

Arteconomy  
2002 - 2009

Arteconomy would like  
to thank everyone  
for their contribution during  
the pioneering period between 2002 and 2009

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\* A while ago, Arteconomy published several advertisements in the art magazine <H>ART. In each case, we asked an entrepreneur, an artist or an organization to think of a catchword for the relationship between art and the economy that would invite reflection. These words correspond strikingly with the contents of the chapters in this publication. You will find the explanation given by the people who came up with the different catchwords on page 48 and the following pages.

# 1. PREJUDICE

## Introduction

What is the future of Arteconomy? We are not talking about the organization itself but about the range of ideas and the views it stands for. The belief in a common dynamic source from which an entrepreneur, an artist or a scholar can draw their creativity. This means that the connections between their different activities are more genuine than the differences that are opening deep gaps in the social landscape today. These connections can, at the basis of existing structures, set change and improvement into motion.

Under the influence of notions such as the knowledge society, creativity, innovation and academization, initiatives that promise and realize social transformation are acclaimed. Since a couple of years, the government has been granting budgets (on a small scale) to this kind of initiatives. Would it be conceivable, then, that the ministers of economy, education and culture and their administrations might recognize the power of a common creative source and come together on this venture? Do they see that art and culture are not without value for the economy? And that education, notwithstanding over-specialisation, is in fact the front runner of creativity, of cross-border thinking and collaboration?

Can this evolution happen without a unilateral territorial gain by the economic functionalism that will ultimately impose its logic on all segments of our society? Does the economic crisis enhance this movement or will it give space to creativity and innovation? What kind of space is society willing to reserve for chaos, the immeasurable, the searching and the playing that could provide the unilateral economy with new oxygen?

We want to raise the above questions and thoughts now that Arteconomy seems to be coming to the close of its pioneering period as an organization. What was indeed pioneering work several years ago is now picked up by the government and consolidated as mainstream. The question concerning the future of Arteconomy and the destination of its ideas needs to be considered. Can we hope that the range of ideas for which Arteconomy has created the necessary awareness over the years, and which it has enterprisingly dealt with, will be continued in an inspiring way?

This booklet stands midway between the past and the future of Arteconomy. While its purpose was to reflect on seven years of growth, it also seemed an ideal opportunity to unfold plans for the future. It offers a survey of what Arteconomy has achieved, insight into its specific approach and vision, as well as new ideas and goals.

## 2.

## POLITICS

### Social urgency and the position of Arteconomy

We open this booklet with the notes from a Q&A discussion between Julie Vandenbroucke, president of Arteconomy vzw; Charlotte Bonduel, editor of this publication and a PhD student at Brussels University, and Pascal Gielen. Pascal Gielen teaches art, sociology of art and arts policy at Groningen State University. He is also lecturer on *Art Practice in Society* at the Fontys Academy of Arts in Tilburg. In this discussion, the role of Arteconomy in society as a player between art, the economy and politics is described and analysed.

*Although Arteconomy started as a personal research project<sup>1</sup>, I have discovered that we serve a social interest. That is why Arteconomy should conclude its pioneering period and define its role in society in a structural way. In the past three years we have applied for subsidies from the ministry of culture as well as from the ministry of economy, yet these applications have been turned down time and time again. Each ministry refer us to the other. On the one hand, we notice that our way of working is of social interest; on the other hand it seems that policy makers don't follow this line of thinking. That raises the question whether the government is willing to address a joint venture between art and the economy. Can connections between art and the economy be confirmed and where necessary established at a political level?*

Pascal Gielen: “Since the seventies, art and creativity have been firmly embraced by business in what is generally named Post-Fordism<sup>2</sup>. At a certain moment, the economy has understood that you can no longer treat workers as numbers; instead, their individual capacities should be addressed. The ones who fail to understand this are politicians, policy makers, as well as universities. Their way of thinking and dealing with their staff or students remains stuck in an almost Fordist<sup>3</sup> model. They don't know how to apply forms of creativity, for which art serves as a natural model. Today's politics is not politics anymore, but a kind of administration. This is illustrated by the repeated, rhetorical phrase “Europe has decided”, as if a minister were a civil servant who executes what Europe has decided. The responsibility is passed on to others. Politics has become a sort of governance that tries to control society. In order to succeed it has adopted a bad copy of business life. It tries to manage, practising outsourcing. It lives on an expertise that is supposedly not ideological. For how to treat files, how to deal with staff, etc., follows a so-called objective ratio that can be measured.

Ideology no longer counts in politics. All parties want the same thing: a better government. Politicians have become administrators. However, politics in its classic,

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1 Arteconomy vzw grew from the concrete example of collaboration with artists at the metal construction company Constructies Espeel in Roeselare, Belgium. You can read more about these collaborative projects in the book *Walk with Me. About artists, the company Constructies Espeel and their collaborations*. Ed. C. Bonduel and L. Derycke, Lannoo, 2009.

2 “The transition from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist (that is: Toyota-ist) manufacturing process is marked primarily by the transition from material to immaterial labour and production, and from material to immaterial goods. In the case of the latter, the symbolic value is greater than the practical value. (...) Design and aesthetics – in other words, external signs and symbols – are major driving forces in today's economy, because they constantly heighten consumer interest.”  
P. Gielen, *Het Gemurmel van de Artistieke Menigte. Over Kunst en Post-Fordisme*. Tilburg: Fontys, 2008.

3 Fordism is a production model for companies based on assembly-line work and serial production that was invented by Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company.

compartmentalized form used to have an aesthetic dimension. It held up an ideal, an image of what society should look like. Sometimes it was utopian. This aesthetic principle has completely faded away.

The fact that politics doesn't embrace art – even if it appears to do so – while the economy does, is linked to the moment in history when it said farewell to the grand narratives, thus making aesthetic thinking impossible. Politics was left with a historical hangover from these narratives and is afraid of being tackled if it should start thinking in terms of 'makeability' once again. This is why it is constantly reaching for measurable elements: efficiency, effectiveness, measurability and management.

The conclusion is that there are much larger mental and social parallels between the world of business of the entrepreneur and the art world, than between the art world and what is today called politics.”

*Did the arts community understand this?*

Gielen: “What the arts community fails to notice is that a way of thinking and social manners that are typical of the art world, are being incorporated by the economy. Its work-oriented logic and ethics have become part of business life. The arts community no longer knows which attitude to adopt or how to escape. On the one hand, there is a forced reaction of a certain part of the art world that doesn't want to have anything to do with money or business. Especially as regards the visual arts, this is an ambivalent reaction because every artist lives from the works that he sells. There is a mercantile relationship, but one that has been repressed or denied since the nineteenth century. The classic solution still remains that the government can be considered as a buffer. State financing offers a counterbalance to marketing and to the mercantilization of the artist's work. As noted, that model is a nineteenth-century one and outdated. It assumes the centralizing idea of a nation-state. As a result, only reactionary actions are possible, in a constant impasse between the economy and art.

Look at the older generation of Flemish artists. Thierry De Cordier, for instance, is the role model for someone who rejects the economy. In so doing, he cultivates an old, romantic model of the artist that is still propagated at today's art academies.”

*My experience tells me that artists are not aware of the evolution that the economy has gone through. That is why they don't see that they have in fact become partners, yet they keep resisting. On the other hand more and more arts organizations notice that they think in the same way as the economy. They ask themselves what their core business is.*

Gielen: “Artists should look out when it comes to the market and the economy. Their suspicion is justified. I work in a giant school in Tilburg where each year 250 art students graduate. They are all creative actors. All of them are artists. In order to keep up-to-date, the market has been implemented in the school in the form of an event office. This prevents that which has always been typical of education: suspending the market for a while, until students are 18 or 22. Starting up supply and demand during training cuts off many opportunities: time for experimentation, time for loss, such as making things one can throw away, and any moment of self-reflection. A certain mentality becomes dominant. That leads to burn-out among these young people after ten or fifteen years, because they are wrung out from the start. So there lies a real danger in the relationship between art and the economy.

But the usual reaction to that is a reactionary one.

I think however, that on the contrary one should address the market in a more strategic way. First of all one ought to know how the economy functions; how the Post-Fordist economy works, because that is the context we are living in. We need to know how the network society functions. That it works with temporary contracts, temporary relationships and flexible working hours. You should at least be aware of this whole and then find out where the gaps are. What are the problems with this model and what can the strategic reaction be?

The arts community, through the mere fact of the financial crisis, has been getting all tools back in its own hands. This just goes to show how trade value has become some kind of virtual, immaterial value that has gone wild. There is no longer any single product to which this financial value refers. Money refers only to money, which creates an incredible explosion, an excess. The entrepreneur is the one who can really see that this trade value is virtual. And then I'm not talking about the manager but rather about the old boss of the company who is an engineer himself and who made his way up the ladder to become the director, but who does not lose the connection with the product. He understands that a product has a certain practical value that he tries to increase, but at the same time he still knows that he is 'only' making this. Those entrepreneurs can see the difference.

Luc Tuymans has already said a thousand times that he does not understand the prices of his paintings. He realizes that he "only" makes them. In this sense, the art world is a historic frontrunner that shows that linking practical value and trade value can completely go wrong. Every artist or his gallery owner is engaged in selling his work and trying to keep the ratio between practical and trade value as stable as possible: "This work should not be sold for too high a price or it should not be auctioned because if that happens I lose control."

The object in itself has a value, but it figures in a symbolic economy that determines the trade value. With this insight, people in the art world can do two things. Either they will over-identify in the virtual direction: let's totally sever the link between the two and just continue with the virtual value without a product as a counterpart. Or they stress the importance of the relationship and ensure that it stays alive.

On our national holiday even the king talked about ethics. We have to go back to an ethical orientation, and that leads us to the artistic example of Michelangelo Pistoletto. He understood that all of us are entrepreneurs. In a rather bombastic way, Pistoletto states that we should return to the old Fordism, according to which a car should be able to be driven from A to B. And it should not only be functional but also environmentally friendly, in a kind of inclusive Fordism. This logic fosters an ethical way of doing business and dealing with art. There is a kind of ethical turn."

*According to you the big story was based on ethics.  
Why do ethics coincide with aesthetics for you?*

Gielen: "Ethics is an aesthetic principle for me. And artistic thinking means: everything that exists can be different. That is the line of thinking one has as an artist. It's about scanning other opportunities – what was referred to as 'Making Worlds' in the recent Venice Biennial. An artist should believe in full makeability. And he can believe in it because he is dealing with something fictitious. The sense of possibility is an activity that is totally cut out of today's politics, but also of science. Science is focussed on method. If you want to be accepted in a peer-reviewed journal, the first question is: how did you measure? Whereas creativity lies in the hypothetical capacity of science, in formulating a hypothesis, in being able to set two worlds side by side, whether or not these worlds are possible. Politics has also cut that off. This evolution had already been going on since the seventies but was symbolically completed with the fall of the Berlin wall. Politics used to shape society. That is what an artist does, too. The latter shapes material things, objects, but there is a clear parallel. Nowadays, politics hardly believes in the makeability of society. Everything is a reaction to the market or to globalized phenomena. Well-reasoned steps are not taken any longer. That has become inconceivable.

By the very act of throwing art and the economy together, Arteconomy creates an environment with an intangible 'unmeasure'<sup>4</sup>. Perhaps this is so with every new idea. It slides across everything. This has become very obvious in the applications for subsidies: Arteconomy operates in an environment that cannot be measured. Output measurements in

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4 Gielen P., *De Onmaat van de Kunst*. (The unmeasure of the Arts) Interview with Paolo Virno, 2009, Open 17. <http://www.skor.nl/artefact-4172-nl.html>

politics are patterned after the efficiency and effectiveness in another system, in which one tries to measure every single detail of an organization. This makes the space for any deviating action very small, leading to an incredible mediocrity on all levels and producing a kind of diplomatic artist who adapts to the rules. Art should always mark an unmeasure. A different measure that may be measurable thirty or forty years from now, but that will hustle everything once it's in place.

Since politics has lost its aesthetics and is in fact only a bad copy of the economy, it has difficulties taking a firm negotiating position in relation to the economy and also to art. Trying to maintain an identity causes cramps. Politics should dare to decide again. Being in politics means that every choice you make is a choice against something else. This also implies that in a global system, national politics should have the guts to go solo. In Belgium that has happened with the introduction of the Tobin tax<sup>5</sup>. Our country has done that on its own. However, this law also makes sure that the trade value is related to the product value. So you can learn ethical lessons from the logic of art and how it worked since the beginning of its marketing in the nineteenth century. Politics can learn from art, while it thinks, from its public administration point of view, that everything should be solved efficiently.”

*How can politics learn from art and act aesthetically or ethically? And what is the part that Arteconomy can play?*

Gielen: “Since Romanticism in the nineteenth century, artists have been saying that they cannot work within structures. They want no employment contracts, no permanent appointments. An artist should be able to work on projects, irregularly, at night, during the day, or always. The creative industry has adopted that in a perverse kind of way, so that all social employment rules are lost.

Moreover, there are more and more artists who get into the creative economy and combine their jobs with their art practice. They engage in multiple activities and practise *multi-jobbing*. Their thinking no longer comes from the reactionary attitude of the autonomous artist. On an individual scale, artists are constantly making the cross-over, which leads to lots of problems that a government could try to react to.

Entrepreneurship comes with a certain portrayal of man that is focussed on the individual and that strongly believes in its own makeability. The American Dream: as an entrepreneur you can reshape your own destiny. In this entrepreneurial logic, paired with this sort of portrayal of man, solidarity is not very important. Individual reason reigns everywhere. On top of that, entrepreneurship is constantly working with projects, because Post-Fordism looks for temporary relations. The consequence is that solidarity is present only momentarily as long as the project lasts. After that, the network closes again, splits up and a new network arises with a different kind of solidarity.

A government, as well as Arteconomy, should closely watch this relationship. Working with projects has consequences for a person's social relations, work relations and employment contracts. How can this project approach, which has become so dominant in our economy, become sustainable without losing its benefits? When a government encounters these plural activities, it should play along and find out what and when it will subsidize, in what phase of an artist's career, for example. How does it get an artist who is constantly exploited by the design sector in light of his precarious situation? After ten years he's outdated and spit out. But that leaves him with nothing. No pension, no social benefits.

An organisation like Arteconomy should point out these issues but at the same time also the advantage of that collaboration. Its expertise in art and the economy allows it to

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5 At this moment, Belgium is the only country in the world that has a law on the Tobin tax. The Tobin tax is a small tax on currency transactions, named after the American economist and Nobel Prize winner James Tobin who suggested this tax back in 1972. Such a tax — for instance, 0.1 or 0.25 percent — makes trades in currency less interesting. Slowing down ‘flash capital’ is the first argument in favour of a Tobin tax. Besides, this kind of tax on international trade on currency could yield a large amount of money that can be put to good use in the struggle against poverty in the world. (source: Wikipedia)

research how both can learn from each other in an ethical way, so that at a certain moment policy makers can create a legal framework for it.”

*Arteconomy wants to deal with the organizational models in the arts and in business, but certainly not in one direction. Our vision is not to transfer business models to the art community because the latter lacks models. On the contrary, I think that the art world is working with interesting models, but they are not sufficiently aware of that. I'm thinking of the Vooruit model at the time of Erik Temmerman (Ghent), or the way that Guy Cassiers at the Toneelhuis (Antwerp) substantiates his program. In my view, the latter is a pure form of open innovation. I want to enable this cross-fertilization in both directions. We have to detect interesting models in the arts and transfer them to the economy, but also vice versa.*

Gielen: “What strikes me in artistic organizations, for instance, is that they do not diversify. Functions overlap and everybody does just about everything. Personal relationships are very important. Guy Cassiers, for example, needs to be able to rely on his manager completely. All aspects of his personality are important. He should not only be capable of running the organization financially, but his charisma or what he says to the media is also important. This generates a strong and informal personal relationship based on trust. Large or larger companies that are growing from a small or medium-sized company structure forget about that kind of relationship. They start fragmenting. The question then is how you can incorporate total relationships, in which the whole personality plays a part.

The art world is an expert in this field. The art market is not a pure market. Suppose you want to buy a Luc Tuymans painting: you have to know Luc Tuymans, as well as his gallery owner Frank Demaegd. You have to have dinner with him. This is how relationships based on mutual trust are established. An important element of trust is the fact that the painting does not end up in an auction the very next day. These things are checked. The social connection that grows when buying a product is something the economy can learn from. This is not valid for everything, since mass production has been responsible for creating distance between producers and buyers. But my point lies elsewhere: in an arts organization full of energy and ideals, the relationship based on trust is a logical organizational structure, but I don't know if you can simply transplant this to business. In order to reach this ideal relationship, companies organize teambuilding weekends and parties. The big problem is, of course, that the company starts controlling the whole life of a person. That is the exercise that Arteconomy has to conduct again and again: show how creativity works and does not work and how an organization can learn from it in a fresh way. What does the company need? What can it learn from this? Because the pitfall here is that life itself is becoming totally economised.

Richard Florida<sup>6</sup> says that there should be more attention to creativity in the economy, but his line of thinking still comes from an accumulation spiral. A company can sell even more or faster when it starts playing with design. People no longer buy a new mobile phone because the old one is broken but because the design is outdated after two years. That is a virtual engine. The aim of design is to speed up the economy to run faster than it should. I think that virtually pushing the economy is a very baleful contribution of aesthetics to the economy.

If one is acting in a troubled — especially for the government— field of art and the economy, one has to be very well aware of all possible pitfalls. From the perspective of the artist and vice versa.”

*This is the reason why Arteconomy has hitherto set up research projects only in companies. We were always looking for a situation that offered as much to the artist as*

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6 R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class. And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life*. Basic Books, 2002.

*to the entrepreneur, so that both could develop through that partnership. Our objective was not to make the economy even richer, but to give the artist as well as the entrepreneur an opportunity to develop themselves further. That means that we have not yet accepted commissioned projects. However, this way of working cannot be sustained in the future for two reasons. In the first place, it is very intense and far-reaching. Moreover, we are noticing an increasing plurality on the part of the artists. They are willing to work in the company, to earn their money honestly and at the same time to learn something. We cannot limit our activities to research projects only, however ethically sound they may be, because society is evolving.*

Gielen: “A creative tool can work both ways in a company. Creativity can be applied through a logic of accumulation. Or you can create a space in the company, an *unmeasure* within the measure of the company that develops *slowable*<sup>7</sup> strategies. For instance, you could think about the design of a car that may be convincing for ten years. Why do some retro-models come back? How can you ensure that a product will last and drive for ten years? I think that is an assignment for a creative design instead of ‘How can we speed up sales?’”.

The western economy has run wild at the moment. On a macro-sociological level, the challenge for creative thinking is to slow everything down. So how can you stimulate that process as a creative thinker? The car will of course be introduced on the market and sales remain the objective, but the question is how you can counter the baleful tendency of accumulation. There we see art dealing with politics, because it gives an opinion on how society should function. The artist starts thinking about society again. How can the economy and ecology relate to one another and how can you intervene? Art can still go two ways. A Damien Hirst would never think along these lines, while a Michelangelo Pistoletto would. In the long run, Arteconomy will see that it can work with some artists and not with others.”

*The Post-Fordist economy indeed seems to get a lot of inspiration from existing artistic models, yet there is still an enormous difference of scale between both worlds.*

Gielen: “The economy has understood that the artist has something to offer that it needs badly, but you cannot simply assume a symmetrical relationship. The power definitely lies in the business camp. The economy can play strategically; art can only play tactically. It can interfere with the economy; create some thorns, because the relationship is never symmetrical. Just to make a little detour: when I tell 180 students: “And we agree that there is no class next week and after that there is an exam...”, then of course you are not making an agreement, but you act as if you were. You simulate a symmetrical relationship, but in reality I determine the rules. Maybe that is also the deception involved in a partnership. Although you cannot assume a symmetrical relationship, the partnership can be the ideal. That works both ways. It means that we should support the artist in such a way that his relationship with the company becomes as symmetrical as possible, but also that we should convince the company that it is absolutely necessary for the artist to work autonomously within that company at any given moment.

Politics are also in a subordinate position. Since the rise of multinationals, politics have become totally subordinate to large companies. If Procter & Gamble leaves Brussels tomorrow unless a law is changed, the law will be changed. It will still be the result of negotiations, but we saw that when DHL left the airport area, a lot of factors appeared to influence the decision.

Partnership can be false when you say: “It is there”, because it’s not already there. It has to be the objective. That is the way Arteconomy works. Step by step you convince the company. It starts with hanging works of art on the company walls because that’s what the company wants. Once you are there, you ask if the collaboration can go one step further by inviting an

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7 ‘Slowable’ is a derivative of the word ‘slow’ that has a negative connotation in our way of thinking, whereas ‘sustainable’ is a positive word.

artist who will want something totally different. This is how you start a negotiating process that generates a more symmetrical relationship. At a micro level I think that you can develop a truly symmetrical relationship. During a project, an entrepreneur can really become convinced of an artist's intrinsic value. However, on a macro-sociological level, the relationship will always be asymmetrical. Nevertheless, you place the artist in a position of potential negotiation. This is an important step. Putting it differently, you could say that you make the artist stronger in order to negotiate and you make the entrepreneur weaker by giving them all the strategic insights and pitfalls that come with this kind of relationship.

I do not understand why, when you convey this to a government, it does not comply with the idea. In this story the main issue is totally different from just expecting art and the economy to go hand in hand. The artist can benefit from the collaboration. He or she becomes economically stronger. Our government is currently following a neo-liberal approach and withdrawing from society, but this is exactly why I find it highly bizarre that it does not even see that Arteconomy bears a gift to the art sector. At least in part, since all figures show that the number of artists, or people who call themselves artists, has increased tenfold in the past decade. The democratization of education in the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has allowed more people to attend art schools. The government cannot handle the influx, understandably. We see a good example in what happened with dance. P.A.R.T.S. was established and Brussels exploded. It is impossible to subsidize all those dancers. Formulating an honourable relationship between art and the economy could offer a solution.”

*What is the best position for Arteconomy in order to ensure its social role? Should it be an extension of the government or rather a private enterprise?*

Gielen: “Arteconomy should be a good watchdog and assume a double role. For projects you need a third partner and being able to be that partner requires a neutral starting position. You need a referee. I think that the government should take responsibility there. When you just run from one company to another with or without generating money, you are very dependent on what is available. Then Arteconomy also finds itself in a subordinate position, because, as we said, the relationship is asymmetric. You have less power to adjust a project, to weigh in on it or to refuse certain tracks, than when you are autonomous.

In order to establish this neutral position you need the government for assistance and subsidies. And this is not only for financial reasons. It is also a symbolic position. You will then be recognized by a government as taking on this intermediary role.”

### 3. WANTED!

#### 3.1

##### The Arteconomy approach

*Halfway through the twentieth century the American painter Jackson Pollock took leave of the nineteenth century centralist thinking with his all-over paintings. If the centre doesn't exist, then there is no margin either. All parts are equal. Today we see that the avant-garde attitude of this artist has not yet been incorporated into the actions and thoughts of the contemporary art community and the economy. Collaboration between art and the economy is still considered in both worlds as 'art in the margins' or 'not generating effectiveness'. At the basis of this reaction lies the unilateral focus on the materiality of the art work or of the company product. However, the developing process of creation, of innovation and the immaterial role of people in the whole process deserve equal attention.*

*Arteconomy shifts the focus towards the connections between people: the artist, the entrepreneur and the employee. The most important elements in formulating these relationships are development, partnership, co-creation, transposition, engagement, aesthetic intelligent leadership, competencies, skills, knowledge, attitude, the immaterial art work and the prototype. This enumeration looks impressive, but the starting point is simple. When relationships come first, the material art work or the company end product can follow and in analogy with the prototype, maintain the potential of its innovative power.*

*Arteconomy is a breeding ground for innovation and creativity, for artists as well as for companies. It is a laboratory with an open mind regarding the process, one that is not solely focussed on a material end result.*

##### Arteconomy as a model

###### *Mission statement*

Arteconomy searches for connections between art and the economy and for their meaning. Arteconomy's intended purpose is that these connections can serve as an example for other connections.

This mission is the starting point for everything that Arteconomy is doing. It is a vision on collaboration starting from a balanced partnership between people (called connections). This vision defines Arteconomy's viewpoint on the relationship between art and the economy.

When we consider the existing international organizations in this field, we notice that they usually start from one of both realities; either from the art world or from the economy. The Arteconomy approach however, will not lead so quickly to the instrumentalisation of art or the economy. The starting point as well as the objective is essentially different. In the Arteconomy projects the artist does not make a commitment with the company as to results with the company, even though sometimes company products or art works are produced. The presence of the artist in the company starts off a negotiation process (read: transformation process). He is not a consultant but a catalyst and intermediary. Conversely, you can say that the company can give a new dynamic to the artist.

Exactly when starting from the model of connection, of open and people centred innovation, a new thinking world comes into being with an absolute surplus value for everyone concerned, also for Arteconomy. All partners enrich their knowledge and their skills; develop competencies, attitudes, their personality and their world view.

The *match* between artist and company culture determines the course and the result of a collaboration project. The artist's personality and his concept constitute an important key to the result of change. An equally decisive factor is the motivating leadership that the

entrepreneur is showing towards the project and his ability to establish a top-to-bottom as well as a bottom-to-top connection in his company.

This relationship can serve as an exemplary model for a society in which creativity and people-centred innovation can make the difference.

#### Arteconomy as a format

Each new project generates collaboration that either means the implementation of an existing format or the introduction of a totally new concept. Looking back, it seems that often this is done so that a new module is created within the basic concept of the collaboration.

The projects completed thus far have generated four formats.

##### *Research projects*

Long-term collaboration between a company and an artist brings about personal development for the artist, the entrepreneur and the company employees. It allows the artist to extend his technical research and to enhance his skills. Of course the production capacity is much larger in a company than in a studio. The artist can make an appeal to the professional competence of the employees. Moreover, through the specific process that people go through together, each project becomes a research into the ways in which a prototype is considered.

##### *Co-creation workshops*

The workshops consist of a brief module of four afternoons during which three or four artists and as many entrepreneurs meet each other. The underlying question is whether common challenges could incite them to work together.

These sessions also serve as meeting place for fellow artists and fellow entrepreneurs. A tight format and strong coaching promote a certain degree of efficiency within the experimental character of the workshops.

##### *Workshops*

In the workshops on *Creation in the economic network*, artists present an idea they would like to realize. Thanks to Arteconomy's experience in the field, we examine which business partners could help them attain this goal. Thanks to the concrete character of these workshops, the projects become more realistic and realizable instead of remaining castles in the air. The participants discover new contacts and possibilities for collaboration. The artists appreciate the great openness of the workshops and find there a sounding board that can increase the belief in their creation.

#### **Art as tool in the company**

This is our common denominator for the various ways in which art can be introduced into a company. To use the words of Lotte Darsø<sup>8</sup>, art can be used as decoration, as entertainment, as an instrument or integrated as a process of transformation. Art can play a role in all departments of a company: from research & development to human resources, from marketing and production to communication. Arteconomy does not shun any of these four approaches; however, it does intend that art projects in a company set something in motion and lead to new concepts.

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<sup>8</sup> Lotte Darsø is the author of many papers and articles on creativity, innovation and Arts-in-Business.

## Arteconomy as a process coach

### *The role of Arteconomy*

Arteconomy is a permanent intermediary, advisor and process coach. The organisation refers to others and engages experts for specific challenges. Its research-driven attitude and the basic vision that a combination of connections and disconnections lead to innovation are the key principles for every new project. As an intermediary between art and the economy, its neutrality is essential. Arteconomy figures as one of the possible models that can establish a connection between art and the economy, but the vision of the process coach for collaboration between art and the economy determines the result of such collaboration.

### *Stepping stones in the process*

1. *The objective* at the start of the project sets a direction but is not necessarily the final objective. A changing context, the available means and the process itself will also be determinative factors for the end result. A project that is concretely defined at the start works better. That is what experience tells us.
2. There is no commitment to a particular result. The engagement lies more in the development of a *prototype* rather than in obtaining a finished end result ready to market. A prototype is a step, a new form in which specific knowledge and skills are accumulated, but not an end point. The future holds new possibilities for further development of the prototype.
3. Arteconomy makes *a distinction* between the relational aspect and the contents – though both are important — in collaboration. The relational aspect determines the potential and the term of the project. The aim is that the responsibility will be going beyond the collaboration in itself.
4. This is why Arteconomy wants the *internal communication* to be *at a meta-level*, not at the level of the product. The notion of the expert does not prevail. The artist, the entrepreneur and the employee meet each other as persons in their way of thinking and/or in what touches their soul. This way people will discover common grounds and diversity can become a challenge or an opportunity for both.
5. Arteconomy wants to turn failing into learning and daring to disconnect in order to attain a better connection. Change and innovation are the results of flexible connection and disconnection. Resistance is turned into trust by encouraging repetition and transposition — putting oneself into what the other person stands for.
6. *Transposition* is made possible by creating a framework for and from both worlds. This makes it possible to understand everybody in their own biotope of standards and values. New and different boundaries that allow collaboration to come into being. Sometimes there is no longer any distinction between the entrepreneur and the artist, and the similarities seem bigger than the differences.
7. *Project follow-up* is necessary to increase the results and to offer a solid base for collaboration within the company or the organization or for the individual.

## Arteconomy as added value

The introduction of art projects into a company is a perfect basis for fostering creativity and innovation. It holds a mirror to the company and it sharpens the entrepreneurial spirit. The artist is confronted with a reality that is otherwise inaccessible to him or her. It generates a new, productive way of thinking in which the artist, the entrepreneur as well as the employees are involved. It is indeed a partnership, a real connection that leads to co-creation, a full two-way traffic between artists and companies.

### *Fruitful confrontation*

Direct contact between artists, entrepreneurs and employees reduces misunderstandings and prejudices. Being confronted with a different way of life is very instructing. Many employees considered the contact with the artist to be crucial to the project. Artists for their part are confronted with the reality of the shop floor. They discover new (technical) possibilities and they can redefine their ambitions. The basic elements for this potential are trust and mutual respect for each other's work.

#### *Open communication*

Open communication between all partners is crucial during the collaboration. Artists and entrepreneurs communicate in different ways. They deal with conflicts and problems differently. Some artists even find it easier to communicate in a business environment than in the art world. They experience more equality among the participants, who can easily put themselves into the other person's way of thinking. A good balance is essential, both in the communication among all participants involved and in external communication.

#### *Personal development*

In the process, the artists broaden their knowledge of a socio-economic environment. In addition to the more technical skills or competencies they acquire, they develop an attitude towards that milieu.

For the company staff, in turn, these projects are a concrete gateway to developing a creative attitude. Openness to the visions of other people grows on them. Employees discover hidden qualities within themselves and their co-workers. While group dynamics are essential, creativity also requires space for the individual. These art projects are an emotional experience, they relate to a total relationship and not only to data. The immediate effect is not always measurable but a new, human dimension gets a real chance for growth.

#### *Artistic freedom and competence*

The Vlerick Management School and Ivok (Institute for Research in the Arts) research findings are formal: in the Arteconomy projects, the artists maintain their artistic freedom. The artists promote interaction among the people who are involved in the process that they are setting up. Their function is solely that of catalyst and intermediary. The interaction grows from their specific competency as artists. This means: looking at things from a different angle, insight into the course of the process, competency in dealing with creative emptiness, not being market-oriented, which makes them dig deeper into the issue, thinking out of the box. They can start a transformation process in the company by using their 'regular tools'. These tools can be a critical attitude, intuition, imagination and thinking in images, using the senses without a compulsion to rationalize or to take responsibility towards the economic context.

Aligning the vision and the intention of the partners involved is decisive to maintain the individuality of each partner.

#### *Motivational leadership*

The tangible commitment and the attitude of the entrepreneur determine the course of the collaborative process. He should give the project the necessary space and freedom on all levels. This openness incites the entrepreneur to reflection. He reflects upon his responsibility in the company and in society in general. Then in turn he passes that on to his collaborators, which can help them to put their own role into a broader context. Entrepreneurs tend to treat their employees in a different way during or after the project. In times of crisis it gives them a broader basis to deal with problems in a positive way and to be more of a coach to their employees.<sup>9</sup>

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9 For a profile of leadership we would like to refer to *Esthetisch intelligent leiderschap (Aesthetic intelligent leadership)* by Caroline van der Linden. In her work, she describes a leader who starts from partnership and system thinking and who searches for a tense balance between intuition and ratio, autonomy and connection, listening and authority, guts and modesty. He researches and

### *Concept, creative process and time*

The artist can contact a company to present his own concept or a concept can be developed together with the entrepreneur and the employees. Both the complexity of the concept and going through the process of realization make the group of people involved very conscious of the idea from concept to end result. It breaks the casualness. But on the other hand, employees grow conscious of the creative process in itself, mirroring that of the artist. One artist put it this way: "My personal conceptual thinking process does not differ from this process."

The integration of the process requires the necessary time. Being confronted with the time experience of the artist generates reflection on how time is dealt with in the company. Working together with an artist requires taking and giving time, being patient, letting the process do its job. That time cannot be limited in view of a short term result. Conversely, it also makes the artist think about 'his freedom' and obliges him to reflect upon the compelling character of time in a business environment.

### *Limitations and responsibility*

Having to cope with time, budget, space and cooperation limitations in companies and in the art world makes people understand that thinking together and having proper input are extremely important. More than before, employees question certain situations and search for solutions themselves. Artists also realize that business holds limitations. The real economy and the situation of employees, spatial and financial boundaries don't always leave a lot of scope for spontaneous creativity. The challenge is to integrate these limitations into the project in a responsible way. Frustration sometimes leads to conflicts within the project group. If this can be steered in a positive way, it results in a demand for more insight and responsibility. Uncertainty and doubt form a breeding ground to take decisions and continue on the creative path.

### *The creation/production of products/art works*

Artists can call on companies for technological research regarding their art works or for producing them. Co-creation leads to concepts of new art works/company products or to thorough improvements to existing concepts.

### *Start-ups*

The alchemy of art and the economy can lead to new start-ups. Twenty years of collaboration by Constructions Espeel with many artists not only generated Arteconomy but also the company Essential, a trading partnership between the artist Hans De Pelsmaecker and Constructions Espeel.

You can read more about this in the book *Walk with me* about the collaboration of Constructions Espeel with artists.

## 3.2

### Arteconomy's operations

After seven years, Arteconomy is coming to the end of a pioneering period. During this time several activities have been undertaken and developed that have encouraged a strong concept

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develops, is open minded towards other ideas and is not afraid to express his own vision. He is a world citizen.

development. How this development took place will be described by taking a look at the different kinds of activities:

- formulating the mission and the strategic goals
- creating social awareness and social effect
- advice
- setting up innovative research projects
- study and research

Formulating the mission statement and the strategic goals

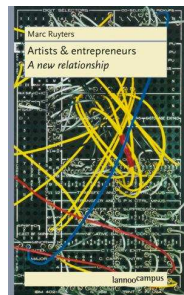
### **Mission statement**

- Arteconomy searches for connections between art and the economy and for their meaning.
- Arteconomy's intended purpose is that these connections should serve as an example for other connections.

### **Strategic goals**

Arteconomy:

- Fosters and creates new connections between art and the economy, starting from a quality engagement, and aiming at a balanced partnership model.
- Offers space for the artist, the entrepreneur and the employee to meet and to develop themselves as persons in their competencies, skills, knowledge and attitude.
- Aims at long term engagements.
- Focuses on the process as well as on the end result.
- Aims at an interaction between experiment and reflection.
- Wants to keep developing as an organization.



Creating awareness – social effect

The seminar *Art and the economy: we see no difference* was Arteconomy's first endeavour intended to create awareness (2004-2005). A target group of twenty-five entrepreneurs gathered during eight evenings together with art experts, philosophers and sociologists for an in-depth thematic discussion. The pioneering projects grew within this group of entrepreneurs. It was also there that the concept for the book *Artists and entrepreneurs: a new relationship* came into being, written by author Marc Ruyters together with the entrepreneurs. The book was nominated for the *Book of the year* (2007) shortlist by the Dutch organization OOA (Order of Organization experts and Advisors).

Over the years Arteconomy has taken up its role of creating awareness in many different ways, such as giving lectures, being a member of advisory boards and boards of directors, through individual contacts, round-table conferences, the website, project days, the publication of books and the findings of several studies and research.

Arteconomy has established important contacts in the field of culture, economy, education and politics, which are equally represented in Arteconomy's working area. Business federations, innovation centres and research institutions, companies, leading

support organizations in the arts field as well as art centres and museums (MuHKA, S.M.A.K., and Buda), banks and professional federations have become acquainted with Arteconomy.

On a political level, Arteconomy tries to advocate collaboration between the ministries of Culture, Economy and Innovation. At the same time Arteconomy encourages local, regional and national politicians to put the concept of human-centred innovation on the agenda whenever possible. There is still a long way to go, but interest in this concept is increasing.

Since education is a decisive factor in society, Arteconomy is also present in that field by commissioning studies and research, for instance with Vlerick Management School, Ghent University and the Institute for Research in the Arts (Louvain University). There is also a very interesting interaction under way with University College West Flanders. Arteconomy is regularly represented in examination juries, like in La Cambre and several school associations.

## Advice

There is a need for advice for and coaching of individual artists and companies. That became very clear during the advice sessions that Arteconomy organized in 2007 together with BAM (support organization for visual, audiovisual and media art).

As an advisor for the Lhoist company, Arteconomy developed strategies to apply the company art collection as a basis for the development of social and economic processes in society.

## Study and research

### *Art company/Company art*

When Arteconomy first started up it commissioned a *sociological case study* from Ghent University on the collaboration engagement of the company *Constructies Espeel and artists*. The study was carried out by the sociology department led by Prof. Dr. Johny Vincke. The main subject of the study was the effect that collaboration with artists can have on employees.

Some conclusions:

- The company culture determines the collaboration with artists.
- Introducing art is an added value for the company and the employees:
- The employee realizes that the artist needs him, which leads to commitment, motivation and variation.
- There is an exchange of worldviews, which in turn leads to greater openness.
- The employee's professional competence is not taken for granted anymore.
- Positive media attention generates pride in the company.
- The contact with the artist is the most important element: "It's the artist, not art or the art work".

### *Arteconomy case study — building a bridge between art and enterprise: Flemish businesses stimulate creativity and innovation through art*

Vlerick Management School Louvain Ghent did the research in collaboration with Flanders District of Creativity. The authors were Herman Van den Broeck, Eva Cools and Tine Maenhout. The findings of this study were also published in the November 2008 issue of the *Journal of Management & Organization Australia & New Zealand*.

Some conclusions:

- Working with artists is a red carpet to creativity.
- Breaking through received ideas means discovering new interpretations.
- An emotional experience through collaborating on a work of art can be a perfect message medium.
- Discover hidden talents, develop better communication, be a real team.

- Added value is in the exchange, in the balanced partnership-model.
- The whole process behind the art work is now applied as a process-catalyst for change within the company.
- Arteconomy is a process coach with a unique approach.
- The artist is purely a catalyst and intermediary.

#### *The artist in the company*

This study sketches the role of the artists in different Arteconomy projects. The study did research on the interesting aspects for the artists when they engage in a relationship with business, on the ideal combination of artist and company and on a research field that could offer a win-win situation for both.

Author: Yves Knockaert, Institute for Research in the Arts, Study group Art Research

Economy

Some conclusions:

- The artist is not a consultant in the company.
- Working with the economy is an opportunity for the artists to further develop themselves and their creative process.
- In his search for the new, the challenge and the confrontation with the unknown business world can invite the artist to experiment.

Set up innovative research projects

Arteconomy is a laboratory for experiment and development. The Arteconomy projects were essential in order to test out the vision and theory. On an academic level, they also appeared to be a concrete object of research and scholarly studies. In Flanders these have until now been the only available sources in this field.

This chapter provides further details about the projects.

#### *Some key principles*

- The initiative can come from a company, an organization or an artist.
- Arteconomy finds a suitable partner. The most important elements when choosing a partner are the openness to engage in an experiment and the intention of both to meet each other as persons.
- Financial agreements between the partners are made at the start of the project.
- Openness, respect and generosity of all participants towards each other is necessary.
- There are long-term projects and short-term projects.

#### *The Arteconomy projects aim at economic, social and artistic innovation:*

Between companies and artists:

- *Glass Works*. artist Kris Vleeschouwer — Siemens
- *Domotic.Lab*. Domotic.Lounge — artist Sophie De Somere
- *The Walk*. Concordia Textiles — artist Michaël Aerts
- *The Dragon of Deerlijk*. Promo Fashion — artist Els Opsomer
- *Commission for a company space*. VdS Weaving — artists Sarah & Charles
- *Walk with me*. Constructions Espeel worked with artists for 20 years
- Co-creation workshops:
  - *Atelier 36* — multimedia together with art centre KC Buda
  - *Atelier 64* — interfaces together with plugMedia

Between social institutions, organizations and artists:

- *400 Blows / De Walhoeve* — artist Anouk De Clercq

- *Water and concrete solutions* — project Lieven Paelinck — NGO Protos and UAB
- Sint-Lucas Architecture and Siemens

In a broader social context:

These projects generate awareness on a broad scale within a region, a business park, a city, a school community. The collaboration among artist-entrepreneur-employee-population is used as a driving force for development.

- Regional development of the Rupel region in the Province of Antwerp — several artists
- Court-house in Kortrijk. LVDA law office — artist Pieter Vermeersch
- *Translucent Futures* — artist Angelo Vermeulen — LVDA law office
- Workshop *Creation in the economic network* together with BAM

## THE ARTECONOMY PROJECTS

### RUPEL REGION MASTER PLAN 2020



initiator: *Province of Antwerp with the Rupel Region cooperative association (Samenwerkingsverband Rupelstreek).*

*A regional development project in collaboration with Business Park Hoek 76.*

artists: *Katrin Dekoninck, Luc De Backer, F.Man, Kris Vleeschouwer*

duration: *started in 2008*

#### STARTING POINT

The strategic goals of this project are:

1. To strengthen the historic and the natural cohesion of the five Rupel towns regarding all aspects related to living, working and recreation.
2. To strengthen the specific regional identity with the objective to enhance the image of the Rupel region as an accessible, future-oriented and innovative region.
3. To use a unique artist-entrepreneur partnership as a driving force to develop and achieve the reconversion of the Rupel region into an accessible, future-oriented and innovative region.

#### CONCRETE STEPS

1. Vision development in the think-tank *A new image for the Rupel region.*

Coached by Arteconomy, entrepreneurs, politicians and artists like Kris Vleeschouwer and Luc De Backer gathered and formulated proposals regarding the mission statement, the strategic goals and the concrete approach for the master plan.

2. Art project Hoek 76

On the occasion of the cultural festival VUUR!WERK (FIREWORKS) Business Park Hoek 76 invited three artists: F.Man, Luc De Backer and Katrin Dekoninck. They developed a concept to increase the image and the visibility of the business park and the region. ([www.vuurwerk2009.be](http://www.vuurwerk2009.be))

3. The art project SPEAK by artist Katrin Dekoninck and the company Ampco Flashlight in Hoek 76.

SPEAK is a multimedia art installation in the Rupel region. The chimneys of the old brick works are covered with a digital writing, drawing and image board. At home, in the virtual space of the living room, the internet user can communicate, through the chimney communication boards, with speakers in different Belgian cities and also with other internet users. With this installation the artist illustrates that historic industry, patrimony, contemporary art, technology and economy can work together.

#### PARTNERS

Province of Antwerp ([www.provant.be](http://www.provant.be))

Rupel Region cooperative association (Samenwerkingsverband Rupelstreek)

Business Park Hoek 76 ([www.hoek76.be](http://www.hoek76.be))

visual artists: Katrin Dekoninck, Luc De Backer, F. Man, Kris Vleeschouwer ([www.katrin-dekoninck.com](http://www.katrin-dekoninck.com), [www.lucdebacker.com](http://www.lucdebacker.com), [www.Fman.be](http://www.Fman.be), [www.anniegentilsgallery.com](http://www.anniegentilsgallery.com))

## 400 BLOWS



initiator: *De Walhoeve vzw*  
director: *Bernard Velghe*  
artist: *Anouk De Clercq*  
duration: *2 years*  
in collaboration with *Auguste Orts vzw*

### STARTING POINT

De Walhoeve vzw asked artist Anouk De Clercq to visualize the added value of their service. The end result should be an art work that can serve as a catalyst, on the one hand for making the subject open to discussion and on the other hand for the inclusion of youngsters from Special Youth Care in society.

### 400 BLOWS

Fifty years ago François Truffaut made the film *Les 400 Coups*. Anouk De Clercq formulates a contemporary answer to the film, within the context of De Walhoeve. The entire art work consists of a video, a series of photograms and a companion logbook. The video doesn't literally show the subject matter; rather, it is expressed through motion and emotion in a scene with a boy who is running across the beautiful landscape of the Mores towards the sea. The art work is the result of collaboration between the artist, the youngsters, and the coaches ... in social democratic cooperation. The final form and content of the logbook grew spontaneously during the creation of the art work. This workbook is a sketchbook with notes, photos and reactions of the youths, the artist and the coaches. It is further processed into a publication and so it will be an extra means of communication.

### PARTNERS

De Walhoeve vzw  
De Walhoeve vzw is active in Special Youth Care. It manages a coaching home in West-Vleteren and day care centres in Ypres and Veurne focused on coaching and treatment of youngsters with behavioural and emotional problems.  
[www.dewalhoeve.be](http://www.dewalhoeve.be)

Anouk De Clercq  
Visual artist  
[www.portapak.be](http://www.portapak.be)

## GLASS WORKS



initiator: *Kris Vleeschouwer, artist*  
company: *Siemens*  
director: *Philip Maertens*  
duration: *1 year*

### STARTING POINT

Artist Kris Vleeschouwer was looking for help from a company to develop the necessary technology for a monumental art work for the exhibition for the Young Belgian Painting Prize 2005. This collaboration strengthened the image of Siemens as an innovative company while at the same time it meant an engagement in a broader social context. Siemens was not acting as a sponsor for the artist but rather as a facilitator.

### GLASS WORKS

The art work *Glass Works* was realized thanks to the fruitful collaboration of the artist, who was acting as a project leader within the team of engineers and product developers at Siemens, and four other companies. The project proved to be very motivating for the employees involved and it enhanced creativity and problem-solving skills. They learned how to deal with a non-paper way of working. They started with two pages of instructions instead of a fist-size manual of specifications, as is usual. The creation of the art work involved cutting edge technology that received extensive press coverage and also received a lot of attention within the company.

Kris Vleeschouwer received the Palais des Beaux Arts prize for this art work. Moreover, the project contributed largely to his international breakthrough as an artist.

### PARTNERS

Siemens Automation and Drives  
Manufacturer of integrated products and systems for the implementation of customer designed automation solutions.  
[w1.siemens.com](http://w1.siemens.com)

Kris Vleeschouwer  
visual artist  
[www.anniegentilsgallery.com](http://www.anniegentilsgallery.com)

## DOMOTIC.LAB



initiator: *Domotic.Lounge / Elektromat*  
entrepreneur: *Stef Vande Meulebroucke*  
artists: *Sophie De Somere (concept)*  
*Michelle Adriaense (actress)*  
duration: *1 year*  
*In collaboration with Arts Centre Buda*

### STARTING POINT

Domotic.Lounge asked one-to-one theatre maker Sophie De Somere to apply her artistic experience to the creation of a performance or an installation allowing visitors and spectators experience domotica technology in a playful yet personal and conscious manner. Her artistic research was aimed at spatial experience, manipulation and sensory perceptions. The result was intended to arouse emotions: to humiliate, deceive, surprise and give hope at the same time.

### DOMOTIC.LAB

A door opens and closes. The visitors are confronted with an elderly lady in her own biotope. The signals they receive are contrary to these of the commercial domotic world outside. The guests seem to intrude uninvited on someone's private world. And while they are there they are confronted, incidentally and in a subdued way during the performance, with ... domotics. Domotic.Lab doesn't show domotics, but uses it discretely, in a surprising and functional way.

Domotic.Lab was first introduced in May 2007 at the trade show Architect@work in Kortrijk Xpo. It was subsequently installed at the Kortrijk 1302 museum during the Kortrijk Congé summer festival in July 2007, at Classics in Kortrijk in November 2007 and at the Trends in Living trade show in the Skyhall at Brussels Airport. Afterwards the space was used for the artist's experimental theatre.

### PARTNERS

Domotic.Lounge

Distributor and integrator of domotics, specialist in KNX, the current European standard in domotics.

[www.domotic-lounge.be](http://www.domotic-lounge.be)

Sophie De Somere

Theatre maker at the theatre company Ontroerend Goed, Ghent

[www.ontroerendgoed.be](http://www.ontroerendgoed.be)

Michelle Adriaense

Visual artist

[www.spoor13.be](http://www.spoor13.be)

## THE WALK



initiator: *Concordia Textiles NV*  
entrepreneurs: *Manu and Patric Tuytens*  
artist: *Michaël Aerts*  
duration: *1 year*

### STARTING POINT

By setting up this art project, Concordia Textiles wanted to promote the flexibility of its employees, teach them to think in more future-oriented ways in order to anticipate the ever changing market. The goal was first and foremost personal improvement, rather than a concrete statement or an art work.

### THE WALK

Artist Michaël Aerts took a group of company employees on a mental and physical walk through his creative process. They met for ten sessions spread over a period of about one year. Their participation in a creative process was a powerful incentive for creative thinking and improving mutual communication.

The employees built three modules that represent the three themes Rest, Unrest and Change, as a synthesis of their sessions with the artist.

### PARTNERS

Concordia Textiles NV  
Manufacturer of state-of-the-art synthetic fabrics for industrial, decorative, professional, recreational and military applications.  
[www.concordiatextiles.com](http://www.concordiatextiles.com)

Michaël Aerts  
Visual artist  
[www.michaelaerts.com](http://www.michaelaerts.com)

## THE DRAGON OF DEERLIJK



initiator: *Promo Fashion*  
entrepreneur: *Michel Delfosse*  
artist: *Els Opsomer*  
duration: *1,5 year*

### STARTING POINT

The entrepreneur wanted to confront his employees with the artist's vision of fashion. The purpose was to obtain a broader vision through verbal and non-verbal communication between the artist and the people in the project: a learning process towards a more open mind and a better understanding of different perceptions. This allowed the employees to further develop their personality, which would directly or indirectly influence their daily job in the company.

### THE DRAGON OF DEERLIJK

A group of employees worked on a creation with company products, together with the artist. The artist and the creation of the 'dragon' serve as a means of interaction to bring about a new thinking pattern about people and society, which in turn leads to self-fulfilment and improvement with the employees.

While the artist envisioned the dragon rather as an idea, or symbol, the employees saw it as a product. And so they created a real dragon with fabric, clothes and other company products. The dragon stands in the entrance hall of the impressive company building where contemporary art is prominently present.

### PARTNERS

Promo Fashion  
Manufacturer of clothing for ladies, men and children, with a retail network of sixty shops in Belgium.  
[www.promofashion.be](http://www.promofashion.be)

Els Opsomer  
Visual artist  
[www.ernahecey.com/uk/els\\_opsomer\\_works.php](http://www.ernahecey.com/uk/els_opsomer_works.php)

## COMMISSION FOR A COMPANY SPACE



initiator: *VdS Weaving*  
entrepreneur: *Guy Van den Storme*  
artists: *Sarah Deboosere & Charles Blondeel*  
duration: *1,5 year*

### STARTING POINT

Encourage the employees to grow and to be more aware of respect for themselves, their colleagues and their environment.

### COMPANY SPACE

During their first visits, the young artists noted that there was little communication among the workers in the company and that people had little or no feeling for the end result of their work. In the beginning, Sarah & Charles wanted to promote communication among the co-workers by making a video with individual footing of employees talking about things that touch them.

However, when the artists got to know the company better, a new idea arose: they would create an outside space, a small meeting garden for the employees. A place where people can eat their lunch together, smoke a cigarette, catch up a bit, enjoy the sun and get to know each other better, giving rise to mutual respect. The lay-out of the garden was done in collaboration with Benjamin Claeys.

### PARTNERS

VdS Weaving  
Weaving mill of quality fabrics for applications in the furniture industry, agriculture, luggage production, medicine, and so on.  
[www.vdsweaving.com](http://www.vdsweaving.com)

Sarah Deboosere & Charles Blondeel  
Visual artists  
[www.charlessarah.com](http://www.charlessarah.com)

## CO-CREATION — WORKSHOPS

Short format of four afternoons in which three or four artists meet as many entrepreneurs. This concept was first introduced by MAD Emergent Art Center (Paul Desmedt, Rene Paré) in The Netherlands for a Creative Challenge Call.  
<http://mad.dse.nl/>

### STARTING POINT

The participants from the world of business and the art sector are coached in their search for connections that can serve as a starting point for joint projects. Co-creation grows between two totally different disciplines and generates concrete concepts, proposals for elaboration and innovative work processes in a very short time span. The aim is to foster interaction among the participants in the different workshops by creating a pool where they can regularly meet and where new collaborative projects can grow.

### ATELIER 36 (2008)



A joint initiative by Arteconomy and Arts Centre Buda with the support of Domotic.Lounge/Elektromat. Delphine Hesters (PhD in sociology, Louvain University) was the observer and reporter.

Atelier 36 led to the following collaborative ventures:

- UMO — Unidentified Moving Object: Kris Verdonck, artist, and Dirk Ghekiere/dZine do research together regarding materials for the use of holograms. For dZine this is a commercial opportunity, for Kris it means an interesting track for a new artistic project.
- GPS — Great Parental Steering System: Eric Joris, artist, and Hans Vermandere/Indie Group develop a computer game that will make children forget boredom during long car rides. Perhaps Indie Group discovers a new market opportunity, for the artist the new insights are inspiring for his artistic career.
- The process of slowness: artist Yves Coussement will invite the employees of Jo Versavel/Traficon to dedicate one working day in a fortnight solely to creative ideas. Yves serves as a catalyst to induce the staff to reach this enhanced creativity.

[www.budakortrijk.be](http://www.budakortrijk.be)

## COCREATION — ATELIERS

### ATELIER 64 (2009)



A joint venture by Arteconomy and plugMedia, with Innowiz, HOWEST University College Kortrijk as observer.

Atelier 64 led to the following collaborative projects:

- A video-project for dance: Ugo Dehaes, artist and Lucas De Wilde/One Agency examined the thin line between life and death, and its unbearable lightness. This became a video project that can be used during dance performances.
- Online exhibition tool: Narcisse Tordoir, artist and Dirk Sabbe/Netlash developed an online exhibition tool for an artist to present his/her work.
- Multitouch: Rudi Bogaerts, artist, and Bart Chanet/Dreams and Creations conceived the Multitouch project for museums and other cultural organisations. More commercial applications will be developed in the future.
- You Theatre: Timothy Segers, artist, and Christel De Maeyer/pluginMedia want to give people a voice and stimulate spontaneous performances by means of You Theatre, an installation in public spaces. You Theatre is now installed as a prototype at the Nieuwpoort.theater for Beaufort.

[www.pluginmedia.be](http://www.pluginmedia.be)

[www.innowiz.be](http://www.innowiz.be)

## A SELECTION OF NEW PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

### SIEMENS, SINT-LUCAS ARCHITECTURE — MIXED MEDIA LAB, IVOK

This project is still in its development phase and aims at the co-creation of an environment in which designers can raise their creative bids, based on the formal structure of traditional decision spaces. The space should become an intelligent environment that can bring a creative meeting to a higher level of consciousness thanks to the available technology and the visual surplus value.

The concept of an action-reflection-space and the structure of this installation are derived from the ideas and the research project of Marc Godts. The collaboration between the designer, MMLAB and SIEMENS is an extraordinary opportunity to face both technological and content-related challenges that the development of a prototype for this space presents.

[www.architectuur.sintlucas.wenk.be](http://www.architectuur.sintlucas.wenk.be)  
[w1.siemens.com](http://w1.siemens.com)  
[associatie.kuleuven.be/ivok](http://associatie.kuleuven.be/ivok)

### KORTRIJK COURT-HOUSE



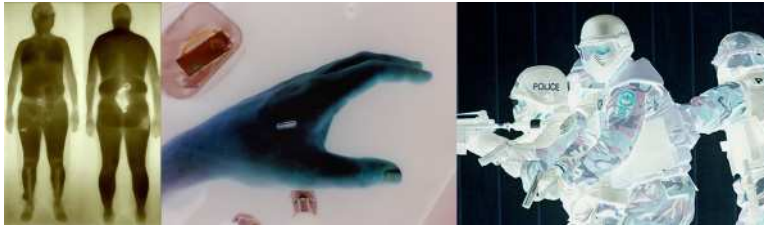
initiator: *LVDA law office*  
entrepreneur: *Jan Leysen*  
artist: *Pieter Vermeersch*  
*In collaboration with Art Centre Buda*

The austere architecture and the transparency of the new court-house in Kortrijk reflect the logic of the legal system and the judicial authorities. The stern black and white combination stresses the seriousness with which ‘good and bad’; ‘right and wrong’ are treated here. Can the austerity of judicial thinking be questioned by art? Can it be challenged in order to justify itself even more successfully?

The work of artist Pieter Vermeersch is capable of positioning the building ‘obliquely’ for a moment to call the obviousness into question, to hold a mirror to what is logical and predictable. His progressive use of colour and light questions the over-simplified and totally non-emotional character of justice.

[www.lvda.be](http://www.lvda.be)  
[www.pietervermeersch.be](http://www.pietervermeersch.be)

## TRANSLUCENT FUTURES



initiator: *artist Angelo Vermeulen*  
company: *LVDa law office*  
entrepreneur: *Jan Leysen*

Translucent Futures is an artistic/activist platform that deals with the increasing erosion of civil rights and privacy through ubiquitous technology. The research process can be followed on an open wiki. In this manner, Translucent Futures is building a network of interested partners.

The objective is to combine open collaborative research, multidisciplinary dialogue, artistic practice and activism. The artist is looking to collaborate with the law office as an expert in privacy law.

[www.angelovermeulen.net](http://www.angelovermeulen.net)

[www.lvda.be](http://www.lvda.be)

## WATER AND CONCRETE SOLUTIONS (working title)



initiator: *artist Lieven Paelinck*

Lieven Paelinck links his research on the subject of water to concrete. With the artistic products that he develops on this theme, he seeks to make an interesting comment on Art for socially responsible transformation.

The project is running in collaboration with and with the support of the NGO Protos and the UAB (Universiteit Algemeen Belang – University of Common Interest).

Arteconomy is coaching the artist in his search for partners and the means to realize his ideas.  
<http://www.bamart.be/persons/detail/nl/169>

## 4. IMPATIENCE

### Connection

Arteconomy doesn't build bridges. Arteconomy uncovers the connections that are already present.

This part treats the relational starting point of Arteconomy as a source of inspiration for the approach between art and the economy.

What makes Arteconomy unique is its relational vision of art and the economy. The principle of connection is universal. It is not embedded in one specific social domain or a particular content, but always elicits a dynamic movement. This dynamic or movement is the key that sets encounters in motion.

This dynamic vision is laid out in the arteconomy logo.



The logo consists of two figures. One is the base, consisting of criss-crossed lines or — if one does not lift the pen while scribbling — a long line that intersects itself time and time again. On this background rests a clearly defined form: a horizontal beam that carries the name Arteconomy.

### movement

Arteconomy identifies its activity with a cloud of whirling lines because it wants to be in motion. Arteconomy cannot be bound to one place, institution or house. As an intermediary between art and the economy it takes new positions each time, sometimes mentally, sometimes physically. That is why Arteconomy can identify itself by the simplest drawing of a light aeriform figure.

Let's dig a little deeper into the metaphor. What is air? It is a substance in a gaseous state. It is a thin substance that we call air, or oxygen. Gas has no odour or colour. Oxygen is invisible but omnipresent and active. Arteconomy has to do its job, as self-evidently and unnoticed as breathing.

On a micro-level, air consists of atoms that criss-cross and establish connections when colliding. Chemical connections are exemplary of the connections that Arteconomy is building on a micro-level. People are like atoms. The more they move, the bigger the chance that they will run into each other and establish connections. Arteconomy keeps moving, and by doing so and connecting people it stresses the connections between art and the economy. It does not add anything to the formula, does not use magic spells. Arteconomy assumes that connections already exist, but are generally invisible. In a personal encounter entrepreneurs and artists leave the 'roles' that they and we have been taught. On the level of atoms, from person to person, there are no boundaries which are put first by systems. People often talk about 'building bridges' between both entities: that means that one has to construct, to

connect river banks to reach each other. According to Arteconomy these bridges are not necessary because the connections between art and the economy are already in place.

In the world of atoms, movement is more genuine than the connections created. This means that all connections are temporary and are linked to disconnection. These two movements alternate.

Atoms differ from each other. They belong to a certain type that also determines their behaviour. When they interconnect they do not surrender their identity. They connect while maintaining their individual character and their differences. When combined they can form a new whole, but the difference between them remains. In this view, borders are a contact zone, not a separation or protection, but a place where one is confronted with differences. Integration then lies not in blending and losing identity, but in letting go of the mental cage in which we place ourselves as well as art and the economy.

The beam in the logo is symbol of the contact zone or meeting place that Arteconomy wants to be. There are moments when the gaseous state of Arteconomy coagulates, hardens and takes the form, for instance, of a seminar, a project or a workshop. These habitats are always temporary.

From nuclear physics we can learn a lot about the nature of a connection-oriented relationship. But there are lots of sources of inspiration in other worlds that provide examples of connections and which can serve as a touchstone for the relationship between art and the economy. Works that are important for Julie Vandenbroucke: The book *Verbondenheid* (connection) by Ferdinand Cuvelier; the book *Form is emptiness, emptiness is form – The Heart of understanding* by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, who lives mainly in France and who considers that ‘connection’ from a Buddhist viewpoint; and personal conversations with Peter Bassens.

#### connection versus bipolarity

There are two ways to look at the relationship between art and the economy. One is from a connection-oriented point of view, the other is a bipolar or dual vision, with the first being more dynamic and offering more opportunities for innovation and change. Innovation is the result of connection and disconnection.

In a bipolar proposition we find art pitted against the economy. Art is situated in the margins; the economy stands in the centre and offers certainties. This means that the contact with art could be risky for the economy and conversely, that art is living on the certainties of the economy. Yet both have more to offer to each other.

When you consider art and the economy from a connection-oriented vision, it is the person that comes first. In theory one could talk about a centre or a margin, but in practice these concepts are obsolete because people constantly move between the two. Movement is more genuine, then, than coming home, either in the art world or in the world of business.

Arteconomy does not focus attention on art or the economy as central elements in society, as other organizations sometimes do. It does not say that art or the economy should change society. Arteconomy highlights connection. Both partners are equal and share responsibility.

This is how the subject and its commitment gain a central place.

Highlighting connection means: assuming that there is a process of exchange in which both grow and change, which also changes the whole. In this holistic approach, to opt for connection is also to opt for (flexible) disconnection. Both should take turns and are necessary to obtain innovation and change. This rule applies equally to the art sector and to the business world, as well as to society in general.

When art (or the economy) unilaterally have to bring about the necessary change, people assume that the truth is lying there. Then the other one is responsible for change. This way it is easy to get stuck in a struggle for power. The relationship becomes a matter of controlling the other. When that happens, change and innovation will be delayed, because

disconnection is an important factor. The focus is more on instituting duality than aiming for the whole.

Arteconomy puts persons first, their soul, their heart, their thinking, their challenges, their concerns, their development and the connections they establish.

Arteconomy asked artist Honoré δ'O to pass on his vision on connection in an artistic way.

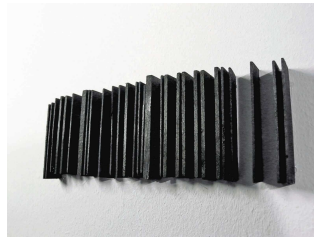


#### VALUE AWARD

#### CERTIFICATE

“A person is born with a liking for profit.”

Xun Zi (Chinese Confucian philosopher, 4th century B.C.)



*Value Award* is a chalice filled with little black blocks that can be assembled by the owner as s/he chooses to form a barcode. They make a wall sculpture which, as is to be expected of course, makes the chalice emptier.

Comma, comma, comma. That's what my point is on.

The owner of the work is permitted to nurture fantasies about 'value' in general, or specifically about the value of this work. The sculpture which interprets the purchase price of the work, for example, can be adjusted

as the work increases in value ...

or decreases. Crisis stock!

Or crisis-resistant. Language puts images into words and images add value to language.

O's, e's and i's may resonate, dance and be substituted. The a as a separate shriek.

Substituted? Banned even, then I will speak to you with only consonants.

A Free Online Bar Code Generator is easy to google.

Naturally the art work aims to be a *solution!* For mainly insoluble problems. It shrinks from materialistic inspiration and, in the end, gives us a thorough grip on the ever-elusive idea of total — therefore changing — value, of everlasting, endless, creative capital.

11/05/2009  
Honoré δ'O