

Manifesto for a new art understanding (2011)
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On 14 april 2011 four composers published the following 'Manifesto for a new art understanding' in an attempt to reclaim language from the jargon increasingly used by policy makers and Arts managers in what was up to then the clearest indication of a neoliberal takeover of the Arts sector in the Netherlands. The petition was signed by hundreds of artists from all disciplines and offered to the minister of culture. The attempt bore no consequences of course and Holland became one of the foremost neoliberal Firms in the world. Underneath the twelve main points.

1. Art is not intended for a specific "Target Group". All Art is always for everyone.

Whosoever makes a piece of art brings something into the world that is available to everyone and makes the world livable.

2. Art is not an "instrument".

Every piece of art sets its own goals and has its own effects. What a piece of art shall become en what it shall cause in the world is not predictable and can not be enforced via political or commercial agendas.

3. The value of Art is neither predictable nor calculable.

Art offers perceptions and feelings, offers knowledge about what we can see, hear, think and do in the world. This knowledge is called "experience". An artwork has value in so far as the experience it offers is specific: in so far as it can be reduced to nothing else. An artwork is a specific thought about experience.

4. An Artwork is not in itself "accessible", but offers access to experience.

Whosoever embarks on making, watching or listening to a piece of art can not know in advance to what experience that artwork shall lead. For this reason "accessibility" can not be a predetermined criterium for Art. The experience however becomes more accessible through repeated contact with the work.

5. Art is a discipline.

Art demands dedication, from makers and observers. Only who focusses attentively on an artwork can gain access to the experience that the work enables.

6. Art is separate from both State and Market.

Neither the mechanisms of the State nor those of the Market will ever capture what Art is. From the perspective of the arts there is also no difference between Market and State - there is only one MarketState that does not think but regulates (in so far as the storm of international capital permits). Outside of that there is thought. In the sciences for example, and in art.

7. Art is neither "pluriform" nor "democratic".

Art is unsuitable as a policy tool with which to correct or blur failing social policies. Art does not represent democratic consensus but flourishes under rivalry of ideas.

8. Art is not "consumed".

An artwork does not exhaust itself in its consumption and is thus not scarce. Economic laws are therefore not applicable to the Arts. The thought of an artwork is an eternal source.

9. Art is not a "supply" for which there is a "demand".

No artwork can ever be reduced to the mechanism of the Market - the Market can only have a demand for that which is already known. The artwork derives its value exactly because it is unpredictable. The demand of the public is therefore neither a creative nor an artistic factor.

10. There is no "oversupply" of Art. Art is excessive, generous and yet continually necessary again.

Every artwork is always too much. There is always more Art than anyone can keep up with. It is no other way: there is always more to think, to experience and to do than a human can manage, and Art makes that uncomfortable fact continually visible. Making this visible is human necessity: exactly the too much that Art offers can elevate a human and free them from drudgery and regulation. Art is thus, besides always too much, also never enough.

11. An Artwork is a question to which the answer can change your life.

12. Art celebrates that we can think, feel, create, live.