for a class society, for increasing rationality in the cultural industry and for requiring its autonomy as a proper reaction to a politicized discourse, the capitalist art receives the task of facing consumption and its implications for the production of art. The puzzle of capitalist art begins with the need of legitimising art in the social life as a principle of order and self-constitution of the individual, following Oscar Wilde's ideal of regarding our existence as a work-of-art. How can capitalist art be relevant for the aesthetics of the existence, for inspiring individual liberties and moderated behaviours in the contemporary society of ready-made pleasures, when its own liberty is

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questioned in terms of art markets, production, reception and popularisation of artworks and institutional practices of exposure? Is art relevant for the quotidian society exclusively due to its function as a “sub-system of the capitalist world system?” (Ray 2014, 135-136) Is capitalist art, after a century of avant-gardes, disputing the liberties of creation, innovation and representational discourses, a new aesthetic revolution, in the middle of the consumption society? Furthermore, to what extent is it possible for it to be both “autonomous and” part of “a social fact?” (Adorno 1997, 5) These questions, raised from the challenges that the contemporary individuals face in the assimilation and interpretation of current artworks, reflect the accurate need of developing “a paradigm of interpreting capitalism through a critical theory” (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, 32). If art is to be considered an independent cultural phenomena as well as a related social fact, then a social critique should be addressed to artistic capitalism. Upon closer review, however, art is inevitably confronted with the paradox of providing the means for an authentic life of the individual in the full era of artificial and technological social experience.

The main aim of this article is to examine and define artistic capitalism, by explaining its relevancy and authority as a scientific field of artistic research. I will reinforce Lipovetsky’s perspectives on this matter, pointing out the interdisciplinary contents and the correspondent methodology of artistic capitalism. This paper will also question what kind of social critique is viable for it and what are the conditions that such a structure should respect in order to provide a sufficient and plausible explanation for this cultural paradigm?

## 2. Artistic Capitalism: Norms and Evolutions

In this section I will provide a brief overview on artistic capitalism, which was for the first time enforced as an autonomous domain of research by Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy in 2013, through their last book, *L'esthétisation du monde. Vivre à l'âge du capitalisme artiste*.

“This is what we mainly call artistic or creative-transaesthetic capitalism”, an ideology “characterised by the increasing importance of different stages of sensibility and process design, through a systematic work of styling goods and commercial spaces, of generalised integration of art, look and effects of the consumerist universe.” (Lipovetsky 2013, 12)

Their main argument is that taking into account the historical power of aesthetics to organize itself around different economic and political conditions, one can easily observe that its main capacity is providing alternative models of self-governing for different societies. In capitalism, its main role was that

of liberating the artistic production from the exigencies of industrial culture, inspiring the constitution of an ideal of authenticity for the existence of the modern individual, accommodated with predetermined standards of life and depersonalisation through alienated work. Artistic capitalism engaged the modern era in the challenge of recreating the current society as a work of art, following Marcuse's ideal (Marcuse 2007, 123-137). Nevertheless, capitalist society surprises the modern individual in a continuous challenge of subjecting him to the accelerated norms of production and consumption, forcing himself to resist to the routine of hedonist life. Conciliating these two paradigms means, for Lipovetsky and Serroy, finding inside the capitalist society the necessary tools for aestheticizing the world, meaning, constituting a coherent and consistent ideal of a satisfactory and a moral life. In other words, the production of art and the production of self, understood in the sense of a Foucauldian project of the aesthetics of existence, represent correspondent purposes in artistic capitalism. Life as a work of art, as well as art in itself, are discussed in terms of aestheticizing the world. According to Lipovetsky, there are four ages of artistic capitalism, understood as aestheticization of the world. The first one is the age of integrating consumption goods and practices in the quotidian life. Related to this, the two French authors conceive a new definition of artistic capitalism, as "the economic system which functions through the systematic aestheticization of consumption markets, of goods and current environments" (Lipovetsky & Serroy 2013, 45). Consumption must seduce the individual and for this, PR strategies, publicity and psychological manipulation of the consumer arise as a social and economic exigency. The second wave of artistic capitalism is that of generalising entrepreneurial dimensions of cultural and creative industries: "artworks get, in this logic, to be judged depending on their commercial and financial results, despite their aesthetic character." (46) Symptomatic for this cultural period is that artistic values are subordinated by economic ones. The third significant period belongs to the flourishing activity of specialised groups in creating artworks or artistic objects, such as fashion brands. Lipovetsky considers, at this level, that economy reveals to be creative in itself – galleries, museums, houses of fashion increase their reputation by their economic power. The last age of artistic capitalism is that of destroying old artistic and cultural hierarchies, as a consequence of what Luc Ferry would recognize being the democratisation of taste and creation of art. The ascension and overcoming of kitsch, the privilege that contemporary artistic environments do to technologized instruments of art production, especially in the new media field, the expansion of art to virtually mediums and immateriality made room, in fact, for a new dynamics of individualisation as self-creation, concentrated on "a decorative market of personalisation" (354) high-life and cosmopolitanism, spectacle and entertainment, hedonism. How could

the individual avoid his appetite for spectacle and artificial emotions since the most high-rated artworks are developed, nowadays, by exploiting exactly these dimensions? This question remains open, in order to approach the capitalist particularities of these challenges, in the form of a social critique, which I will largely expose in the subsequent section of my article. Up to this point of my research, artistic capitalism reveals being the project of post-industrial era that confronts the autonomy of individual and his self-constitution in an individualist and democratic society, with the double character of art, that of being both autonomous and a social-fact. My thesis is that a critical theory should be addressed to the ideology of artistic capitalism, in the traditional sense of Horkheimer's perspective on such a theoretical construction, which aims to "liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave him" (Horkheimer 1982, 244) – in this case, from consumption. Analysing the manners in which artistic capitalism changed society as a whole, in a historical specificity – namely the industrial and post-industrial era, and reshaping the discourse of modernity by engaging new and particular significances for individualism, autonomy of art, society of consumption, life style and morals, I will argue that such a critical theory is possible, taking into account some punctual principles, derived from my inquiry. In my opinion, there are two major attempts in this direction: one represented by the Boltanski-Chiapello model of constructing a critical theory of capitalism, which applies also to artistic capitalism as subordinated domain, and one extracted from Luc Ferry's analysis on *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of the Taste in the Democratic Age*<sup>2</sup>. An important mention is that none of them was conceived in the formula of a critical theory of artistic capitalism, but, according to the criteria that I have identified as necessary for such a critical inquiry, that will be later exposed, they can be considered feasible models submitted to this attempt. The main concern of the following section will be the completeness character of each discussed model, observing potential corrections and amendments that could adjust the model of a homogenous critical theory of artistic capitalism.

### **3. The Failure of a Homogenous Critical Theory on Artistic Capitalism: the Boltanski-Chiapello Model and its Corrections**

On the one hand, reflecting on what is called by Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy as "artistic capitalism" – an autonomous domain of determining art as a social tool for the aestheticization of the world and resistance to all the temptations of a hedonistic life inspired by consumption – involves understanding if this notion explains a new artistic regime, correspondent to a historical phase of modernity or postmodernity, or if it represents such a phase in itself. In order to answer this question, I adopted Luc Boltanski's and Eve Chiapello's theory on the four types of capitalism, that I will

confront with the four ages of artistic capitalism, that Lipovetsky and Serroy presented in their book. Hence, Boltanski and Chiapello distinguish between:

- “(a) Capitalism as a source of disenchantment and inauthenticity of objects, persons, emotions, and, more generally, the kind of existence associated with it;
- (b) capitalism as a source of oppression, inasmuch as it is opposed to freedom, autonomy and creativity of the human beings who are subjected, under its sway, on the one hand to the domination of the market as an impersonal force fixing prices and designating desirable human beings and products/services, while rejecting others, and on the other hand to the forms of subordination involved in the condition of wage-labour (enterprise discipline, close monitoring by bosses, and supervision by means of regulations and procedures);
- (c) Capitalism as a source of poverty among workers and of inequalities on an unprecedented scale;
- (d) Capitalism as a source of opportunism and egoism which, by exclusively encouraging private interests, proves destructive of social bonds and collective solidarity, especially of minimal solidarity between rich and poor.”<sup>3</sup>

Combining these four types of capitalism in a homogenous criticism still represents a milestone for any theoretical project of reconstructing the main phases of capitalism, according to Boltanski’s theory. Each type of capitalism is gathered around some native “indignations” and “nostalgias”: for example, the disappearance of authenticity and personal values is confronted with the impersonal domination of the market, while the ideals of equality and transparency are still historically contrasted with the clash of social classes that promoted the bourgeoisie and accelerated capitalism. Hence, Boltanski and Chiapello argue for *a social critique* and *an artistic critique* that should diagnose properly all the insufficiencies of each phase of capitalism. Normatively, the two of them are constituted independently. My argument is that the first model, that of the social critique, has the privilege of opening a taboo subject for artistic capitalism, meaning “the rejection of any contamination of aesthetics by ethics.” (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, 38) Socially, this critique considers that the life style of an individual is modelled by personal aspirations to welfare, reflecting, on the same time, symptoms of decadence and inauthenticity. The artistic mercantilism appears, in the terms of this social critique, responsible for encouraging the reception of an art object as a criteria for social inclusion and validation, since it reflects either the belonging to the same social class, tested through the power of making an expensive acquisition, or the homogenisation of the individual’s judgments of taste in different masses of consumption, with certain financial standards. The artistic critique will face, consequently, the rational management of the production of artworks that puts in question the social role of the artist, as well as its claims for professionalization. However, during the realist capitalism, meaning the ‘50s, this ideal of recognition

inspired one of the greatest cultural manifestos, signed by four pop artists that addressed an official letter to the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs from Westphalia, requiring the social integration of the artist and rehabilitating the status of the art production, as it follows:

“... Of course today every worker is needed in business or industry but if nothing else should be left for us except to earn a livelihood by working at a lathe or on a construction site after 8 semesters of the art academy it would probably make more sense to take this situation to its logical conclusion and break with tradition, dissolving the painting departments at art schools, including teaching positions and departmental employees. Aged 31 and 27 respectively, we still believe that the visual arts are necessary, also in a time characterized by industry, whether as part of a percent for art scheme, as wall-mounted pictures, or as avant-garde experiment.”<sup>4</sup>

Crating policies of recognition for the social status of the artist opened, unfortunately, the Pandora's Box of other nostalgias, that for self-creation and discipline. The artist himself became the symbol of the absence of any other artistic production, excepting his self-constitution, depicted as a work of art. This shift, from a material creation to a spiritual one, generated the figure of the dandy: in the era of standardized behaviours and consumption, the ideal of aestheticizing your own existence and satisfying personal desires without social constraints appeared as a form of liberty, anticipating as much as possible the hedonist life-style that the artistic capitalism proposes nowadays. However, the two critiques, the social and the artistic one, contain, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, a modernist and an antimodernist tendency. The artistic one reveals itself to be modern when is focused on liberating the individual from social standards and behaviours engaged to his own subjectivity, and is anti-modern when it proposes the disenchantment of the individual from a social, political or cultural paradigm. The social critique behaves as a modern construct as long as it encourages the destitutions of inequalities, but reacts as an anti-modern discourse in its attempts of criticizing individualism and discussing ideals such as solidarity and social empathy.

Are these two critiques enough to sustain a larger social criticism dedicated to capitalism and, sequentially, to artistic capitalism? Both Boltanski and Chiapello consider that they fail in providing a unitary apparatus of criticism, since “even in the case of the most radical movements, it (A/N each critique) shares 'something' with what it seeks to criticize.” (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, 40) The lack of a distance between the real and the theoretical realm inflicts the failure of this social criticism, divided in the two models – social and artistic – that are exceeded starting with the '70s. The authors stress that the former becomes the source for a new theory, demanding the security of the individual, while the latter is reinforced as a

theory for the autonomy of the individual (167). Security and autonomy are not only compatible, but also contradictory. At a first glimpse, they cohabitate in the terms of procuring welfare, comfort, even autonomy. But, in fact, they also synthesize what Daniel Bell recognized as the first age of the cultural contradictions of capitalism (Bell 1979, 75), that of accelerating consumption by destroying the old ascetical ideology of savings and abstinence, followed by a second wave of paradoxes, assisted by the confrontation of dictated and standardized behaviours with the morals of authenticity and liberation, concentrated by Lipovetsky's new moral imperative, "Be yourself!"<sup>5</sup>

Hence, what amendments should be addressed to the Boltanski-Chiapello model, in order to develop a sustainable social critique of artistic capitalism? In my opinion, the first problem is represented by the clash between the ethical and the aesthetic level of such a critical theory, that inspires particular "indignations" and "nostalgias" for each of the two aspects of such a theoretical construct, as Boltanski and Chiapello agreed. The key to create the synergy between the ethical and the aesthetic level of interpretation is represented by the attempt to consider them as integrated parts of a modern project of social criticism in which the switch from a Webberian protestant ethic which dominates the capitalist society, to a Lipovetskyan hedonist moral assists the individual also in his quality of art consumer. The social critique should treat, in my opinion, artistic capitalism, in its two aspects – social and artistic – as part of a certain phase of modernity, through which it proves its historical legitimacy, authority and particularity. A similar argument appears in Luc Ferry's pages, who considers that modernism continues, a century later, the work of modern society, that of promoting democracy and liberating the individual from the codes of traditions and mimesis. (Ferry 1997, 256) In this manner, any model proposed for the social theory of capitalist art should take into account the fact that modernity is focused exclusively on "the subjectivation of truth as primary conception of art expressing a distinct and original individuality." (278) In the line of this arguments, Luc Ferry offers a new solution for the modern tensions between the ethical and aesthetic level of individualism and its receptions in capitalism. His thesis is that there are three significant moments of the accomplished compatibility of ethical and aesthetical concerns on individualism: (1) the understanding of a work of art as an extension of the artist; (2) the understanding of science as an objective theoretical discourse guided by the needs of a subject; (3) the historical constitution of the Subject through the determination of autonomy as value and principle of existence. Hence, excellency, meritocracy and authenticity became the main values that modern individualism operates in the age of artistic capitalism. Even though they are social values, that express human nature, individual aptitudes and efforts or moral criteria for the constitution

of the self, they are transposed in the artistic field as marks for the originality, brilliancy and concurrency in the artistic field of production. My conclusion is that at this level, Ferry's model of critical theory of artistic capitalism is successful, since it creates normative correspondences between the ethical and the aesthetic levels of such an inquiry, applying the operating principle of axiological transmutation, which was considered, in the Boltanski-Chiapello model, impossible to exercise and, therefore, invalid.

An important mention is that Ferry's model is adapted, somehow, to previous models of a critical theory of art in the age of capitalism, even though, it was never intended such an objective. Relevant is, in this concern, the model of critical theory constituted by the Frankfurt School, which is based on two main hypotheses. The first one is that art represents an autonomous fact, while the second states that art is a social fact. There are no inadvertences between the two working-hypotheses, as Adorno, for example, considered. These two aspects, that inspired the late critique pioneered by Boltanski and Chiapello, in a very popular structure, but with its previous presented reserves on its success, are not accidentally replicated. From the Frankfurt's School, the double character of art – social and artistic – remained a necessary working-hypothesis in any attempt of creating a critical theory of art in the age of capitalism.

My argument is that to the operational principle of axiological transmutation, very efficient in Ferry's model of social critique, some other important hypothesis should be added in order to obtain a complete and homogenous model for such an inquiry. Firstly, bringing modern individualism into discussion involves understanding that the status of the artist has been consequently modified. Buying a signature instead of a work of art is the most common example reflected in the jargon of art consumers for understanding the brand-culture as the effect of the exigencies of modern individualism – buying a Van Gogh means an acquisition of \$82,500,000<sup>6</sup> while having a Picasso<sup>7</sup> costs \$95,200,000. Secondly, the individuality of the artist represents an authoritative argument for contesting or confirming the aesthetical quality of a work of art. The example of Robert Morris' Litanies, "aesthetically withdrawn" through a notarial legalised statement<sup>8</sup> signed by the artist is eloquent for understanding the new paradigm for art consumption that capitalism advanced. Art is uncertain, the main quality of an art object being its anxiety: each time, a work of art is regarded with suspicion, since it might not be considered to be one by alternative criteria, from other artistic perspective or interpretation. The status of the work of art was withdrawn, in Morris' case, through a "verbal exorcism" (Rosenberg 1972, 29) performed by its creator. This process opened the de-definition of art, also announced by Rosenberg as de-aestheticization, responsible for creating new boundaries and cannons for the mass production, as well for the artistic exposure. De-definition



reflects not only a radical new paradigm of defining a work of art, but also the expression of capitalist inequalities, addressed both to the creators and consumers of art. It imposes a simplified production of the art object, mainly through accessible instruments or recycled ones, as the eco-empire of the capitalist aged disposed. On the one hand, this context promoted the expansion of conceptual art; as an example, Morris' statement was considered a piece of art, since it was exposed in different galleries, taking into account the institutional art theories. Rosenberg was asking why should not be necessary, in these terms, a second statement for Morris' withdrawal, that could guarantee the lack of aesthetic content for the original document. On the other hand, artistic capitalism reflects the liberation of art from the dominance of industrial canons, market mechanisms and economic constraints. The echoes of this emancipation are given by the artistic project of Arshile Gorky WPA Federal Art Program, whose objective was to create poor art for poor people. Arta Povera, for them, does not mean low and cheap art, created by inexpensive elements, but the alienated art existent in the art market. At least in the last phases of artistic capitalism, art was engaged in a fervent movement of opposition against consumption criteria for producing and distributing artworks. From the de-definition of art is inspired the third important aspect of my revised model of social theory: art is de-territorialised, based on the fact that the institutional theory of art became old-fashioned and the democratization of different spaces of artistic exposure begins as a signal of requalifying art as a social phenomenon. The most illustrative example is given by the revolutionary motto from Marinetti's Futurism, "Burn the museums!", which anticipates what Dubuffet recognized, in the "Asphyxiating Culture", being the production of a "falsified substitute" for the "free culture", "which acts like an antibiotic" (Dubuffet 1986, 8), mostly alimeted by the institution of the ministries of culture in different European regions. In a sense, Rosenberg's opinion that the death of art liberates the power of creation from individuals and transfers it to all of us (Rosenberg 1977, 208) makes sense, only if the contribution of art to the culture and its significances for the society of the capitalist era is clarified. It is true that culture is understood, nowadays, in two alternative senses, that of "works of the past" (Dubuffet 1986, 8) and that of determining the creative intellectual activity, with material or spiritual outcomes. According to Dubuffet, whose radical opinions I do not share but I find relevant for the current argument, State acts as a cultural police, creating policies of selection, founding, popularisation and acceptance of different artworks and artists in a national heritage. Regardless the criteria applied in order to realize such a selection, Dubuffet considers that all the policies and public mechanisms initiated by a state are for the social good, which is never the same with the interest of an individual. Hence,

“To confer a socially meritorious nature to the production of art, making it an honoured social function, is to seriously falsify its meaning, for the production of art is a strictly and strongly individual function, and consequently entirely antagonistic to any social function. It can only be antisocial function or at least an asocial one...” (Dubuffet 1986, 12)

This is why I strongly consider that in order to accept the working-hypothesis that art is both autonomous and a social fact, it should be clarified that modern individualism does not interfere with the public life and community. Art for masses can be consumed individually or not: as an example, the seductive universe of the 3 and 4D contemporary cinema represents the highest form of consumption culture, addressed exclusively to the individual's expectations, comfort and entertainment. Therefore, individual pleasure maximizes economic profit for cinematic institutions, as well as their capacity to achieve and expose more artworks for its public. But, what Dubuffet targeted in his argument was the expression of free cultural manifestations, assumed as an objective for his *Art Brut*<sup>9</sup> program, despite cultural policies and mechanisms of advertising and public recognition. The artist succeeds in remaining the figure of the individual par excellence when he resists to cultural assimilation: his creative impulses should not be solidary with social expectations on art production; otherwise, the entire culture will be asphyxiated. What I want to stress here is that autonomy means both liberated creation and cultural resistance in a social field. In these terms, art is still autonomous and a social fact, reinforcing Adorno's perspective: it confirms the former character, by ignoring cultural practices and trends of art production, while the latter character is respected by expressing the art of naïve “outsiders”, which are part of the social reality, even though they are ignored or oppressed. At limit, the *Art Brut* program could be treated as a new paradigm of discussing and criticizing the production of art in post-industrial societies, in order to understand the new significances that the double character of art obtained in the last years.

#### 4. Conclusions

In order to understand the contemporary contamination of ethics with aesthetics, artistic capitalism proves to be the most suitable historical interval of postmodernity to be looked at, assuming this task by treating the production of art and the production of human identities in very similar terms. Developing a critical theory of artistic capitalism enforces the current challenges of reconsidering the social role of art and its autonomy, recently after the century of the dominance of technical rationality on all the forms of culture and existence, as the members of the Frankfurt School

argued. This very particular domain of artistic capitalism opens original hermeneutical paths of reconstructing the sense of postmodernity, surprised in the middle of the clash between industrial and post-industrial societies, that provide for the art consumer new senses for the democratisation of the taste, as well as for the consequences of consumption on the life-styles and authenticity of individuals.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> To be consulted J.M. Bernstein, Lydia Goehr, Gregg Horowitz and Chris Cutrone, “The relevance of critical theory to art today”, in *The Platypus Review*, Issue 31, January 2011, 2.

<sup>2</sup> To be consulted Luc Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of the Taste in the Democratic Age* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Boltanski, Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Manfred Kuttner, Konrad Lueg, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, *Living with Pop – A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism*, in Robert Storr, Gerhard Richter (ed.), *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting*, The Museum of Modern Art (New York: Art Publishers INC., 2002), 32.

<sup>5</sup> It is not the place in this article to develop the subject, but a larger argument on this matter is conceived in the first section of the book *Artistic Capitalism. The Consumption of the Work-of-Art in Four Steps: Marcuse, Baudrillard, Debord and Lipovetsky*, in which the author argues that the models of the social criticism dedicated to the artistic capitalism should be theoreticized also taking into account the sum of ruptures that the history of the individualist-democratic society had, as Luc Ferry and Daniel Bell noticed. See Oana Șerban, *Artistic Capitalism. The Consumption of the Work-of-Art in Four Steps: Marcuse, Baudrillard, Debord and Lipovetsky* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> The acquisition of Van Gogh’s painting, “Portrait of Dr. Gachet”, made in 1990, is accompanied by a twisted story: “Up for auction and purchased by Japanese businessman Ryoei Saito, this was – at the time- the most expensive painting in the world. Saito (then 75) caused controversy at the time, stating that when he died, he’d have the painting cremated along with him. This was later cleared up as he claimed that he was only using the expression to show his intense affection for it.” M.C. Whinkle, “The 20 Most Expensive Paintings in the World”, in *Whudat*, 25 May 2014, online source: <http://www.whudat.de/top-20-most-expensive-paintings-in-the-world/> (accessed at the 20th of July 2016)

<sup>7</sup> For Picasso’s “Dora Maar au Chat” was payed the second highest price ever fetched at auction, by an anonymous buyer. “Auctioned in 2006, a mysterious Russian bidder took this home (along with a Monet and a Chagall, spending over \$100 million) and no one has since found out who he was. The ownership of the painting has still not been made public.” M.C. Whinkle, “The 20 Most Expensive Paintings in the World”, in *Whudat*, 25 May 2014, online source: <http://www.whudat.de/top-20-most-expensive-paintings-in-the-world/> (accessed at the 20th of July 2016)

<sup>8</sup> His manifesto was signed at November 15<sup>th</sup> 1963.

<sup>9</sup> This example is very atypical in the history of modern and contemporary art. Dubuffet attempted to define through the expression of “art brut”, meaning “rough” or “raw art” a form of art which resists to a cultural trend and to social expectations on art. It is the art of “outsiders”, of conciliated exclusion, belonging to those who, normally, would not be considered artists, such as psychiatric patients or children. His program reflects a cultural manifesto against institutionalised art and could represent a powerful precedent in creating a critical inquiry for mass art in artistic capitalism, nowadays.

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