THE ART OF IMPACT PROGRAMME: INTERVIEW WITH TABO GOUDSWAARD AND MICHIEL MUNNEKE

Reflecting on the implications of cultural programmes such as *The Art of Impact*, brought up many questions about the implementation and day-to-day functions of such an initiative. To better understand how the various aspects of *The Art of Impact* work, such as the selection process, the formation of jury committees, the role of the intendant, the interpretation of the term 'impact', as well as how the 'social impact' of the funded projects is measured, we conducted an interview with Michiel Munneke, programme director, and Tabo Goudswaard, intendant of the fund.

Kunstlicht*: Could you please explain how *The Art of Impact* works and what your roles are within it?

Michiel Munneke: One thing that is important to stress is that *The Art of Impact* is a temporary programme and it has an experimental nature. Besides providing subsidies it is also a research programme. It was initiated by the Ministry of Culture (OCW) with the purpose of connecting art and culture with societal organisations in a more vivid, dynamic way. When we came in, the programme was already designed and approved, so we are more in charge of the execution. Having said that, we still have the mandate to mould the programme according to newly gained insights and experiences. During the first year we have been focusing on the recruiting of projects. We had two open calls [for proposals], and in total received around 700 applications of which we only accepted around 80. Besides that, we also selected existing projects that fit our goals and criteria. I have to say, the main challenge in the first year was not necessarily to reach out to the arts and culture sector; it was a far greater challenge to reach out to society and to try to convince organisations to come up with proposals, where they start to cooperate with an artist or with art institutions. Although this is still a challenge, I hope that with this programme we can show that there is potential for this kind of cooperation. After having recruited most of the projects, in total 120, in this second year our focus is on promoting the projects, the idea and philosophy of *The Art of Impact*, and on sharing the results of our research. We organized a gathering where participants shared their experiences on how they make an impact [independently], and how they make an impact through collaborations with their partners. Moreover, we are very interested in knowing what went well, and what did not go according to plan. Out of the 120 funded projects, fifteen were chosen as case studies to analyse in depth. For this research, we are working together with the KWINK group, and at the end we aim to come up with recommendations for the future for the type of practices that *The Art of Impact* aims to promote.[1]

KL: We are curious to know more about the selection process and the criteria by which these projects are selected to receive funding.

MM: There are two ways to select projects: one is by open call and [the selection is] handled by a jury committee, and the other is by our intendant, who singles out already existing projects. In order to select the [successful] applicants, the jury considers the quality and position of the candidate, the artistic quality and vision, the social relevance and urgency, the visibility and access to public, and the budgeting and entrepreneurship, and we focus a lot as well on collaboration with third parties.

KL: Could you please explain how the intendant chooses projects and why this position has been created?

MM: Having an intendant is not a common practice within arts foundations. The film fund is the only other foundation that works with one. We presented the idea to the ministry and it was accepted. For me, the combination of a procedure of both open calls and an intendant works perfectly well. These two ways of recruiting projects allow us to create an interesting and balanced portfolio of intriguing initiatives. The main reason why arts foundations hardly work with intendants has to do with the fact that these institutions are publicly funded. Having one person to decide about what project to fund is regarded risky. I understand where the fear comes from, but I do not see any problem as long as the intendant is trustworthy, knowledgeable, and experienced and the framework is clearly defined. In the end, accountability and transparency are the things that count [when working with an intendant].

Tabo Goudswaard: There are two main differences between the selection tracks. Through the open call, projects can receive between 10.000 and 200.000 euros, and through my own selection they receive a fixed amount of 30.000 euros. Projects applying to the open call are new projects. They [were required to] present a plan to which the jury reacted positively or negatively. For the projects I choose, I have the possibility to advise them on how to make it a good project. While [they are] in progress I am able to join them and we can tweak the plans for improvement.

KL: In your experience, what are the key aspects that the projects are missing when you give them advice?

TG: I am focused on the mentality of the makers, and I am really interested in their ambition. I was trained as a fine artist at the Rietveld Academy, and there the dominant attitude was to make a piece of art for the white cube. Maybe it's subversive, maybe it opens a discussion or changes the way people perceive a certain subject. But I am looking for people that are more ambitious than that, who are not only disruptive, but also ready to organize stuff, and to really think about what their proposals are doing to a societal system. What's your position on a societal system? What can you add? What are the mechanisms that you can build into the projects that have a promise for certain societal questions? That requires a different attitude from makers. It's also about how you talk about your work. Are you willing to be empathetic towards the people that are addressed by the project? Are you willing to let them have a say in it? These are just some aspects, but there are many others that I try to address.

KL: In your opinion, what is the benefit of funding already existent projects?

TG: If you really want to make a societal impact then maybe you need to have a longer breath. There is often a lot of potential in projects that are already [being] done. Now that they receive funding we all can benefit from it.

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According to their website, the KWINK group is a consulting agency that evaluates organizations, policies, and legislation, analysing and measuring effects and results. For more information see: *The Art of Impact's* website, which states that the goal of this research programme is to understand "how collaboration has been established, how to optimally work together and how to trigger off the intended (social) impact". Accessed via: theartofimpact.nl/onderzoek, on 6 July 2016.

KL: As part of your job, you report on and follow up the projects you select. What is the relevance of doing this?

TG: With the statement [about each project] on the website I try to be transparent about why I have selected them. There are a lot of reasons why a project is relevant and I try to explain that in my statement. While they are in progress I follow up with them as they usually deal with similar problems, and I can, for example, join them for a brainstorm[ing session] in order to see what the next step might be. It's a way to learn from them and connect different projects so they can help each other.

MM: It also differs a lot from project to project: some are really open and some are already very established and don't need much support. So it's a wide range of involvement from the intendant. Generally, we ask the initiators to be receptive and really contribute and commit to the programme as we also aim to do research—in that way we are not a typical fund for public culture. They become part of the community of *The Art of Impact*, and share our inquisitive mentality in order to learn lessons from the project: for the participating public funds, for the Ministry perhaps, but above all for artists, art institutions and (societal) organizations that intend to cooperate.

KL: For the open call you have formed different jury committees. What were the criteria, in this case, for selecting the jury members?

MM: What was important for us was to put together a group that was representative of what we were looking for, choosing the right people with the right expertise. On one side we had people from arts and culture, like film, literature, and the creative industries, and on the other side [we had] people who represented society. We realized that for the first open call the focus was more on arts and culture, and for the second one we rearranged it to involve more people from society, so to speak. We tried to form a balanced group [that was] representative of different disciplines, but also had a certain reputation in terms of publicity and public figures; having people on board that are respected helps to spread the message of *The Art of Impact*, and ensures [that] the projects are chosen by experienced and qualified judges. Besides the selection criteria I mentioned at the beginning, jury members were very keen on judging the projects also in terms of sustainability, so as to look at projects not as one-off events, but at what will last afterwards when the subsidy is no longer provided.

KL: What do you mean by 'people from society'?

MM: Well, it's difficult to ask somebody to represent society. You could define it as people who are not primarily rooted in the arts and culture domain. For example, we chose as our first chair the editor-in-chief of *Financieel Dagblad*. Also, we asked Bas Haring, who is a philosopher, public speaker, and writer—because this type of person is very engaged and at the same time has a public profile.

KL: Indeed most of the jury members come from the culture industry and have public visibility. However, in these juries we were expecting to see critical experts from the fields that *The Art of Impact* seeks to impact—such as energy and climate, health, circular economy, the refugee crisis, etc.—in order to use their knowledge and experience to select the projects. By this we mean e.g., sociologists or economists that have

insight into the issues facing their fields. Why were these experts not included in the juries?

MM: We were looking for the kind of experience of people that are more active in the practice of these disciplines—like the founder of Plastic Whale, which is an organization that fishes for plastic in canals here in the Netherlands. We were expecting that people would [be able to] judge projects from their own perspectives. It's more of an approach that is focused on the practitioners, than a scientific or academic approach.

KL: Many articles in this issue are questioning cultural policies such as *The Art of Impact*, analysing them as instances of governmental intervention in the arts, or 'the entrepreneurialization of culture' while also establishing direct connections to the cultural industries. We presume these comparisons are nothing new to both of you. Do you have any comment on those parallels? How would you position this fund in response to those critiques?

TG: The way artists work is very different from other ways of working in society, and artistic quality is one of the things we take as a starting point. We do not try to change the arts, but try to find out in what way artistic quality can enrich the societal, more rational, repertoire. That, for us, is impact production. The impact producer creates the right circumstances for the collaboration, taking the autonomous position of the artist for instance as a starting point. In collaborating with other partners, I think artistic autonomy doesn't need to be defended, but conquered within a project. Arranging the right circumstances to enable a meaningful collaboration and have impact, in our opinion, is a new discipline.

KL: Since the 1990s, and especially considering community and participatory art within the art field, concepts such as usefulness, helpfulness, or realism have been popularly used. However, in this case, the Dutch government has chosen the word 'impact'. Could you elaborate on the reasons why this particular term was chosen?

MM: Well, in fact we inherited the name *The Art of Impact* and we are quite happy with it as, in a way, it provokes, and it also covers what we aim [to achieve] with the programme perfectly. It is about coming up with projects that might change certain systems within society. It is, of course, about art, but it also goes beyond it. It's about the way art impacts society and addresses certain questions, maybe even within companies and corporations, using the creativity of artists to come up with different perspectives to [address] questions they are struggling with, so-called 'wicked problems'.

KL: Since the conceptualization of this issue, we have been reflecting on the meaning of the word 'impact', which, for us, is a very subjective concept. However, on the website one can read that you plan to measure the qualitative results of the funded projects. This means that you understand that the impact of each project is measurable. How do you evaluate the impact of a project so objectively?

MM: The timing of this question is premature as we are in the middle of this process and, currently, are discussing this with the research company. The measurement of the impact of a project in quantitative terms is easy; you can count how many people attend an event, the amount of media coverage a project receives, or any kind of

figure. However, hopefully, our programme will generate more qualitative information. The way we approach it is similar to storytelling: what are the practices that the artists came across while cooperating with other organizations; what did they learn; what aspects went wrong and how did the cooperating partners cope with it? As *The Art of Impact*, we are more interested in the dynamics and processes through which the partners arrived at an end product, and then, of course, in the end product itself. This is the starting point for the research.

KL: Are you, then, researching the impact on the producers or on the communities with which these producers or artists are working? What are you actually researching in regard to these projects?

MM: In my opinion it can be both in the end. But what we are very much interested in is the process: how do you get there? It's a kind of journey that the artists enter into with their partners. We try to analyse what they come across and what it means for them and for the cooperation. We are interested in how the process affects the cooperation and the end result, the goals they are aiming [to achieve].

TG: There are many different questions that can be touched upon by a work of art, or how they [artists] try to change perceptions of a certain topic. For me, I would like to think about impact as a change [that occurs] around a certain issue. This change could be the attitude of the people that are involved or the rules of the mechanism working around a certain issue. Are the people showing different kinds of behaviour or using a different language as a consequence of the project? Are there other goals they are focusing on? It could be on all these different levels that the change is being made through the collaboration.

KL: Previously you mentioned that this subsidy seeks to support sustainable projects. However, *The Art of Impact* is a temporary fund. In your opinion, how does the temporary nature of this subsidy affect the sustainability of the projects?

MM: We started the programme with the awareness that it would only last two years, and we try to see it as an experiment, as an opportunity to research the processes and dynamics of the funded projects. Therefore, this programme, in a way, is a pilot to learn lessons for the future and maybe one of these lessons is that public funds do not invest enough in long-term projects, or that there is not enough time to create the right context in which the artists want to operate.

Michel Munneke studied sociology and anthropology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen and obtained his PhD in Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam. From 1995 until 2000 he worked at the World Press Photo Foundation, becoming its director in 2001. Next to his position as programme director of *The Art of Impact*, Munneke is an advisor of the board of directors of Child Helpline International, and follows the Senior Leadership Programme at the Nyenrode Business University.

Tabo Goudswaard studied Fine Arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Amsterdam, after which he joined the No Academy, a post-graduate programme for social design in Amsterdam. As a social designer, Goudswaard searches for new ways of looking at social problems. He seeks to connect his work with people's everyday behaviour and designs new concrete perspectives for taking action, which are both shared with participants and produced together with them. It is his conviction that artists can play a crucial role in shaping societies.

*Interview by Lara Garcia Diaz & Cristina Marques Moran

AGENTS OR OBJECTS OF DISCONTINUOUS CHANGE? BLAIRITE BRITAIN AND THE ROLE OF THE CULTUREPRENEUR
Josephine Berry

In his epoch-defining book on the knowledge economy, *Living on Thin Air*, Charles Leadbeater advanced a crucial formulation: "The more rapid and discontinuous the nature of knowledge creation within an industry, the more conducive it is for entrepreneurship."[1] When seeking to understand the rise of the 'cultural entrepreneur'—or *culturepreneur*—in Britain in the 1990s, it is important to keep in mind how profound the experience of 'rapid and discontinuous change' was during this time. In a sense, the rise of the entrepreneur *per se*, as an economic ideal and governmental fetish, registers a popular awakening to the effects of a full-scale implementation of neoliberal policies and their engineering of endemic economic instability. Such policies swept away the social and economic compacts that had undergirded and stabilized society since the end of the Second World War. To contend with the 'creative destruction' of globalized and deregulated trade, the welfare state thus began its transition into the innovation state.

But beyond merely registering this systemic instability, the fetishized figure of the entrepreneur provided a conduit by which a general economic condition could be converted into a set of personal responsibilities and motivations. Neoliberalism demanded that an entirely new model of subjectivity be born. In 1990s Britain, it was the invented and unlikely figure of the *cultural* entrepreneur who most embodied the risk-taking individualism that was given as the model of success for thriving in new economic times. Here we will look at how this contradictory figure was engineered, and its lasting impact on the cultural landscape.

Fordism's demise in the early 1970s had brought about the end of jobs for life or the notion of a lifelong career. The end of economic stability had also, however, left governments with a historic *opportunity*. Finally, the on-going argument between those who believed that the collective insurance of the welfare state was an essential buffer to the market's destructive pursuit of profit, and those who believed that welfare costs were unaffordable could be settled. As an apparently unavoidable consequence of the changes in economic conditions, the social would now become entirely integrated into the economic. Neoliberalism is a political ideology that subjects all aspects of life (social, economic, biological, cultural, personal) to an economic judgement or audit; it is a perspective that no longer permits of any outside to the economic. In this respect, we can say that society as a whole was entrepreneurialized as an effect of neoliberalism. But below we will look specifically at culture, rapidly becoming the great white hope of deindustrialized times, and the story of its entrepreneurialization in 'Creative Britain'.[2]

ENTREPRENEURIAL SALVATION

As Jacques Donzelot argues in his essay 'Pleasure in Work', at the very centre of this change is the transformation of the *subject of rights* who disidentifies with work into the *subject of change* who embraces and takes pleasure in work.[3] The Fordist worker, protected by statutory rights but threatened by unemployment and hence economic obsolescence, had become a real problem for government

1
Charles Leadbeater, *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 104.

2
'Creative Britain' is the title of the 1998 book by Chris Smith, New Labour's Secretary of State for Culture, which laid out a vision for the culturepreneurialization of Britain. In it, Smith imagines the transformation of the British economy through the individualistic, innovative, and self-risking figure of the cultural producer. He also reimagines the role of arts funding in terms of a *financing* of entrepreneurial actors able to produce economic returns. For Robert Hewison, the phrase 'Creative Britain' "resonates throughout New Labour's time in office. And who could be against creativity? Creativity is positive and forward-looking—it is cool, just as New Labour wished to be." Robert Hewison, *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain*, London/New York: Verso, 2014, p. 5.

3
Jacques Donzelot, 'Pleasure in Work', in: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller (eds.) [The Foucault Effect...] *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.