

‘An idea is when the brain smiles’
Edna van Duyn

The exhibition and project ‘Take the Money and Run’ had the double impact we secretly hoped for: good proceeds for our new building and an exciting contribution to the current discourse on the economic and symbolic value of art works, which culminated in the performance by the auctioneer.

Through the approach of *embedding* into the commercial art world, the financial crisis, globally and internally concerning de Appel’s relocation, was inserted to a process that created new art works.

Daniel Buren was exemplifying in an absolute way of correctly answering the questions of the invite. According to Buren, the value of art must be understood as the economic one that is only created when it is sold. *‘Concepts are sold everyday. But, in the art world a concept to be sold must have a kind of a shape, a form and looks like a visual object even if it is a mere piece of paper with few words on.’*

Lawrence Weiner, who was first in submitting his work, and in doing so, gave us the good spirit to continue this project, confronted the viewer with a *‘catch as catch can’* next to *‘From Peter to Paul’*, which brought up associations of standing at the door of heaven, morally questioning right or wrong, and in a light-hearted way making the institution conscious of its current position in decision-making how to survive. In the work of Barbara Bloom the viewer was triggered through the subtitle *‘An idea is how the brain smiles’* which still sounds as the perfect poetical title for the project in emphasizing one of the main targets in presenting art as an enrichment of experience and imagination. During the process of making ‘Take the Money and Run’ we were in touch with Aernout Bourdrez, a lawyer specialised in intellectual copyright who pointed us to the difference between the Corpus Mysticum and Corpus Mechanicum, the respective spiritual and physical elements of an art work which strengthened our idea of asking for conceptual works on A4 Paper, containing proposals for new works.

Maria Barnas composed a letter on A4 that contained the invitation to a future correspondence with the buyer of her proposal. In the presentation at the Brouwersgracht, the birthplace of de Appel in 1974, the conceptual esthetics of sheets of paper, framed in a modest way as possible, hanging on the brick white washed walls, under accompanying eye of the former curator of the Print Collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Ad Petersen (and his wife, Stedelijk Museum colleague Thea Houweling) became contemporary reminiscences of the beginning of de Appel. In the early seventies (in the slipstream of conceptual art) Wies Smals stepped out of the commercial gallery world - although gallery Seriaal already focussed on accessible art in editions - and started an institute with private money that aimed to present art to visitors participating and experiencing performances and media-based art. These ephemeric works were usually Mystical Bodies of which less remained. The early de Appel became legendary and Ad Petersen told us some apocryphic stories complementing its academic history and editing the myths that evolve around the unfortunately lost Wies and Josine. (These stories should somehow be collected.)

The opening of ‘Take the Money and Run’ was attended by many young artists in the retinue of Tomo Savić-Gecan, Ahmet Ögüt and Maria Barnas, living in Amsterdam and witnesses of the first hour, like Ulay, Aggy Smeets, Antje von Graevenitz as well as Harrie de Kroon who, with his alternative search engine, the [wdiggie], supplied us with a seventies spirit that survived into the 21st century in a playful and at the same time serious reshape of a gigant as Google. The 250 visitors to the opening, the

beautiful weather and the flash back live supplied an atmosphere of cheerful reunion and at the same time, looking into the new future of de Appel in which the new building was to be imagined and a topic of discussion.

In the work of Apolonija Šušteršič the architectural requirements for the new location were transformed into thousands of A4 sheets of paper, each representing 0,06237 m², a share in the floor plan of the building divided into different functions. Due to the site-specific work of Šušteršič the interaction between the real estate market and the art market was represented and thanks to de Appel's board member Suzan Oxenaar the 'Anti-gentrification' work is part of the collection of de Appel.

How in many ways applicable the questions were that we sent to the artists, becomes apparent in the reactions of YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES and Marlene Dumas, both referring to the *appel* to the artist. The first, reminding of Weiner, 'What's the catch, there is no catch' and 'They pay you for seeing what other don't see, doing what others don't do.'

Marlene Dumas, the artist that has one of the most successful relations with the art market in the Netherlands, was so generous to submit a handwritten statement in which she pointed out that it is not evident that artists always respond to the needs of 'To whom it may concern' and that she sometimes doesn't feel like pleasing at all, but de Appel has had her support for over years in many different ways.

There were only a few artists who liked the concept and still backed out of it, because of their struggle with time (f.i. Candice Breitz), or because, like Allen Ruppersberg who has 'given many works over the years to many organizations for many purposes so don't feel the need to question this practice at the moment. I'm not really an "auction artist" as they say but do give things when it is needed and I can help in that way.'

Mladen Stilinović who worked in 1979 with de Appel at the Brouwersgracht, supported the project by an existing work, therefore deviating from the A4 concept, with a work from his series of off-white painted pillow cases with red painted texts on it, of which the first one says *I am selling* and the second one *I am selling Duchamp*. When he gave this work during his opening in Antwerp at Extra City, it was an offer we couldn't refuse. With all works a bonding was created during the process, this one especially and it is hopefully to be seen again in a public collection, as some museums were represented at the auction.

The actual response on our invite that was sent out in January was so quick and positive, that when Ad Petersen and Thea Houweling consented in an unique resurrection of de Appel at the Brouwersgracht, this implied a symbolic place but also a floorplan of an intimate size, and no more artists than up till then could be invited. There were still a lot on the wish list, to mention only a few: Dennis Adams, Stanley Brouwn (who in the middle of housing problems of his studio, actually had a practical reason not to reply, although it is assumed that this wouldn't be the reason), Moshekwa Langa, Douglas Gordon, Hans Haacke, Barbara Kruger and many others. With the work by Meschac Gaba we were very pleased, he asked his twin sons of just 8 years old, to execute a performance he conceptualised, in which they would make drawings and sell these as well to the audience to support de Appel. Alexandra van Dongen, mother and curator applied arts at Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen was present to assist Johannes and Jonathan. Anticipating on the performance, it was well foreseen that the boys had some drawings prepared, they sold well and the attention of the public was so overwhelming that they actually didn't draw much at the spur of the moment. Two drawings were signed and dated by the young artists and joined the

diptych of their father including his statement in the auction. They might be on view in a public collection as well.

The work of Sven Augustijnen was reluctant at first in accessibility, were we trapped in our own concept that we actually wondered what the e-mail implied? It is addressed to Sonia Dermience and tells in French that he has prepared her return to the United States with a gun, bullets and parrots around. Should she dress like an Indian?

During the time the intriguing text stuck in our minds and triggered our thoughts that much, that we assumed that the imaginative value of this work was reached anyway. In line with the cheap print out of the email, economic and symbolic values were both covered. As well as in Liam Gillick's work for which he used a medieval print in which 13 people are gathered around a dish and entitled it: *mmm money pie*.

Jens Haaning convinced us within the frame of the concept through an existing work, his work 'Passport', framed in a wooden frame so no one could open it, and still valid, it said on the certificate. Requesting belief, trust and imagination of the viewer and future buyer, it inspired the auctioneer, Arno Verkade, to recommend this work. This auctioneer excelled in the performance, conceptualized by Christian Jankowski, with auctioning his 'personal' belongings, breast pocket handkerchief, tie, suit jacket, shoes, shirt, socks and shoes and finally, the auction hammer. A phone bidder asked if Verkade would auction his belt, but the performance was not meant to honour 'fetish', but to deconstruct the principle of auctioning. The auction house specialists were also excited by the work of Louise Lawler: *'People who expressed interest for this work, also bid on the following:'* would incorporate other works following the Amazon system on Internet. Images taken from Internet were appropriated by Dominique Gonzalez Foerster in a A4 'diptych': an announcement for *'Pickpocket'*, a film by Robert Bresson juxtaposed a modest text saying *'underground needs your money baby'*. Referring to money in an even more direct way was the check of Maurizio Cattelan that promised to pay one dollar if it would be cashed, the proceeds were besides a lot of discussion during the show, more than thousands times a dollar: symbolic versus economic value of art was illustrated most extremely.

Reflecting on productivity of time and energy, Dora Garcia actually wrote: *'Today I wrote nothing. Doesn't matter.'* Garcia's work appeared to be a major complement to the proposed correspondence of Barnas and was juxtaposed in the exhibition to confront both options. Future activities of the owner were optional in the works that Claire Fontaine and Coleen Fitzgibbon and Robin Winters submitted. Fontaine proposed the imaginary owner to construct a neon sign saying: *This neon sign was made by Hans van Oostrum for the remuneration of two thousand, three hundred euros.* The A4 showed the future size and positioning and a second A4 contained the estimate. This design makes one curious where it will be executed. Fitzgibbon/Winters who inspired us for the title, that renamed their project in 1977 at the Brouwersgracht, put into prospect a drawing that will be made in consultation with the owner. Also Ahmet Ögüt promised a drawing if one would buy the A4 saying: *To those who buy this A4 sheet of paper, I will give an A4 drawing as a gift.*

Job Koelewijn implemented our request in his, since 2006, daily reading out loud of books and recorded on cassette tapes. The meditative action requires another attention and focus than one is used to in the daily flow. Koelewijn sort of enlarged this reflective action by photographing the tapes and the books and designed a banner on which his daily records are noted and illustrated by the covers of the books he read. During the show one reading session was public, and the visitors attended a concentrated reading by Koelewijn alternated by Edna van Duyn, of the I Ching, a

rather intricate text on which Koelewijn gave some comments, as well as he introduced this work within his oeuvre.

Nedko Solakov was one of the artists who donated a work for the auction and also generously participated in 'Take the Money and Run' by describing that a sentence, that is printed on normal A4 paper, including a spelling mistake and which is not signed by him, is a '*potential to possibly accommodate a fresh idea for a successful art market strategy in the times of global crisis. Unfortunately the full stop in that sentence had just killed that potential, which is good for the art market too, unless this sheet of useless paper goes to an art auction.*' From this quote of Solakov's A4 it is obvious that he at the same time is involved in the auction through an existing work by him, which is usually signed and handwritten, and therefore conscious of implications and layers of reflection within engaging with a charity auction.

Monica Bonvicini's work consisted of more than twenty tracing papers with titles in stencil repeating the word 'Run' from 'Take the Money and Run' in song titles, thus emphasizing the running, floating and streaming element that money has ('Money has to be spent' or 'You can't take it with you if you die').

Spending money and the responsibility of how much art is valued, is what Tomo Savić-Gecan expressed in his text that was glued to the wall: '*Each gallery visitor sets the ticket price for the next visitor.*' In 2005 this idea was put into function in the 'On Mobility' show at de Appel. The purpose within the frame of 'Take the Money and Run' was 'only' to have people think and talk about it, so the idea always remains the property of the artist and oral history.

Erick Beltrán focused on the physical quality of a sheet of paper, which is not worth 'an sich', but made into a ball photographed in four ways and accompanied by a sheet of paper on which the 'cutting edges' are printed in a pattern, it symbolized the imaginary quality a concept can have.

'Take the Money and Run' was accompanied through an instruction in the work by Roman Ondák in his A4 stating that the instruction for the work was '*Take the instruction and run.*' The institution, the curator and the viewer were addressed, although all had to think of an instruction him/herself. Action and reaction are shifted here. The perspective of subject and object was put into the work that Sean Snyder made; '*The problem for the artist is not to know of the work of art should be considered as an object or as a subject. Since the two are inseparable.*'

And as if Snyder wants to advise the institution, the curator and the viewer, his statement ends with:

'Give value to the commodity at hand. Redistribute the idea.'

Edna van Duyn
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