

“Not Just a Few Are Called, But Everyone”¹

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Abstract

This paper focuses upon the transformation of artist identities and roles in late modernity. In particular we have studied how young Norwegian artists identify with the term “artist” in general and the charismatic myth of the artist in particular, after the transition from art students to professional artists. – The study uncovers a clear discrepancy between the students’ more or less charismatic vision of the artistic career *during* their studies and the young artists more trivial experiences *after* having started to work professionally. Nevertheless, the ambivalence between practical trivialities and elevated visions also seem to subsist during the young artists’ professional careers. – The study shows that the young artists stress the importance of initiative and hard work in order to succeed as artists. This seems to correspond badly with the charismatic myth. But the interviews also may be interpreted in line with Max Weber’s classic analysis of the relationship between Calvinism and capitalism: From this perspective hard work and dedication to the artistic profession appears as a *sign* that one is among those few who are “chosen” for success. – The study also indicates that the young artists avoid doing explicit and systematic strategic efforts to create useful networks in order to make success. This may reflect a more general tendency to favour a “gift economy” rather than a “market economy” in the arts field. One tends to “hide” the directly commercial character of economic transactions. – Thus a tendency of “denial of the economy” has for long characterised the art field. The de-institutionalisation process of the last decade has, however, contributed to blur the boundaries between art and commerce. The young artists in our study are still very much aware of the boundaries, even if they may cross and challenge them from time to time. But if they are going to do “commercial projects” they insist that such project should at least keep up with a high level of quality. – Finally, it is striking that none of the young artists we interviewed had alternative career plans. They could not imagine themselves in any other occupation. To have alternative career plans would imply to admit that one is not fully committed to the artistic career. – All in all the study draws a picture of young artists who are navigating in open waters between the classic charismatic myth and the pragmatic/strategic purposes of a mobile contemporary art field.

Keywords

Artist occupation, charismatic myth, professional strategies, art education, artist identity.

Introduction

The charismatic myth of the artist is crucial to the perception of artists as an occupational category. Artists are usually seen as persons with extraordinary talents possessing the ability to create unique and sublime works of art. The charismatic myth demands that artistic work should be carried out in a disinterested manner with a pure aesthetic vision as

the only guiding star (Kris/Kurz 1979 [1934], Menger 1989, Moulin 1992, Bourdieu 1993, Abbing 2002). Over the last decades there have been substantial changes in the field of artistic production – in Norway and elsewhere. These changes challenge the charismatic myth of the artist. Especially, there has been an increasing interaction between the institutional and independent parts of the field of artistic production and the culture industry. This process, often called “dedifferentiation” or “deinstitutionalisation”, seems to mess up the image of a pure and disinterested art world (Bjørkås 1998, Ellmeier 2003).

In this paper we argue that even if the contexts for artistic work has changed a lot over the last decades, the charismatic myth of the artist still remains a core idea and an important reference-point in the construction of professional identities of young Norwegian artists. When they reflect upon their identities as artists they do, however, exhibit a considerable ambivalence in relation to this myth. They both refuse and rely on the ideas that are embodied in the myth. At an analytical level, we argue that it is preferable to treat the charismatic myth of the artist as a dynamic meaning structure, interpreted in relation to specific social and cultural contexts and potentially under continuous reconstruction. The content and interpretation of the myth is not necessarily stable over time or identical in different contexts. Therefore, the charismatic myth of the artist should not be treated as an a-historical or universal archetype, as seems to be the case in several analyses.²

The Charismatic Myth of the Artist

To be an artist is according to the charismatic myth a question of having an inborn talent or a gift of grace. Hence, being an artist is not an acquired status; it is a status you are predestined for. You do not become an artist as a result of choice or personal will – it is a calling. In the same way, the process of creating works of art is perceived as a fulfilment of divine inspiration or an inner voice. Works of art are unique objects that demonstrate the authenticity and originality of the artist. In addition, the charismatic myth presupposes that the artist is a socially marginal person (e.g. a bohemian). Social isolation is both a prerequisite for and an evidence of the originality of the artist. Since artistic skills primarily are seen as independent of socialisation and training, art education has had a paradoxical position in the field of artistic production. On the one hand, the artistic talent or the creative genius, according to the charismatic myth, may be damaged by the standardised programs for learning that is characteristic of the educational system. On the other hand, art schools are in fact important arenas for socialisation to the artist role. It is also obvious that certain art schools carry great prestige in the field of artistic production (Mangset 2004).

According to the charismatic myth, artistic work must be carried out in a disinterested manner. This attitude is apparent in the tautology “art for art’s sake” that has been a central motto in the field of art as long as it has been relatively autonomous. No other interests than a pure aesthetic vision should govern the creation of a work of art. Therefore a disavowal of the economy traditionally has been characteristic for the field of artistic production (Bourdieu 1993, Abbing 2002). Bourdieu even claims that displaying commercial interests may result in artistic devaluation. Thus, to prove the genuine character of the artistic work the artists must deny monetary ends.

According to Bourdieu (1993), it is important to see the charismatic myth of the artist as an ideology or a doxa. The specific image of the artist that this myth produces is one of the underlying presuppositions which are constitutive to the field of artistic production. This also means that the strength of this myth depends on whether the agents of the field believe in the myth or not. According to Pierre-Michel Menger (1989), on the other

hand, the charismatic myth helps to make the risks and insecurity of artistic life bearable for artists. He considers the myth more or less as a functional institution. Thus the charismatic myth contributes to maintain the artists' belief in a kind of "magic and supernatural power that can control insecurity" (Menger 1989:122).

"Every Human Being is an Artist"?³

We know that the artistic population in Norway has grown considerably during the last decades, although available statistics about this matter are slightly inconsistent and insufficient. The number of members of the artist unions, however, grew considerably during the 1980s and 90s (Elstad and Røsvik Pedersen 1996); the number of newly-established firms registered in the category "cultural service" with "self-employed artists" as the dominant subcategory, has increased more than in the any other trade recently (Bolkesjø 2003); and the number of students who have completed an art education (either at an art school in Norway or abroad) has grown considerably during the last decades (Mangset 2004).

To talk about "the number of artists" is, however, problematic in several ways. On the one hand, it is almost impossible to identify formal criteria to distinguish between artists and non-artists. As the charismatic myth of the artist indicates the field of artistic production stresses individual characteristics that it is hard to convert into operative measures. To be employed as an artist, for example as an actor at a theatre, is no guarantee for being recognised as an artist. It is only through the quality of the artistic work that a person may be merited as an artist. On the other hand, as the boundaries between art and other forms of culture is getting blurred, due to the dedifferentiation of culture (Bjørkås 1998, Lash 1990) and the broader process of "aestheticisation of everyday life" (Featherstone 1991, McRobbie 1999), the relevance and adequacy of talking of artists as a specific occupational group at all can be questioned. If artists have important characteristics in common with designers, stylists, advertisers, DJs and so on, why not include them in an overall category of "cultural workers" or "cultural entrepreneurs" (Ellmeier 2003)? In the end, the rise and growth of creative industries as the ultimate stadium of the post-fordist production may be interpreted as the realisation of Joseph Beuys' vision of every human being fulfilling its creative potential.

In this paper, we maintain that artists *can* be considered as a specific occupational category, although we are totally aware of the problem of defining that category. Rather than continuing the discussion on whether/how to define artists we want to focus on how young Norwegian artists identify with the term "artist" in general and the charismatic myth of the artist in particular.

Empirical Basis

The analysis in this paper is mainly based on qualitative interviews with young Norwegian artists. The artists have been interviewed in two phases. In the first phase 33 young students from the National Academy of Music, the National Academy of Dramatic Art and The National Academy of Fine Art were interviewed. Some of them also had their art education from abroad. These interviews were performed in 1998 and 1999 (Mangset 2002, 2004). In the second phase 12 of these students were interviewed a second time after having finished their education and trying to establish a career as professional artists. These interviews were carried out in 2002-2004. Both of the samples had an equal share of actors, musicians and visual artists, and of men and women. The artists interviewed in the second phase represent different work conditions;

some of them are engaged for shorter or longer periods at art institutions as theatres and orchestras, some of them are self-employed with their own artistic work, some of them work as teachers in different kinds of combination with their own artistic work, while some have engagements in culture industry (advertising, film industry and music industry).

Although an interview guide with a list of preformulated questions has been used in the interviews, they have not been very structured. Even though the interviews sometimes have resembled “normal” conversation, the interview is of course a special situation for the informant. The focus is exclusively directed to his or her reflections on being an artist. Hence, the interviews must be interpreted as a part of an ongoing process of constructing the artists’ identity. When we quote from the interviews in the following text we have of course translated the conversation to English. Although we have been trying to translate as precisely as possible, some of the meaning inevitably get lost or changed by the translation.⁴

In the next sections we will focus on three main topics, in order to analyse how young artists construct their identities and to what extent they identify with the charismatic myth of the artist:

- 1) The transition from art students to professional artists,
- 2) the strategies chosen to establish a professional career as artists, and
- 3) motivational factors related to their artistic work.

The Transition from Art Students to Professional Artists

In his study “Many are called, but few are chosen”, Mangset (2004) found that to become a professional artist is for many art students a lifelong dream coming true. Already in early childhood many art students know that they want to be actors, musicians or visual artists. Thus, completing an art education is the final stop in a long preparatory travel towards a professional career as artists. How do young artists experience the situation as their dream is getting real? And how do the educational programs prepare them for the life as professional artists?

There Is More to Life than Art, even for Artists

Although the structure and content of the educational programs at the National Academy of Music, the National Academy of Dramatic Art and The National Academy of Fine Art are very different (Mangset 2004) and the arenas for professional artistic work within the different art forms vary a lot, there are striking similarities in the experiences that the young artists report related to the transition from the status as art students to professional artists. Especially, it seems to be surprising to many informants that we interviewed in the second phase that the life as an artist is not solely focused on getting into the spirit of the creative artistic process. To work as an artist also have trivial aspects.

The young artists experience a lack competence confronted with the non-artistic aspects of the work as artists. Mainly, the young artists are fully satisfied with the artistic parts of their education, but most of them, especially those who are self-employed, do not feel themselves prepared for the practical and administrative tasks they have to handle. When they completed their education and started to work they knew little about how to do marketing, write applications, keep accounts, and so on. Earlier research by Borgen (2002) also concludes that art schools in Norway to a great extent neglect the need for

administrative competence. The educational programs are (more or less) exclusively focused on individual identity construction related to artistic work. The focus on the isolated individual artist fall short of the networking competence that is required to establish a professional career as an artist.

As Borgen's findings indicate, the discrepancy between the educational programs and the young artists' experiences of starting a professional career is not solely a question of what kind of practical competence they have acquired. It is also a question of attitudes and work ethics, i.e. the artist roles. Many informants tell that as students they had an illusion of the life as an artist as totally enchanted. As students they cultivated the charismatic artist role. As they enter the professional arenas for artistic work they find themselves a bit surprised by the routine manner and standardised procedures that characterise some parts of the field of artistic production (especially institutions like theatres and orchestras). It is also surprising to meet colleagues that do not focus on being artists day and night, but distinguish strictly between work and leisure time. While some of them find this a bit disappointing, others, like the male actor below, describe it as a relief:

When you go to the theatre school everybody is busy trying to really live it, and art is like a life-style, and if you want to be good, it is almost like you should have a tragic history, become an alcoholic or something to be a good actor. You live the myth in a way. And then it is very nice to get a job and realise that it is only a job. [...] If we worked with a serious play at the theatre school then we were serious all day long, but here [at the theatre] actors playing tragic Shakespeare may tell a joke two minutes before they leave the canteen. [...] You think it's more artist-like outside school, and then you get out and it isn't. They're talking about football in the lunch!

Although many young artists find the procedures and attitudes at some of the working arenas in contrast with their charismatic expectations, it is not an unambiguous experience. In spite of all, most of them do not stop believing in the magical sides of life as artists. It is rather a question of adjusting the expectations. The life as professional artists has both trivial and magical sides. It is not realistic to expect the magic to be present all the time. The elevation they sometimes feel during their work as artists is something that calls for respect. It is something they should be happy to experience once in a while. One female actor told us how she now considers the magical aspects of her work as religious:

There are moments at the theatre when it's like magic. Where you... Things happen that can't be explained by how I paused exactly at that point in the text and so on. [...] Sometimes there is a magic that can't be explained by our techniques. And it is, maybe we are some strange human beings that we, no... It is extremely difficult to talk about these things, because we don't have words for it. It is a kind of religion. You can almost speak of religiousness. My relation to what we are talking about now is quite religious. If you manage to open up to this magic, it's just like, oh damn, a painter or, who only tries to lay his intellect aside and just follows the intuition, something spiritual. But it takes a lot of courage to open up and trust it and to use it.

This way of describing the feeling of magic resembles the emphasis laid on divine inspiration by the charismatic myth. As the informant makes a point of, the magical aspect of artistic work cannot be planned or controlled. So, although the young artists have to reinterpret their ideas of artistic work as they enter different arenas for professional artistic work, they do not totally leave their charismatic expectations. There

is no necessary opposition between the trivial and the magical sides of the life as an artist.

Strategies for Establishing an Artistic Career

The field of artistic production is characterised by a surplus of recruits (Becker 1982, Menger 1989). There are far too many recruits aspiring for an artistic career than can be absorbed into the significant positions of the field. How do the young artists deal with that? And what kind of strategies do they use to establish a professional career?

There's Only One Way to Success – Hard Work

When asked of what they consider the most important condition for artistic success, most of the young artists stress the importance of initiative and hard work. This corresponds, however, badly with the charismatic myth. As Bourdieu (1993:130) maintains:

Nothing could be further, for example, from the charismatic vision of the writer's "mission" than the image proposed by the successful writer previously cited: "Writing is a job like any other. Talent and imagination are not enough. Above all, discipline is required. It's better to force oneself to write two pages a day than ten pages once a week. There is one essential condition for this: one has to be in shape, just as a sportsman has to be in shape to run a hundred metres or to play a football match."

Most informants, in the second phase, find it problematic to consider artistic success as a question of being chosen or dependent upon an inborn talent. The belief in the gift of grace seems anachronistic and difficult to defend in a modern world. Many young artists therefore agree with Joseph Beuys' democratic view that the creative potential is universal. For example, one of the musicians we interviewed put it this way:

My view of the human being is that everyone can become an artist, but ... You got to have initiative and be able to do something with your life. That's the most important thing. You cannot live a ... you have to do something with your life, at least once in a while, to get things done. That doesn't mean you have to live a straight life. But you have to take initiative to be able to produce something.

In this way, the young artists in contrast to the charismatic myth of the artist seem to consider being an artist as an acquired status. At the same time as the young artists are focused on the importance of hard work, they are, however, looking for signs that confirm that they are among those who will succeed. One of the visual artists who were interviewed in the first phase of the project (Mangset 2004) admit that most of the students at the Academy of Fine Arts will not be professional artists few years after they have finished their study. However, she takes comfort in the following observation:

I know maybe about [the] four-five-six last years where I have had a lot of contact with people who have studied here, and I nevertheless see that it is the people who have all the time had the highest ambitions, who are staying [in the artistic profession], and I find a huge comfort in that, to know that it is the people who wants it most, that in spite of all [succeed] – that it is after all possible.

In the long run it is those who are most dedicated that succeed, according to this informant. Thus the emphasis laid on ambitions, initiative and hard work as the way to artistic success can be interpreted as parallel to the Calvinists way of dealing with the fact that they according to their theology had no chance of knowing whether they were among the chosen ones or among those who were damned to perdition. According to the classical analysis Weber made of the protestant ethic as one of the major engines behind the development of the capitalist logic, the fact that the Calvinists had no possibility of knowing their own destiny they fully dedicated themselves to their work clinging to a hope that success on the working arena could be a sign of being one of God's chosen ones (Weber 1991 [1904-1905]). The young artists also find themselves in a situation where it is difficult, maybe impossible, to know whether their ambitions to be professional artists will be fulfilled or not. Therefore, it is tempting to interpret their emphasis on hard work as a way of dealing with the uncertainty that the situation with a surplus of recruits produces or as a way of looking for signs of being one of those who are chosen (i.e. signs of charisma).

To Be at the Right Place at the Right Moment

The young artists find themselves in a labour market that is more or less marked by keen competition to survive as artists.⁵ Although the young artists stress the importance of hard work to succeed as professional artists, they also have to act strategically in order to become visible among potential employers. What do the young artists do to make themselves attractive to such people? What are their strategies in their struggle for fruitful contacts?

It is striking that no young artists tell about systematic efforts to establish useful networks. Although they acknowledge the need of contacts, and many of them already have established invaluable networks, they find it best to keep within narrow limits in their efforts to get visible for potential employers or financial sources. Rather, the strategy seems to be to avoid being eager. One visual artist told us how he got a flying start on his career as an artist:

So I got into contact with an art dealer in New York, actually, and he invited me to an exhibition. And it was totally accidental. I was not actively searching for an art dealer over there. It was just a coincidence that we bumped into each other. [I: What kind of coincidence was it?] No, I was in a gallery. I was on a trip to New York to look at art. And then the art dealer came up to me and we started talking and he was excited about me coming from Scandinavia. And then he asked me if I was an artist, and I said yes, and then he said: "Why don't you bring your works? I'm very curious about Scandinavian art." So I did, and then it was all done. But I think he got interested because I wasn't too offensive. In one way it is a simple mechanism. It is very much based on human relations and quite simple things. It is, if you just stay cool and laidback, I think that it is an advantage in the art world.

This story can be interpreted as a classical example of how the unique talent within the field of artistic production should be discovered by persons who are considered to possess significant artistic competence. The talents should not be forced to advertise themselves. It may even produce the reverse of the desired effect getting too eager marketing their own talent. According to Abbing (2002) this mechanism can be interpreted as a function of the art world being permeated of a "gift economy" rather than a "market economy". Even though economic transactions are as common in the field of artistic production as elsewhere, these transactions should not be carried out in the same manner as in other markets. When an art dealer is dealing with the artist he must

be given the chance of appearing as generous. The gift economy and the norm that talents should be discovered underpin the charismatic myth of the artist. True art is nothing in the need of being marketed – it is something that just appears.

Motivational Factors

Mangset (2004) found that art students differ considerably from other student categories (future teachers, nurses, librarians, journalists etc.) when it comes to their motivation and dedication for their studies. The art students reported in the quantitative part of Mangset's study that they were more certain of the choice of education to be the right one and more willing to work/study long hours than other student categories. But what is it that the young recruits of artists find so motivating about the occupation? In this section we will throw light on some of the motivational factors that were mentioned in the second phase interviews.

“All ‘bout the Money?”⁶

The de-institutionalising of the art world and the blurring of boundaries between art and commerce, inevitably leads to the question if the importance of the disinterested and pure motivation the charismatic myth of the artist requires has weakened. What is the status of the traditional norm of the denial of economic interests among young artists today?

The denial of the economy seems to be a norm the informants are very conscious of when they reflect upon issues like what kind of jobs they can do and what kind of objectives they relate to those jobs. And all of the informants have definite ideas of the borders between the purer and more commercial parts of the artistic field. While for some of them it is a pragmatic question to take part in contexts that they consider to be commercial in nature (i.e. it will reduce their attractiveness in the non-commercial parts of the field) others have more fundamental objections confronted with such jobs. But there are also those who are stretching the limits of what they find acceptable to do. With the intention of earning extra money, one male actor told us that he is willing to take jobs that a lot of his colleagues find illegitimate.

I also want in a way to earn money! I want to be well off! But then I have made the wrong choice of occupation. [...] I am not against advertising, to put it that way. There are a lot of actors who are [against], to do advertising and so on, and it is much of a taboo in these circles. With the salary at the theatre it is almost... it is normal to... it is almost as if you should take extra jobs. Because the salary is so low. It's about 220.000 crowns⁷ a year. So if I have the possibility to earn some extra money, without getting totally prostituted... You have to be a bit careful of what you do within advertising, because you get associated with it [the advertisement]. [...] It is very embarrassing to be in an advertisement that is really bad. [...] But I feel a bit rotten inside when I take part in things that are not true to my ideals.

This informant is interesting because he articulates values that are not acceptable according to the charismatic myth of the artist. And he is totally aware of it. When he has chosen to do advertising he feels that he is touching on a taboo among actors. Nevertheless, he seems rather untroubled by the advertisements he has made. At the same time, he argues that there are limits to what he is willing to take part in. Although there are some products that he would not advertise (as an example he wittingly

mentions porn), the most important limit for him seems to be related to the quality of the production. He does not want to be too strongly connected to a certain product. What he is looking for when asked to play in an advertisement is the idea behind the sketch he will play, if it is good or funny. If the sketch is good in its own right, relatively independent of the product in question, he has no problems of taking part. As he says:

It is important that it is a good idea, and a funny idea. Because as long as it is funny and people are laughing, I think you can advertise anything and get away with it.

His integrity as an artist would only be affected if he joined productions that he considers to be of bad quality. This could be interpreted as a sign of the traditional limits not being totally absent, but rather in movement as the young artists are forming their careers.

Alternative Career Plans

None of the young artists we have interviewed have concrete alternative career plan to switch to if they for one or another reason should have to quit their artistic career. This indicates a strong dedication to this career. Also those of the informants who have the most pragmatic attitude to their work as artists, who refuse the idea of the artist being anything special or extraordinary compared to “normal” jobs, stresses that they have no alternative career plan. One male actor tells us that he believes that it is totally necessary not to have any alternative plan because this could steal his attention and destroy his chances of becoming a good actor:

I think that as an actor you shouldn't have such a plan on the side. [...] Then you won't be fully focused – 100% in focus – and I think that is necessary. [...] You have to go in for it; if you want to be good, you have to go for it.

So what reason could stop the artistic career of the young artist against his (her) will? One visual artist told us that the only reason he could imagine was that he became seriously disabled in one way or the other.

Yes, if I got totally disabled for example or mentally disabled. I don't know. But I can't imagine other reasons. But if I died of course...

In the same way as the above mentioned actor, the visual artist claims that the strength of his choice of being an artist is one of his advantages in succeeding with his career:

It can be hard sometimes [the feeling of having no choice], but it is also my advantage. Because when all the others don't have any more left to give, then I still do not feel I have a choice, and then I just have to continue my work.

The young artists' dedication to their choice of career is in this way convincing. Knowing that it is not easy for all of the recruits to succeed as artists it becomes urgent to ask what it is that they find so attractive about this occupation. Why are they willing to go so emphatically in for it? One female actor answers as follows:

There is no other occupation I could imagine. And I feel a bit tied up of my own choice. It is just as if... it is a bit like heroine, if you see what I mean. I feel addicted. [...] Because I think it is so fantastic. It is in a way a kindergarten, we are allowed... it is totally fantastic to be allowed to do this. And I have no idea of what could fill me from top to toe in the same way as this does.

To a great extent, the intense and enchanted existential feeling when they are practising their occupation seems in this way to make up for the uncertainty related to being young artists with insecure future prospects. This strong dedication (no choice, no alternative) certainly also can be interpreted as a reflection of the charismatic myth.

Concluding Remarks

The analysis in this paper has pointed to a striking ambivalence related to the charismatic myth of the artist in young Norwegian artists' construction of their professional identity. Here, we will only sum up the main interpretations that we have made throughout this paper. We will, however, develop our conclusions further in the time to follow.

Firstly, the transition from art student to professional artist seems for many young artists to involve a reinterpretation of what it is like to work as an artist. On the one hand, many informants are surprised when confronted with the trivial sides of life as artists. On the other, this reinterpretation seems to enhance the respect for the magical sides of artistic work rather than eliminate their preoccupation with this aspect.

Secondly, the young artists seem to refuse the idea of an inborn talent as a precondition of becoming an artist. They rather underline the importance of ambitions, initiative and hard work. At the same time, it seems as if the young artists are looking for signs of success or being chosen. Hard work and dedication become a sign of charismatic grace, more or less in line with the weberian interpretation. This doubtlessness may be interpreted as a result two contextual factors. On the one hand, acquired statuses appear more legitimate in a modern (and democratic) world. On the other, the surplus of recruits on the field produces considerable uncertainty related to their future prospects.

Thirdly, the young artists are reinterpreting the limits of legitimate behaviour on the field of artistic production in light of the charismatic demand of a pure and disinterested motivation. The reinterpretation in the direction of a more open attitude to work in the more commercial parts of the field seems, however, to be a question of moving the limits, not eliminating them.

Fourthly, even if some of the young artists are stressing that they do not consider being an artist as very different from or more elevated than other occupations, our informants are very dedicated to their choice of career. Most of them can not imagine themselves in any other occupation.

Notes

¹ This is the heading of an interview with Joseph Beuys, published in the anthology *Art in Theory 1900 – 2000* (Harrison and Wood 2003). Beuys is considered to be the most prominent European member of the Fluxus movement which sought to merge art and life during the early 1960s.

² Kris and Kurz' (1979 [1934]) *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist* is one example of the conceptualisation of the charismatic myth of the artist as an archetype.

³ Joseph Beuys cited in Duve 1999:284. The full quotation in Duve's text is: "The most important element, for someone looking at my objects, is my fundamental thesis: every human being is an artist. This is even my one contribution to 'Art history.'"

⁴ In addition to these qualitative interviews we have also collected several kinds of empirical data that we have taken little direct advantage of in this specific paper: Spord Borgen and Mangset have collected and analysed comparative survey-data about art students and other

categories of students in Norway (Mangset 2002, 2004). Borgen has also conducted qualitative interviews with teachers and administrators in some art schools. And finally, Mangset has analysed available statistics about Norwegian art students in Norway and abroad (Mangset 2004).

⁵ There are considerable differences in working possibilities for those who have completed an art education between the different art forms in Norway. The labour market has been more favourable for performing artists (with dancers as an important exception) than for creative artists.

⁶ The title of a world-wide radio hit from the album "Seven Sisters" (1998) by the Swedish pop artist Meja.

⁷ About 30.000 US Dollars.

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