

AMELIE

In the selling of The non-commercial gallery I would like to focus on a description of its staff. This description applies specifically to our non-commercial gallery, but I think it is probable that many other organizations like ours have a similar constellation. We who run the gallery are in profession artists, architects and curators. We have a long and thorough education as well as experience of practice behind us. This includes - besides pursuing and organizing the non-commercial gallery - our individual practices as artists, curators and architects. All put together a vast array of activities.

Also, many of us have additional educations, skills and jobs: economy, graphic design, history, crafts, mathematics, computer programming, web design, engineering, graphic design, moving images, 3D-modelling, event making, teaching, journalism and penmanship.

We have pursued our activities within ak28 on our free time, with burning dedication but without salary. I have often thought of what 13 so competent people could or would achieve if they worked fulltime with salary, if only for a short while.

When buying the non-commercial gallery one possibility is to get a whole staff, already put together, well composed and trimmed before hand by years of common operations. This staff could be used in many different ways. One way would be to use our know-how in any situation applicable to our competences. It could be solving any problem that the buyer might have, creative, financial, personal. Or making something like art or exhibitions or texts or any of the things which we know how to do. Or it could be organizing something (a country maybe?), like we have organized our common work with the gallery.

Being independent as we are, deciding our own mission as we always have, it is likely that a lot of things our buyer would tell us to do, we wouldn't want to do. In which case it's possible to see the purchase of ak28 as a way to make art and architecture possible unconditionally, in any way it would come out if we would do it, like we do it, all the time. Even though we might not want to work fulltime for the buyer and maybe not get paid either and the thought probably is highly hypothetical I think it's a thrilling thought. The price for the non commercial gallery is 130 000 Euro plus fulltime wages for all of us, if we want it.

CAMILLA

I personally have no doubts what so ever that ak28 could easily go from being a non commercial space to a commercial space. But since we who run the gallery space have worked according to the model that it should be a non commercial project we have never discussed the possibility of running it with more focus towards commercial activities.

I don't find commercial being an ugly word and I don't see it as a freedom to work idealistic anymore. Also I don't believe that commerciality is the opposite of interesting. Freedom for me has become to be able to affect, create and to live. Therefore I would very much like - with people in the ak28 group in combination with finance from outside - to turn ak28 into an interesting creative space that can feed itself.

ak28 has been an extraordinary mind exercise, melting pot with a creative potential worth gold in heavy weigh. The diverse knowledge and creativity within the group is for me difficult to validate in cash. But my belief is that ak28 all together - the gallery space and the group of people with master degrees in different areas and skills which is ak28 - possesses the knowledge and sense to visualize and create: art, archi-

ecture, moving images, video, animation, graphic design, curatorial- and project leading work. ak28 could or actually should be a wet dream for a company or person with new ideas, thoughts and visions. A wet dream that can come true. As our buyer I would like to suggest an advertising agency, a design office, an architect office, a clothing brand. Any of these could build its brand and escalate its creativity with a fantastic gallery space or showroom. Or use us as a creative library to step into, be filled with and inhale inspiration from.

DIANA

To whom it may concern,

We are ak28, a self organised, non-profit artist, architect and curator run gallery in the heart of Stockholm. ak28 was founded in 2004 and has 13 members. Over the years three people have left ak28 for different reasons and five have joined. At the moment nobody is about to leave and we are not accepting new members.

Our gallery space is in the cellar of a residential building and consists of one large room with a kitchenette on one side. There is a toilet, shower and storage space in conjunction to the gallery and a large inner room used as a studio by some of the members. Two small windows facing the backyard are sometimes covered to keep light out. The floor is custom designed and carefully installed by us. It has been painted a few times in different colours like green, white and blue to change the room in a very effective way.

When it comes to installing we are skilled, experienced and hard working. We have a projector, at least 3 TV-monitors and DVD-players and a stationary PC and all cables needed. Tools like drill, saw, hammer, spirit level as well as filler, paint and brushes etc are of good quality and kept in a semi neat order in the storage room.

We have produced a wide range of exhibitions, screenings, seminars, talks, releases and have participated in a number of art fairs and even inserted our practice into the context of a big art institution. For the most part we have focused on exhibiting younger up-and-coming artists, giving them an opportunity to make their first solo exhibition. We have good international relations and have over the years introduced many interesting artists to the Stockholm art scene. All engagements have built on personal relations and only a very few were accepted by application though we have had numerous. A delicate matter has always been how to reject applications and we have up till today no good routine when handling the issue. It has remained a hot potato but due to our collective decision making process none of us have felt personally responsible so in some cases the query has been left unanswered.

A routine that we work hard to maintain is the every-second-Monday-meetings, Mondays being interchangeable with any other day of the week, where all decisions regarding ak28's activities are taken. An agenda is set by collecting topics submitted to the secretary and forms the basis for a discussion that subsequently leads to a majority decision. If the majority at a meeting consists of two or less (for more important matters three or less) we rather postpone the decision making and continue the discussions by email. On the whole, internal communication, ie. meetings, emails, telephone calls and text messages, is what ak28 consists of. It's not so much what we discuss, decide or disagree about but the fact that it is ongoing. As the funding is so sparse every project has had an extremely limited budget. The little municipal support we have received has, at times, been enough for us to want to cover the trans-

port, print invitations, cover the artist travel expenses, even pay a fee etc but it hasn't been sustainable in the long run. At some point we decided on a 3 000 SEK production budget for each project. But then we've made very many decisions.

Every project, be it an exhibition, a release party or a seminar, has one or several ak28 members as executive producers who are overall responsible for the project. This has been a good way of dealing with the artists and to secure every venture. A weaker issue may have been the opening hours. Though we are open only on Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 pm it is always hard to find members who can guard and guide. In the end it becomes a question of favours back and forth.

At our openings we sell beer and wine for a fair price at a little counter where we usually keep information such as press releases and printed matter on the artist on show. All our openings are crowded and lively but still laid-back. Even though we have a dedicated fan-base consisting of a mix between students and established artists, critics and a younger clique working with architecture, fashion and advertising we still meet new people at every opening. During an opening we take turns selling in the bar and mingling with the visitors. All of us are good at making conversation. Some of us even smoke though not in the gallery but in the backyard which also functions as an extra space when it gets too crowded or hot in the gallery. Sometimes music is played in the background but it has become more rare nowadays. At around 11 pm when we close we all go a bar nearby for a drink or two together with the artist and the remaining visitors.

Only once or twice have any of the tenants complained about our activities and then only about loud music but since we started inviting them they haven't complained at all. We have also renovated the common room next to the gallery so that any of tenants can book it and use it as they wish, like for instance for reading circles and yoga sessions. We use the space whenever we have a seminar in conjunction to a show or it we have a party. Over the years we've had several really great parties, some with DJs, light shows and smoke machines. Due to the small space and the fact that we know almost everyone these events have been intimate and relaxed. We have had no cases of disturbing behaviour and no police interventions. As required we have an accountant. Like all accountants she can be tricky especially for those of us who don't pay our part of the rent in time. Receipts tend to get lost, payments delayed and tax issues remain murky. Though the fact that nobody is getting rich consoles some.

We are all born in the 1970's. Five of us have children and one is pregnant at the moment. We are good with kids and they like us. There are two couples in ak28, they have both been together for ages but only one is married. Some are in steady relationships outside ak28 others are single. We are all good looking and have a sense of style. We love all that ak28 is and have a great time together but now we feel like it is time for a change, like we need to move on. So please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any suggestions or offers.

ERIK

Economy is about the division and distribution of resources and it is a refined way of controlling and distributing power. One of the driving forces of the non-commercial art space has been independence, the right and possibility of making your own decisions and developing your own ideas. In order to achieve this it has stayed outside structures of power that it could not control itself. This strive for independence has taken it to a point where it hesitates

to accept money for its services, or even gifts, and where it carefully avoids situations where it can be accused of trading services. Instead the non commercial art space is constructed of extra time and money and love and devotion for art, culture and non-profit, non-operational human activity. But it is not driven by idealism. It is a pragmatic strategy to collect and multiply fragments of influence into a stronger force. It becomes a monument of the subversive power of spare time. This is what charges the non-commercial art space with excitement, expectations and a sense of freedom. It appears as a seemingly endless well of new ideas and creativity.

Is it possible to sell?

The non-commercial art space is constituted by individuals, put in a productive and creative relationship. It could probably be used for many different purposes and develop into a multitude of different activities, through which its values may be turned into cash. Still I would say no, there is nothing to sell. But why don't you give us a call? We just want your extra time and your kiss.

FELICE

I would like to see The non-commercial art gallery live on in a partnership with a financing part. The non-commercial art gallery will take on the name of the financing institution or company as a second name.

Example: The non-commercial art gallery SBC. All this, if desired, in the graphic design of the logo of the financing part. The financing would be a favour back for all the cultural value which The non-commercial art gallery will add to the financing institution at a relatively low price. This will bring immeasurable good-will and publicity to the financing part.

The non commercial art gallery should be provided with some hundred square metres of exhibition and project space, three full time jobs and production budget, all to the cost of roughly 275 078.664 Euros a year. Publicity costs not included.

GIOVANNI

"WE SHOULD SELL IT LIKE TOOTHPASTE"

One of my strongest arguments to present ak28 as a sales product in the Rotterdam art fair has always been the fact that I believe that ak28 wouldn't be possible to commercialize since it would somehow change the unique "state-of-affairs" that has made us so attractive in the Stockholm local scene. The ONLY way we could manage it was to face the idea of commercialization as some kind of socio-cultural experiment.

I am not so sure about that anymore.

After the discussions we have had, it's amazing to discover that all of us have played around with the idea of becoming a commercial enterprise. It's even more interesting to notice the different fashions and proposals that we came across under those discussions. One thing we seem to have in common: an awareness and common understanding that there are economical forces that rule even an ideological/conceptual initiative such as ak28.

As I see the whole, ak28 has created an initiative that in its form is very similar to what we know as "art gallery", but when it comes to the way we structure ourselves as a gallery, we are very unique. ak28 is, for starters, an "artist-driven" enterprise, meaning that the majority of us have through the years studied, practiced or mediated art. This insider experience has helped to create a unique network with other artists, in a way that no one gallerist (whom are usually "outsiders") could have managed. That by itself has given us a sense of legitimacy, and a broader possibility to mediate

the art/artists we presented since they are part of our social metiér (meaning we are usually friends with them...). ak28 has also a high experimental "profile", much because we are not willing to compromise our program in order to collect any form of economical support. That means that every single exhibition was brought up by a strong belief from ak28-members that the artists in question are relevant to the gallery and to the art scene in general. It has helped to give us an aura of "credibility" towards the art critics, general media, other cultural producers and the ordinary art visitors. ak28 is also an amalgam of different professional experiences, all of them greatly contribute to create a very sophisticated art gallery "know-how", stretching itself to: administration, logistics, carpentry, legal issues, copyright (and copyleft), economy and accountancy, text production, languages, IT-knowledge, post production, graphic production, displaying techniques, art theory and criticality, architecture, governmental cultural policies, audio and video techniques, marketing and PR. And probably many more! Only the professional experience of 13 highly educated cultural producers working together could be in my opinion valued in a seven-digits money sum! Its very important to point out that there are MAJOR INSTITUTIONS IN SWEDEN WORKING WITH HALF OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES THAT AK28 HAS TO OFFER. AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL: ak28 has through the years developed itself into a kind of "entity" that could easily survive beyond its members. This alone is a strong argument to create a commercial brand around the idea.

Well, enough with the self-infatuation, I think it's essential to this project and to the future of ak28 that we collect those elements of ak28 and create an attractive and informative "package" that can be easily understandable for anyone interested. The only way I see that it can be done right now is by looking at the past and present of ak28 through its documentation and creating a proposal based in simple an effective marketing/advertising techniques.

It's kind of simpler than we think, pretty much as selling toothpaste actually.

HENRIK

ak28 has during four years been in what I would call an internal phase. Our program is first and foremost given by our own interest at a particular time, we have deliberately chosen to not formulate principles or any agenda for the content of our practice.

We have chosen a model of financing which is built on independence. We have mostly used our own private resources and chosen zero-budget solutions rather than becoming dependent on any private or public funding.

We have chosen to, as far as possible, to not formalise our organisation: tasks and responsibilities are floating and methods of collaboration within and outside our organisation has grown spontaneously and by necessity when faced with our self-imposed tasks. It requires a certain effort to build an organisation with few bureaucratic and/or hierarchical tools and I would say that this kind of work has been an important investment in our organisation which strongly affects its current value.

Our marketing strategy has mostly been to extend our private networks. We have rarely marketed ourselves in what is generally recognised as public arenas, we have rather tried to broaden our audience by generating circles on the water among friends, colleagues etc.

I am convinced that we by this working-methods have generated some specific values within our organisation. The way I see

things this might have been the purpose in itself with our collective work this far. We have created a both intuitive and effective way of collaboration that now should be tested in other contexts. This means that ak28 as a gallery in Stockholm is for sale, we don't need that space any more, but more important: ak28 is in transition from one phase to another. We are standing on the doorstep to a second, external phase. And we don't know yet what we are going to do, where our collective competence will be most useful and needed or what we will find interesting and challenging in the future.

As a team we could easily manage a smaller public art-institution or similar. We have necessary skills or know how to find additional competent but my proposal is that we quit our own gallery practice and instead focus on consulting activities. Possible places in need of our services might be museums or other public art institutions, private galleries but also artistic or curatorial production processes as stand-alone projects. We might be hired when there are problems with a too narrow hierarchical or economic thinking, where a good bureaucracy or other organisation-principle for some reason counteracts itself. We could make the decisions that are difficult for the proper management. We would be a SWAT-team with multifunctional practical skills that also would offer our competent and honest opinions on production processes and results. And we would guarantee a decision-process without any transparency. Matching is of course crucial. Is there a third party that would be able to host such consulting services? Or are we able to manage this external phase ourselves?

JOHANNA

I strongly believe that the non-commercial gallery is an important platform for the art scene. Not because there is a contradiction between interesting and commercial art, but it's important that the art scene includes as many forms of organisation as possible. I want to sell the idea of the non-commercial gallery as a platform for cultural exchange to something that is as far as possible from a commercial scene, but still has money to develop a good gallery. A university could use it as a postgraduate education for artists, curators, or other students. People that are interested in the specific knowledge you get from running an institution working with artistic practise. The students should apply for the job after their Master degree and they would get a contract for two years with a decent salary. Every year, two new students come in and are educated by those who had been there before. The gallery should be supported by the university but be totally free from it. There should be a board supporting the gallery with people from outside the university. The gallery should not exhibit students, but use the artists coming for an exhibition to teach the students and the students should get the opportunity to work as assistants, guides or guards at the gallery.

We will then get a non-commercial gallery that will stay dynamic and change all the time but still have a secure and steady financed situation, with no political or commercial interests. It will be a place where different practise at the university and other parts of society can meet. The gallery can have art, craft, parties, lectures, films, performances and music etc.

The cost of this could be approximately (in Sweden) 242 000 SEK per year.

MAGNUS L

The cultural committee distributed recently the regional means for next years culture-budget. Tour-development and internation-

al perspectives on our city is the prioritized areas within the budget.— We want to consolidate our cities position in a global marketplace. Tour-development is therefore a central question for the cultural committee and outermost a democracy question. It's a fundamental to offer our residents and visitors access to a high quality range of culture. Likewise, we are using the public funds to increase an international perspective on our city says the Chairman of the Culture Committee in a comment of the board's distribution of the budget.

Noticeable in the budget is that all funding for the so-called The Open Scene (t.op.s) will be cut off. The Chairman continues.—Earlier years it has been problems with measuring how well the The Open Scene pursued the Culture Committee's priority questions. In the long run, it will become impossible for us to assert that we follow the regulation letters from the Government. Within the budget we have therefore proposed that an independent communication agency should be able to manage the given commission and priority questions. But in order to keep a high-quality range of culture within the city the communication agency must carry out independent exhibition.

An independent exhibition program has since years ago a very high status in the Government Commissions, which all municipalities follow. Culture workers have earlier simply not succeed to work towards that commission which is a waste of tax money. We hope that an independent communication agency better can put a focus on today's burning questions" says the Chairman of the Culture Committee.

The above text is not real in that sense that it's based on quoted statements. But I think a question is how far away is a scenario like that. Where on one hand the culture administration employs a communication agency to highlight and put focus on the culture administration's prioritized questions. And on the other hand the culture administration financing exhibitions programs that focusing on the culture administration's prioritized questions and objectives.

And another question is. Would it, with the Culture Administration as a Client, actually be a higher degree of independence and more freedom in some sense then with the subsidy system of today? The last question is something like this: If the non-Commercial Art space were for sale how much would you care about it?

MAGNUS M

The sale of a NON-COMMERCIAL gallery is a badly formulated statement, an contradiction in itself, embedded in lots of lose sprouts. That's where in my opinion art begins to vibrate. The project raises a lot of unanswered questions that inerests me: What does it mean? Is it an conceptual artproject or is it a real sale? Is it possible to sell a non-commercial organisation? How do you estimate the value of ak28? How do you valuate the goodwill we've mostly been payed in (the non commercial currency?)? Is it selling goodwill or asking for funding? or maybe it's asking for new staff willing to continuesly run the gallery for free? Do the present members want to quit? Is it just selling the label/brand? Is it perhaps a way to start up a franchise buisness in Netherlands or some other country? Is the ak28 gallery after so many years of struggling leaving it all in to get filthy rich? Are we just playing along with the present swedish right-wing politics, to see if that incitement can offer a realitybased platform for our kind of organisation at all? what would ak28 then transform into? Are we selling the right of our artistic freedom?

Never before has ak28 been in the state of committing such an selfish all-in act, leav-

ing it all to the audience/market. The answer is in the eye of the beholder/the one with the biggest wallet and the best answer.

MATEUSZ

"Come on now, and have a look at the wall. There, goes all round the estate. Keep them out. And keep us in. It is yours, Johnny, this estate. I've seen other fellows sell off, bits of theirs. A little here, a little there. That's the rot, Johnny, selling little bits, chipping away at the edges. In the end, they have nothing. Never sell. Never, ever sell. Do anything to keep it whole. Do you understand me? Yourself whole. Land is the lifeblood of this family."

Lord Greystoke summarizes the issue in a message to his heir: the estate is that which is encased between walls, measurable and appraisable. Its proprietor can sell. When discussing the pending sale of ak28, it is paramount to be clear on this definition to avoid a language problem, a confusion between "the sale" and "financing".

ak28 occupies a unique position, being not only an artist driven non-commercial art space, but also "the work" of the artists who run it. As such, ak28 is an ongoing art project. And an artwork, no matter how abstruse or disembodied, can be exhibited and legally sold. One of the instances where ak28 has been exhibited with a price tag is the Spring Salon at Liljevalchs Konsthall of Contemporary Art in Stockholm. This occasion was an opportunity to examine practical and conceptual frameworks as to what in fact can/should be exhibited to represent ak28, not in the least from a conservators point of view.

It turns out that in principle, selling ak28 is simple. The work is that which is encased by the walls. Since the ak28 space is rented, the walls themselves are not included. ak28 is a joint space, half of which is used as a gallery, the other half as a shared studio. The sale does include:

1. All the items currently present in the space. This includes but is not limited to office accessories, tools, leftover materials, personal belongings, half finished as well as completed artworks, computers and peripherals, data on hard disks and other media, lamps, electrical cables, an alarm system, furniture and much more.
2. Layers of paint, filler, and art space dust. These layers range between a few microns to several millimeters in thickness, and require consultation of professional services specializing in relocation end restoration of murals.
3. Wood and linoleum floors, with original marks from artists, curators, journalists, tv teams, art theorists, collectors and visitors.
4. The actual volume of the space, a measurable and reconstructable entity.
5. Structural layouts of the space, both real and imaginary, designed by professional architects.
6. Logotypes, texts, and the name/title "ak28".

The sale does not include the artists personal networks, competences and similar soft assets. While it is encouraged that artists may be hired as consultants at individual rates, artists can not be sold.

A target price is pending in collaboration with several prominent consultants from the art market and finance sector. The buyer is responsible for all logistical and conservational issues, in consultation with the ak28 artists.