No Soul For Sale: 2 Articles, both alike in dignity

In May of 2010 the Tate Modern staged No Soul For Sale, billed as a 'Festival of Independents' that was neither a fair or an exhibition. It was a convention of individuals and groups who devote their energies to art they believe in, beyond the limits of the market and other logistical constraints. The event was re-initiated in June 2009, with a new focus on the organizing of artist-run spaces rather than by artists themselves.

The Tate Modern offered the invited organizations, collectives and etc. (what are etc.s?) absolutely no compensation for setting up shop in Turbine Hall—but neither were the galleries charged to be apart of the proceedings. Though many spaces accepted the Tate's invitation as a great opportunity, at least one group of anonymous British artists created a website www.nosoulforsale.org/. Please read it on the web at http://theartblog.com/2009/06/18/nosoulforsale-.html. Read the entire letter online at http://halfletterpress.tumblr.com/post/59852551/tate.

This small protest was of course accepted by curator Cecilia Alemani as a welcomed institutional critique (3), but perhaps mostly forgotten about in the nearly six months since NSFS took place. The issues raised by NSFS have a larger reach: the idea that art-world relevance and pitch (networking, acknowledgement, visibility) for a service held on by anonymous artists and administrators for artists creating work. There are more people creating art that they know has very little chance of being showcased at non-commercial venues (which organization?) participation in NSFS:

The following is an excerpt from a conversation with Andrew Suggs of Vox Populi concerning that organization’s (which organization?) participation in NSFS:

Andrew Suggs: “I think it would be great if they could pay the spaces but that would probably come with a whole host of problems too. I mean what would that mean—corporate sponsorship?”

Annette Monnier: “Would you not participate if there was corporate sponsorship?”

AS: “It would have given me more pause.”

“It is important to note that this is an excerpt from a half hour conversation in which Andrew expressed various views, both positive and negative, about the NSFS experience. Money has to come from someone with money, in the case of The Tate Modern some of that money comes from corporate sponsorship. So it seems fair to think of this statement coming from?). In this light, it is hard to think of NSFS as being more like a conference of independent art administrators or institutional collectors. Other artists teach art classes or conduct workshops in schools or in their own studio spaces. Some artists also hold full-time or part-time jobs unrelated to art and pursue fine art as a hobby or second career.”


Money can’t buy me love

The facts are irrefutable that artists—maybe not all artists—but artists create art “from an inner necessity without thought of rec-ompense, that money may cause more problems for artistis- tic happenings (what is meant by the word happenings?) than it solves, and that the experience gifted by the Tate to the galleries involved in NSFS was a priceless piece of PR that will grant each of these spaces a better chance at a successful future.

The opposite argument has been published online on the artblog.org. Please read it on the web at http://theartblog.org/

This article takes a pro stance, arguing that artists do make art from an inner necessity without thought of rec-ompense, that money may cause more problems for artistis- tic happenings (what is meant by the word happenings?) than it solves, and that the experience gifted by the Tate to the galleries involved in NSFS was a priceless piece of PR that will grant each of these spaces a better chance at a successful future.

The great majority of artists, art administrators and cu- rators are very idealistic and romantic people who try to think of that under a shallow veneer of cynicism (where is this statement coming from?) they have had to come to a point where they have seen the limitations of trying to create work that they know has very little chance of being sold. Artists regularly band together to create collective studios or gallery spaces in shifty warehouses and often use their own money to pay the rent at such spaces. Some spaces like these, termed independent or alternative or DIY (or some similar ordering of words), constitute a kind of a special culture in the art world, which artist-run spaces defying traditional art world conventions stand out. Many of these are similar to the mission of any incarnation of contemporary art. That artists would think it neces- sary to form their own contemporary art center without their own money to pay the rent at such spaces. Some studios or gallery spaces in shifty warehouses and often create work that they know has very little chance of being

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