

The artistic experience is not created for the consumer, but co-created with them

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Summary

This paper charts the theories that have underpinned arts marketing in the last 20 years. It suggests that incorporating contemporary aesthetic philosophy could lead to a radical shift in arts marketing practice. Rather than allowing either the customer- or artist-centred approach to prevail, the author sets out a more strategic approach that aligns practical marketing activity with theories of aesthetics to achieve the greatest possible artistic impact and value.

Relational aesthetics has changed the way we understand the creation of art

The paper focuses on the fact that in 'relational theory' the value of a work is determined through a process of experience or interpretation. This means that the consumer essentially co-produces the art through their confrontation with it. Without an audience the work has no determined value. Therefore if one of the aims of the artistic (and arts marketing) process is to maximise the impact and value of that work amongst its audience then due regard needs to be given to how to maximize the audience experience in an 'artistic' sense.

What does this mean in practice?

The paper sets out the practicalities of marketing activity informed by aesthetic notions of relational value: the art needs to be shown in a context that maximises the artistic value of the work. So consumers should have their co-production role reinforced through the content and tone of marketing literature,

or an interaction with the artist at some point in the production process. To maximize the conditions for artistic value, marketing activity should disrupt or provoke (rather than predictably reinforce). For art to really affect society a new (or relatively new) audience must be engaged. This requires a change in marketing language and metaphors.

Keywords

marketing value co-production aesthetics experience impact

Title	A strategic logic for arts marketing
Author(s)	Boorsma, M.
Publication date	2006
Source	International Journal of Cultural Policy, Vol 12, Iss 1, pp 73-92
Link	http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10286630600613333

By [Culture.Case](#) | 20 March 2014 | [Impacts](#) , [Intrinsic impacts of arts and culture](#) , [Insights](#) , [Consumer behaviour in arts and culture](#) , [Developing new audiences in arts and culture](#)



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