

Editorial

Now that cuts in the cultural sector are starting to take their toll, the initial commotion seems to have dissolved into a daily reality in which securing one's own existence has priority over posing fundamental questions. Some institutions have indeed changed the way they organise themselves – generally by force and in predictable and accepted ways. Radical alternatives are shunned.

We can draw at least two conclusions. In the first place the art world in the Netherlands seems to be compliant with its role as producer of luxury goods, and at ease with a future centred on entrepreneurship. Against the background of an evolving world economy, the stability of the demand for artworks which are considered of high quality, is uncertain. At the same time the autonomy that is gained by a proportional increase of 'own resources' implies a decreased dependence on

the government. The problematic (in)dependence of the market economy can be seen as an advantage: one is no longer bound to government decisions which are often criticised. One can take matters into one's own hands, advancing a sustainable autonomy.

In the plenary article, Pascal Gielen states the point at issue. Our entire society is becoming more liberal and that has consequences not only for the art sector; Gielen identifies an alarming situation within the realm of art production as well. *Censuur*, a work by Ruben Pater, functions as a counterpoint. In the three subsequent articles this starting point is embedded within historical background and complementary perspectives. Berend Jan Langenberg provides answers to two questions that arise: why is the Dutch culture policy the way it is, and how are we

doing compared to other countries? Olav Velthuis and Erica Coslor write about yet another world in which art has to pay for itself: the art investment market. Whereas the art market has taken on many characteristics of the financial economy, commodity art has proven not to be very profitable in the long term as it is not 'commensurable'. Jelle van Baardewijk and Roel Griffioen question the effects of the abstracted essence of money on our reality, and consider these effects in light of Zachary Formwalt's work, which delves into the connections between the representational functions of money, photography, and architecture.

Both on the cover as well as inside this issue, Formwalt presents archival material he encountered during ongoing research into the Beurs van Berlage, an ideology-

drenched monument. Berlage envisaged a social transformation after which a commodity exchange would be redundant. The Beurs was designed as a gesamtkunstwerk for the people.

Suzanne Pennington de Jongh and Marina Aarts examine the history of the Dutch art market. Pennington de Jongh discusses the rise and fall of government support in the nineteenth century, hinting at comparisons with current policy. Through portraits of different types of collectors, Aarts maps the art market of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with a special emphasis on the influence of 'prestige art' and the internet.

In the three articles that follow, a number of results and reservations about the influence of the free market on the art sector are presented. Angela Bartholomew analyses the liberalised museum world in Los Angeles, and explores the effects of a far-reaching commercially-driven privatisation. Mitha Budhyarto shows how the promising but vulnerable Indonesian art world is merely a pawn in the fluctuating market economy. In his research into the institutionalisation of modern and contemporary art in India, Kallol Ray asks: what does it mean when activities that are normally con-

sidered to belong to museums, are performed and financed by galleries and individuals?

Two concluding articles represent alternative approaches. Rieke Vos discusses the thinking of economist and Fluxus artist Robert Filliou, who devised a 'poetic' economy. Renee Steenbergen makes a plea for giving: in Dutch culture patronage is far from common, but nonetheless it can be stimulated. Steenbergen identifies a number of lacking elements in Dutch government policy and suggests there is room for turning the culture of asking into a culture of giving.

Finally, in the table of contents on the following pages, the work of Chloe Dierckx, Liesbeth Doms and Sarah Henrickxs has been applied for the active reader. A scratch sticker reveals the title of the article by Velthuis and Coslor on art as a transparent, standardised investment. The gold-coloured seal enters into dialogue with this idea: to be controllable, the uncertain, subjective value of art has to be unlocked and translated into a clear language and a commensurate quantity. Departing from kindred principles, Dutch policy operates more and more in line with the logic of the free market: the distinction between the public and the private

sector is disappearing, we can now speak of a 'public market'.

Kunstlicht wants to thank everyone involved in making this issue. We say goodbye to Lisa Goudsmit and Maarten van 't Klooster, and welcome Steyn Bergs, Erik Kussendrager, Docus van der Made, Veerle Spronck and Rosa te Velde to our team.

On behalf of the editorial board, Maeike Kimsma and Jesse van Winden