

Logo as art-fact

CIAN O'NEILL gives a short guide to the logo in modern art.

Whilst Dali and Picasso made celebrity supportive of their work, and Duchamps' urinal was turned to artifact by application of his signature ('branding' or adding a logo through his name); modern art has made panplatiniate efforts to propitiate commodity with art and art with commodity.

One could of course suggest that the 'school' system of artist studios, such as the Rembrandt and Raphael schools/studios was itself about creating a brand of artistic commodity, a normative line art. Yet it is only in the last century that the relationship between commodity and art knits. The patenting of Yves Klein International Blue and unapologetic logo heavy commercialism of Warhol may be seen as developments upon a theme.

Warhol reputed that he chose the Campbell's soup cans as subject matter because he ate the soup in its various forms every lunchtime for twenty years. His avowed seriousness existed purely in relation to artifice, the role of art as practice subjugated to the level of means. The presumptive end was fame, money and associated product. In this sense he is the logical predecessor to Jeff Koons, who occupies the role of current grande guignol of trash in New York City, hotforming a shiny Pieta of Michael Jackson and Bubbles, or erecting twenty foot bunny rabbits of porno topiary around Midtown.



The school idea in fact resurfaces with Koons, who enlists the aid of assistants (often art students of old fashioned ability) to realize his pop-on-laudatum visions. His prior career as a stockbroker and previous wife, La Cicciolina (once Italian Porn queen, later Member of the Italian Parliament) marks him as the perfect example of current state in art. Art as commodity has become the utility of commerce. Less frieze, more fisting.

Sponsoring of portrait competitions and artistic careers through aggregative collecting has become another means—see the BP Portraiture competition, and the sufflation of Britart by Saatchi. Combined with the current trend of artist branding, through the artist/celebrity cult of Tracey Emin and the Chapman brothers, the picture is that of a logo complex, i.e. involving the logo of artist 'personality', having usurped the old fashioned 'grand art'. That being, art as pictorially non-equivalent to the logo, in possessing worth.

The upcoming exhibition of Japanese art in the Barbican evinces this neatly. One of the pieces, of Stonehenge arranged McDonald signs, is in fact sponsored by the company, and the publication control in same retained by the company. The artist, it seems, is now subject of the logo; and the logo the 'true' art. ♦

Creative kids get voice

Community Arts Forum recently held a conference on art for young people. **MOYRA DONALDSON** was there

On the 16th February 2001, Belfast Community Circus School was the venue for a major Youth Arts Conference. Organised by the Community Arts Forum, the conference brought together arts organisations, statutory agencies, funders, provision organisations and youth clubs. A total of ninety delegates attended on the day.

The conference's purpose was to enable discussion around the current lack of arts provision for children and young people, and also to make recommendations for strategies to redress the balance. Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of the West Yorkshire Playhouse and Caro-

line Berry, Programme Co-ordinator of Alternative Entertainment, Dublin, addressed the morning session. Jude Kelly spoke of artistic practice which included imagining a different future, and Caroline Berry gave examples of practice in youth arts projects.

This was followed by a Q and A session from which two main points emerged. Firstly, that community arts organisations face huge challenges in breaking down barriers to the arts, and secondly that implementation of the recommendations made in the All Our Futures document was happening at a very slow pace.

The morning session concluded with an op-