

it relatively irreversible. There is a collective accumulation of collectively possessed resources, one of the functions of academic institutions in all fields and in the field of art in particular being the provision of (unequal) access to these resources. These collective resources, collectively accumulated, constitute at one and the same time constraints and possibilities. Just like an instrument, a harpsichord or a piano, a certain state of the artistic field offers a scale of possibilities, but it closes down others. You cannot do everything – quarter tones for example – you cannot do anything. There is the possible, the probable and the impossible; the thinkable and the unthinkable. There are systems of agreed classification by subtypes, notably hierarchies, which orientate choices. In terms of my own experience, the greatest – Manet in art for example, Heidegger in philosophy, Flaubert in literature – are those who know and best master this scale, the universe of available possibilities – and those to become available – of their times. It seems to me that one can draw out if not a general law, then at least a lesson about these large cultural production undertakings of the past: those who stood up against all the problems offered by the state of the field, who tried to reconcile irreconcilable things, refused absurd alternatives like the opposition between expressed exploration and political commitment, gave themselves the best chances of success in all parts of symbolic production.

This universe of constraints and of possibilities is also what philosophers call a problematic. Which is to say a lot of questions about being of the time and being in the game, 'in the loop', – which is not like being a dog in a game of skittles, in the style of Douanier Rousseau – is not to know what can or cannot be; that is a global view which is not even true in terms of fashion. It is to know where are the real problems and good critique, in my opinion; it is one who is capable of spotting artists who are involved with real problems, who through familiarity with the art world and artists, et cetera, also knows what an artist is, the space of what is possible and who is capable of seeing straight away what has already been done and to differentiate true originality from cynical and opportunistic revivals or imaginary breaks.

In this game, people occupy positions, which are determined in large part by the importance of their symbolic capital of recognition, notoriety, capital which is unequally distributed between different artists. There is therefore a structure of distribution of this capital which, through the position that each artist occupies in this structure (of the dominant and dominated, etc.), 'determines' or orientates the strategies of the different artists through the intermediary, notably, of perception that, in terms of the habitus, each artist can have as a result of the artistic space in which they are inserted. You asked me (Q.6): who makes an artist? Obviously, it is not the artist who makes the artist, but the

field, the totality of the game. Due to the fact that they turn the tables of value, all the principles of assessment, the revolutionary is condemned to find themselves alone. Who wants to say that Manet is an artist when he radically questions the principles according to which we decide who is an artist or not? This is the solitude of the heretic, the founder of heresy: he only has legitimacy within himself. Who makes an artist, the value of an artist? It is the artistic universe, it is not the artist themselves. And, in the final analysis, who make a work of art? In the last resort, it is the game itself, which makes the player by offering them the universe of possible shots and the means to play them.

The second instrument it is necessary to have, is what I call *habitus*; the fact that 'individuals' are themselves also the product of social, historic conditions, et cetera. And, the fact that they have dispositions, which is to say ways of being, permanent categories of perception, schemes, ways of thinking, structures of invention, et cetera, which are linked to their trajectory, in other words, their social origin, their academic trajectories, the type of school they went to (for example, it is important to know that a part of what you have here is linked to the position of your art school in the space of art schools, obviously a hierarchical space to the extent that what you are and what you do is determined by the position that you occupy in the game and by the dispositions that you have imported into the game).

The final thing is the relation between the *habitus* as a system of dispositions linked to a social trajectory, and a field which defines itself by what I call the space of possibilities. In the same way that Balzac could not invent internal monologue – one cannot raise oneself above the times – we are determined by the space of possibilities given by the field at a given moment in time and apprehended through the spectacles of the *habitus*. But, it is also in the relation between what is and is not consecrated by the field that leads to this kind of passion for the game (a foundation of all interest for games) which I call the *illusio*, the fundamental belief that the game is worth the candle, is worth the trouble of being played, and which is much stronger than 'the desire for glory' which one of your questions brought up (Q.8). Belief, love of art, *libido artistica*, all of that is rooted in a social relation, and has nothing to do with a mystical representation which traditional hagiography gives to art and the artist.

For those who might find this account a little disenchanting, I would like, by way of finishing, to bring up this sort of experiential sociology of the art field that Duchamp was the first to undertake and which finds its own natural replication in the experience of the Bienne dustbin man who treated as rubbish, waste ready to be discarded, objects put together as consecrated 'works' through public exhibition and made, for some, from transfigured rubbish by the artistic act as in Duchamp's *Fountain*. In effect, how is it not

possible to see that artistic consecration is a kind of magic act which can only be accomplished in-and-through a collective act at the heart of this magic space that is the artistic field? Duchamp could have believed that it was he, as a singular artist, who turned the *ready made* into a work of art.²³ But, would he have had the idea of this creation, and would he have succeeded in making it recognised, if he had not been an artist and a recognised artist? (It is significant that Man Ray could have claimed that he was the first to invent the *ready made*: in art, as in science, simultaneous inventions are there to remind us that the field is always at the heart of inventions...) The artist who affixes his name to a *ready made* (as the fashion designer who puts their name on perfume, or a bidet – this is an actual example), therefore ‘creating’ a product whose market price is in no way comparable to its cost of its production, is somehow mandated by a whole group to undertake an act of magic which would remain without meaning and effectiveness without the whole tradition to which their

²³ A term coined by Marcel Duchamp and, in its most correct use, applied to his work, alone, between 1913 to 1921. From Dada going forward, ‘ready-made’ has been understood to be a common, mass-produced object, such as the urinal and bicycle wheel Duchamp so famously used. However, ‘ready-mades’ are now used in a completely different context than their original, intended functions. Ready-mades are elevated to the status of art simply because the artist says they are art.

gesture is the outcome; without the universe of celebrants and believers, who give to it a sense and meaning because they are also the product of the same tradition. Obviously I am thinking about museum curators, critics, fans of avant-garde art, collectors (Q.6), and all those, in one way or another, who have something to do with the game of art at this moment in time. It is obvious that the Bienne dustbin man, immortalised by Dario Gamboni, but also, quite probably, the caretaker or the guard of the museum, would have probably thrown into the rubbish one or another of the *ready makes* now immortalised by the history of art. We are now at a point where there is a maximal distance between the artistic game of the artist working for other artists (or assimilating them) and the secular public. In other words, the *ready made* is not already made when it is shown to the spectator. It is *to be made* and it belongs to the spectator to finish the work that the artist has begun, and which would be nothing other than an ordinary object of the ordinary world, in truth a banal and vulgar refuse (I am thinking about these artists who exhibit kitsch objects) without the contribution of ‘those who are watching’ who, according to the words of Duchamp, ‘make the pictures’. As for ‘those who watch’, themselves; how could we forget that they are historical products of a family, an academic education and the museums where an artistic disposition is acquired? And that it takes centuries for an art such as Duchamp’s to

be produced and an aesthete capable of sincerely and naively appreciating his works?

This idea, quite unquestionable, that the *readymade* – as a limit on a piece of art, therefore art work itself – is the product of a *collective* and *historical* work, should discourage or disappoint only those who are desperately attached to a belief in the uniqueness of the 'creator' and the act of creation; an old mythology which we ought to bury like so many others, which science has rejected.

[S]ociology can be one of the most effective weapons to understand and defend art; not just art that already exists, as canonized within museums, but art that makes itself the most surprising artistic research, the most audacious, the most critical, the most free.

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