

MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE IN CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Zhivka Busheva

AMDFA – Plovdiv

Emiliya Konstantinova

AMDFA – Plovdiv e.kon@abv.bg

Abstract: In the last decades the contemporary art are developing in different directions, often unexpected or even contradictory. The artists offer amazing achievements as well as strange end products.

Main general tendency in the new initiatives is the growing need for applying more and more refined managerial knowledge and competencies. Despite the aspiration towards individuality and significant importance of the author's signature in the performing arts, the loud proclaimed team and group work has given great results since the ancient times in the ateliers of great masters. With the challenges and development of the contemporary art the artists continue to use it effectively. Rizzie thinks that the genius of Frank Stella, Rothko, Warhol, Christo, Kostabi and others who bring to live new ideas, but don't realize them themselves, is hidden the talent to create new stile, and to promote and distribute it. This are world known artists whose approach towards work and management is very different.

The stated examples as well as the overall view of the historical development of the performing arts prove that its management rightfully is developing towards refined group work with obvious division of functions. A peculiar peek in this development is Warhol's factory which he thoroughly "codes" but the model multiplies itself in many variations from atelier-factory of Jeff Koons to Kostabi World factory. While for Koons it is all about assisting via a special color system, Kostabi officially displays and advertises his approach and his achievements. His factory can be described production enterprise with art characteristics, specific division of the assignments and amazing achievements who bear the signature of Kostabi. Wonderful and yet different in this direction is the Chihuly's art school which started as a summer symposium of glass but now is well developed with many and interesting examples of group work but with clear authorship. Original is the management model of the art couple Christo and Jean Claude when it comes to creating large-scale projects. Behind every realized project stays well-oiled working production enterprise with well-developed integrated management mechanism defined by specific arts needs and objectives.

Keywords: knowledge, arts management, principles, contemporary art

INTRODUCTION

Development of contemporary art relates not only to the use of new materials, forms and ideas about art, but also with how art is going to be created. Challenges of new art trends demand hard team and group work to be done in such a way as to preserve individuality and significance of author's signature. This is not a new idea and it does not start from today.

Under the expert guidance of the great master-painter his students and assistants perform specific actions assigned by him in the process of creation of paintings, sculptures etc. Usually the master makes the drawing and the plan creation of the work and his assistants finish it. As the art critic Paolo Rizzi pointed out, Rubens used to finish his painting by making the small details and summarizing the selected colors [4]. About that widely spread practice, the great Rubens wrote in his letter to the Ambassador of Great Britain in the Netherlands at that time, offering for sale a number of his works [6]. Work in many of the famous painting and sculpture studios was organized in a similar way. Leonardo da Vinci, himself started his artistic career by painting under the supervision of the famous Italian master Verrocchio.

Examples in this respect are numerous and generally speaking well-known to the reasearches art critics Giotto worked with his students and followers by the same principle. For the creation of the fresco in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, the artist used the help of a number of his students. He carefully examined light in the interior of the building and distributes the well-planned compositions of frescoes. Thus implementation of the whole process is well controlled by the artistic idea and the genius of the author and demonstrates its full glory [7].

It is a well-known fact to the historian art critics that Tintoretto and his daughter worked together in the studio but all works were signed by the father.

Naturally, the question arises about the distribution of activities in a mutual work, where normally the established artist manages the mutual efforts of his assistants with the purpose to achieve a certain goal. Almost every one of the famous artists in the Age of Renaissance had initially started his career together with his teacher. A

tendency, typical for the artists' studios of the fifteenth century, which gradually developed, and nowadays we may enjoy some of its sophisticated demonstrations in the creation of some works of the visual arts.

Rizzi thinks that the genius of Frank Stella, Rothko, Warhol, Christo, Kostabi etc., who give birth to ideas but do not implement them personally, may be determined by their skill to create style and disseminate it [4]. These are world famous and recognized authors whose, approach to work and management of activities is significantly different.

The above examples as well as the overall survey of the historical development of contemporary art testify that its management undergoes natural development towards sophisticated group work and more clearly distinct separation of functions. A hinged peak of this tendency is the Factory of Warhol, which he carefully "veils" but the model is multiplied in diverse variations. Artists approach this idea in two different ways. Some of them accept the practical model and imitate the great Renaissance studios. Among them are Jeff Koons Damien Hirst, Takashi Murakami etc., who make art industry to supply demanded works. They use large teams of assistants for their works and raise the prices, preserving their authorship.

Others, like Xavier Veilhan adopt a different approach as a business option. He is the only shareholder of his limited liability company with only eight employees. They help him to design and develop more and more monumental projects for the architecture companies. While Jeff Koons we may speak only of assistance by the use of a special color system introduced by him; Mark Kostabi frankly demonstrates and advertises his own approach and achievements. His factory, known as the „Kostabi's world“, in many way resembles a production facility with artistic characteristics, specific division of activities and astonishing results the author of which is Kostabi.

From the very beginning of his career, Damien Hirst found out his successful strategy with his outrageous provocations to the audience and critics by the presentation of dead bodies. The most shocking thing about that is not just the aesthetics of this kind of art, but the astronomical prices of his works. Never mind how disputable his art is, one cannot dispute the fact that after the example set by Jeff Koons, Hirst is a brilliant manager. For art collectors who would not like to possess „a shark in formaldehyde“, Hirst makes with paintings with dots. These easily acceptable paintings are usually made by assistant painters by the help of fill-in-type diagrams and this type of organization of work strongly resembles the Renaissance studios.

NEW FACTORY

Mark Kostabi started his career with drawings. Right after the first sales of his drawings by the Mollie Barnes gallery, the enterprising young painter started to calculate how many drawing he could make per hour, per day and per month and how much money he could make after deduction of the fifty per cent commission for the gallery after their sale.

This elemental business approach gave rise the further development of his idea about the Factory, which he started to work on after the publication of his first book which had two editions and made him famous enough. The essence of this first book, named „Kostabi“ is a well-planned and organized PR campaign of the painter. Virtually Mark Kostabi implemented an up-to-date management approach to the sphere of contemporary art, based on significant marketing communications. The painter continued to follow and further develop this approach even after the creation of The Factory, and complemented it by a constantly running TV show and various art installations.

This creative business of Kostabi's actually incorporates all major elements of an up-to-date business establishment. Duties are segregated – some give rise to ideas, others paint, still others deal with PR and advertising, whilst Kostabi manages his genuine business. He pays per-hour wages to his assistants for their work. In consistency with the latest tendencies of modern companies, there are recreation and entertainment zones, a library, pool table and other elements with motivating effect in his company's premises. The one and only indisputable requirement for all created paintings is to follow the established „Kostabi“ style. For the achievement of that, a major role is played by the weekly contest for painting of the week – another strong motivation for the factory employees to do their best at work. The is one indisputable and unconditional matter in this process - who is the author of all works and ideas – the author is Kostabi [3, p. 38-39].

We may speak of similar establishments, though of a much smaller scale, in Europe and even in our country especially in plastic arts. Well-known sculptors work by the family principle in their studios and all works follow the style of the most recognized member of the family and bear his name. In this small family business, we may also speak of division of labor. For sure, one family member is more engaged with PR and advertising, another one with organizational activities and the third one with construction of the works of art. We can only guess about distribution of the money, but I suppose it is adequate to the division of labor. The issue of authorship is irrelevant here as well.

INIMITABLE BUSINESS MODEL

Significantly different is the example with the peculiar business model which the artistic couple Christo and Jeanne-Claude follow for the design and creation of their projects. Harvard University scientists investigated that model and published their work in 2006 [5]. Initially all conceptions start with the preparatory drawings of Christo and are financed by their own corporation CVJ („*Christo Vladimirov Yavashev*“). The business model however, may not be applied in one and the same way for all their projects which have certain peculiarities not only in the technological aspect but in the organizational aspect as well. The flexible entrepreneurial spirit of Christo was clearly demonstrated with their last realized project „The Floating Piers“ in 2017 in the lake of Iseo, Italy. The process from the drawings to the implementation of the installation of the „The Floating Piers“ is of high degree of complexity, typical for the construction of hi-tech projects. All its components need to be developed and manufactured, and after that assembled and commissioned. That means engagement of lots of people of various competences and responsibilities, as well as lots of institutions, government organizations, local authorities, regulatory bodies, investigating the air space, the lake regulations, police units, firefighting services and a number of others, just for the implementation of a single idea for a work of art which will exist for a limited number of days [2]. Therefore, for the implementation of the project „The Floating Piers“ a new company was established under the name of „Floating Piers“, in full compliance with all fiscal requirements of the Italian legislation. Thus the new Italian company constructed and implemented the project.

The implemented project „The Floating Piers“ of Christo and Jeanne-Claude (although Jeanne-Claude is not among us any more, insists on both of them to be signed as authors) demonstrates all characteristics of a well-working company with well-developed mechanism for management. What is more – „a company established for the purpose of implementing an undertaking, which has never been done before, unique in its needs and goals“[9].

„Floating Piers“ as any other well-functioning company also needs certain resources: human, material, financial, technological and informational, which need to be well-planned, well distributed and adequately used. However, on the first place is possess the greatest and most important resource for success the - creative talent if Christo [2, c. 18], who is the motor for the whole implementation of the project. With this scale of activities: artistic, engineering, technical, organizational etc., no artist may achieve the desired success without the well-selected major team of managers, skilled enough to supervise certain groups of qualified and non-qualified workers with various professions.

The effective functioning of the team of managers for this project not only succeeded in the implementation of a work of art but also had positive influence on the economics of a whole region. This was demonstrated by the published economics data after detailed analysis. The total value of the project was eighteen million Euro, paid up in full by Christo, of which one and a half million were paid for the extraordinary work of municipalities. The income for the region of Lombardy amounted to eighty-eight million Euro. The transport industry gained ten, point five million Euro, wine was sold for more than ten million Euro. All that without taking into consideration of the income from tickets, sponsorships, copy rights and other ways for budgeting the project, in other words, the economic results are many times more than the income from the Expo Milan. Extremely impressive figures, which are – for no doubt backed up by excellent planning, organization, management, coordination, logistics and control, i.e., a fully built management for the installation and de-installation of a work art.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude has always acted like traders of their own art. They do not profit on copyrights from the books and films dedicated to their projects, they even often support those financially. They do not get a single “cent” [9]. But they definitely have the know-how to combine the highest level of art without the need of multiplication of the works, by successful management.

MAJOR PROBLEMS

By the provided examples of successful management and artistic practices in the sphere of contemporary art a number of major problems may be derived:

The first one of them is related to the complication and enlargement of people’s activity in this sphere. The more complex and versatile it is, the more clearly is defined the need of deliberate application of up-to-fate models of management. They require well planned organization of the mutual activity, based on division of labor, specific type of control which may be rendered as author’s control rather than typically manager’s control, purposeful marketing and advertising with strong emphasis on PR campaigns and actions to present the works to the respective type of audience.

The existing special feature which makes the difference between artistic organizations from the business ones lies in the greater importance of the PR and advertising, because without that even the most talented authors may remain unknown.

The second major problem has also to do with management. It may be found in the need of special attention to the motivation factors, which stimulate, support and activate the creative process of the individual artist as well as of whole teams, recognized by a number of artist with inclination to management. In this respect, we may already speak of overall working environment, which necessarily includes various functional areas with a specific designation. There are special zones for recreation, sports, entertainment and purposeful relaxation in the artists' studios in most of the well-developed countries. In The Factory of Kostabi that tendency lead to the implementation of various options like a music hall, library etc.. Tables for tennis, chess, pool and rest rooms are among the achievements, which are rented high by the artists but also help to raise the efficiency of labor. Various contests, competitions etc., may also be ranked among the motivating factors.

An excellent example for that is the school of the glass painter Chihuli, which started like summer symposia for glass painting but developed fast and nowadays provides a large number of interesting examples for team work with clear authorship. Seminars there usually last for the average of seventeen days and all lecturers, assistants, students, hosts etc., are glaziers.

The third problem which may be defined and which is not clear enough is the problem with authorship. This problem is specific and need to be additionally cleared for each particular case. The best proof for that are the numerous lawsuits which are under way. In most of these cases it is a question of insufficient juridical knowledge. At the same time, one may say that with a certain degree of conditionality, some designers for example work together with their teams and the final product may be considered as mutual result, whilst with painters and sculptors things are very much different. Artist are very different from entrepreneurs. In this respect not every artist is an entrepreneur. Contemporary art is driven only by demand. One of the modern artists Damien Béguet says: "Artists, whether or not they make money, continue their work. A company that loses money will stop. Galleries, however, are wary. When I take on board the idea of subcontracting, I ask other painters to paint in my place. That's not a problem in business, but in art it upsets the author ethic. It's not done." [8]. The „Factories” of Warhol and Kostabi are more likely an exception of the type “white crow” and the majority of the old and modern masters would have never agreed with the concept of mutual work. Nevertheless, the „factories” are real. It is very difficult to predict the direction of development of those processes.

The forth direction of improvement of management practices is going into management and its components in the sphere of education of artists, which has to be done at every stage of their professional training. That must not only be a component of the training process but need also to be recognized by the students as an element without which the realization of each author nowadays is very difficult. It is not by accident that at the London Royal College of Design art management is one of the majors of the Bachelors programs. In our country, although art management is taught at some of the higher schools, students as well as some of their lecturers have not yet realized and appreciated its significance for their successful career.

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