

Topics on Art and Money

Edited by

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Series in Art



VERNON PRESS

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www.vernonpress.com

In the Americas:
Vernon Press
1000 N West Street, Suite 1200
Wilmington, Delaware, 19801
United States

In the rest of the world:
Vernon Press
C/Sancti Espiritu 17,
Malaga, 29006
Spain

Series in Art

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020947808

ISBN: 978-1-64889-048-2

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Acknowledgments

Cervantes wrote in his *Don Quixote* that the worst sin is that of being ungrateful. And I agree with him.

In consequence, I must begin by thanking Vernon Press for publishing this book, contributing to freedom of expression and the divulgation of academic knowledge and research.

I must also thank each of the contributors who have decided to put their trust in the publisher and me to publish their work. I hope this is only the beginning of future academic and personal relationships that will be beneficial to all of us. Therefore, I hope that this book will serve as a beginning for the future.

I also want to thank three university professors who have had an enormous influence on my way of seeing and my academic interests: Gerard Vilar, Adriana Kemp and Titus Levi.

It would not be fair to forget non-university professors who influenced me a lot as a person in my early development, such as Montserrat Pujals or Montserrat Toscano.

People who also deserve a few lines of dedication are all the people I have had the good fortune to meet at congresses, conferences, seminars and other academic events, and who in one way or another have helped me with their constructive criticism and suggestions. One of them, although not the only one, is Francesco Angelini.

I would especially like to thank those people who have no academic but personal relationship with me. This includes my friends: both Marcs, Aida, and Joan. It also includes Ioana, for her love and patience with me. And last but most important: my family, and especially my mother Sara, father Ernesto and sister Cíntia.

It is very difficult to name all the people I thank, appreciate, and admire. But I know that they know who they are, beyond what can be written on paper.

Introduction

I have training in the Art Market and also in Philosophy. When you study Philosophy and you have worked in the press, you know that being “neutral” is impossible. Being “neutral” implies getting rid of who you are, your context, your thoughts, your ideology and even your language. However, despite the impossibility of being “neutral,” there is something that distinguishes a good philosopher, a good journalist, or a good academic: honesty.

Consequently, I would like to start this book by being honest with both the readers and the contributors who have decided to publish their texts in this book.

When I originally thought about this book, I had a different conception in my head. My initial idea was to prepare a volume based on a libertarian analysis of the current context of the art market. This ideological approach, centered on that specific focus, should have been done from the perspective of Economics, Philosophy, Sociology and any other discipline of interest.

Logically, I presented my idea to a couple of people within the academy for whom I have not only great professional respect, but also personal admiration. One of them said to me: “Okay, go for it, but be careful, sometimes coordinating academics can be like herding cats.” Far from it, the initial idea was very well accepted but above all, I discovered the high level of proposals from people who had common interests with mine: the relationship between art and money. The mutual recognition of these common interests greatly facilitated the entire process.

It is completely true that, in some cases, the contributors of this book may not share my ideology, perspective or opinions, but the scientific rigor and the solidity of their work made me remember two things. Firstly, that coordinating a book like this is a great honor and, above all, a great responsibility. Secondly, that nothing is more libertarian than allowing people to express themselves without limiting their ideas to a specific line of thought. Through their diverse work with a common background idea—that of art and money—the contributors of this book have reminded me what libertarianism is and, at the same time, taught me a lot from that relation, each of them from their line of specialization. I have already learned many things while preparing this book, and I hope that its readers will also do so through reading it.

Thus, this book consists of 7 chapters that, from an economic, historical, cultural or political perspective, for example, somehow reflect that relationship between art and money.

In fact, the title of this book is also intended to be an honest title far from bombastic phrases and empty meanings. And from honesty, the chosen one is made up of three words, a preposition and a coordinating conjunction: *Topics on Art and Money*.

A coordinating conjunction, not a subordinating one, since this book does not intend to express a hierarchical order. As all words are united by a coordinating conjunction, this book intends to connect them. “And” connects; “or” divides. In turn, this book does not pretend to present only some ways in which art and money are linked, but between academics from different fields and geographical areas as well.

It is completely true that even nowadays some people still deny the existence of that relationship. It is not that they consider it appropriate or not, fair or not, desirable or not; it is simply that they deny such a connection. This position seems unrealistic. Since ancient times, thinkers such as Aristotle defended that money was a conventional common measure that refers to everything and with which everything is measured. Art is a part of the whole that we are, as humans and society. This money is what allows for the allocation of resources within human communities, and therefore, in every human community with something named art, art and money connect in one way or another.

In fact—and if I may use a literary reference—there is a beautiful text written by Leonard E. Read called “I, pencil.” In that short text, a simple pencil explains the complexity of its creation and how no one in the whole world knows completely how to make him; how human interconnections are key, from the beginning to the end, to its creation, sale, and use. Money would be the fundamental element in the coordination of all the people who, without knowing each other, are involved in the creation of this pencil. Something as basic as a pencil needs an element as human as money is. The artist needs a pencil to draw, to create or to sketch. The curator needs to write his explanation for an exhibition and, the critic, for his assessment. How could we reject the relationship between art and money? We simply cannot, even in the most basic level of ideas. We can differ, however, in how we see it, we value it, or we apply it, and this book is an honest way to present some of them.

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About the Authors

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Kevin Xiong is a growth strategist, management consultant, and multimedia artist. Kevin currently leads growth at Truveta, a healthcare technology company with a mission to save lives with data. Prior to Truveta, he advised Fortune 500 leaders on growth strategy, performance improvement, customer experience, and organizational design at McKinsey & Company, a management consulting firm. Kevin serves as a Board member of several non-profits, including the Charity of Edward Hopkins, wayOUT Bay Area, and Breakthrough Greater Boston. His former experiences include Artsy and J.P. Morgan.

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