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## WORKING PAPER NEW SERIES

### CONTEMPORARY ART NETWORKS IN FRENCH CITIES

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Università di Torino

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# Contemporary art networks in French Cities

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# I Current Issues and Motivations

- Characteristics of the Contemporary Art Market
    - Uncertainty about quality
    - Legitimizing authorities: a crucial role
  - Sociological studies
    - Becker (1982), art worlds
    - Moulin (2003), art as a collective activity
    - Heinich (1998) three classes for the current art
  - An economic perspective: From art worlds to institutions and conventions
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# I Current Issues and Motivation

- Two opposite « cultural communs » for quality definition: classic, contemporary
  - Classic: rely on imitation.
    - Classic equipment and way of painting (perspective, tradition).
    - Assessment depends on the technical skill of the artist
  - Contemporary: innovation.
    - Diversified equipment (installation art, performance, land art, body art...).
    - Research, innovation, infringement serves as a reference for the assessment of this quality.

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# I Current Issues and Motivations

- Some issues remain unexplored :
  - Researches focus on the contemporary art market, few works deal with the classic art market
  - Even if different ways to assess the quality of an artwork are recognised, a unique definition of the artist remains (income and time)

Aim of the research: shedding light on different « cultural commons », *i.e.* analysing different artworlds by connecting quality conventions with labor market conventions.

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## II Methodology

- Survey for the French Ministry of Culture about the assessment and the diffusion of contemporary art
  - 4 areas (Nantes, Lyon, Montpellier et Rouen-Le Havre)
  - Database involving all categories of art stakeholders (market dealers, institutions, etc.)
- Two parts in the survey
  - Distributors : 132 stakeholders in the 4 cities
  - Artists : 72 people belonging to the 4 cities

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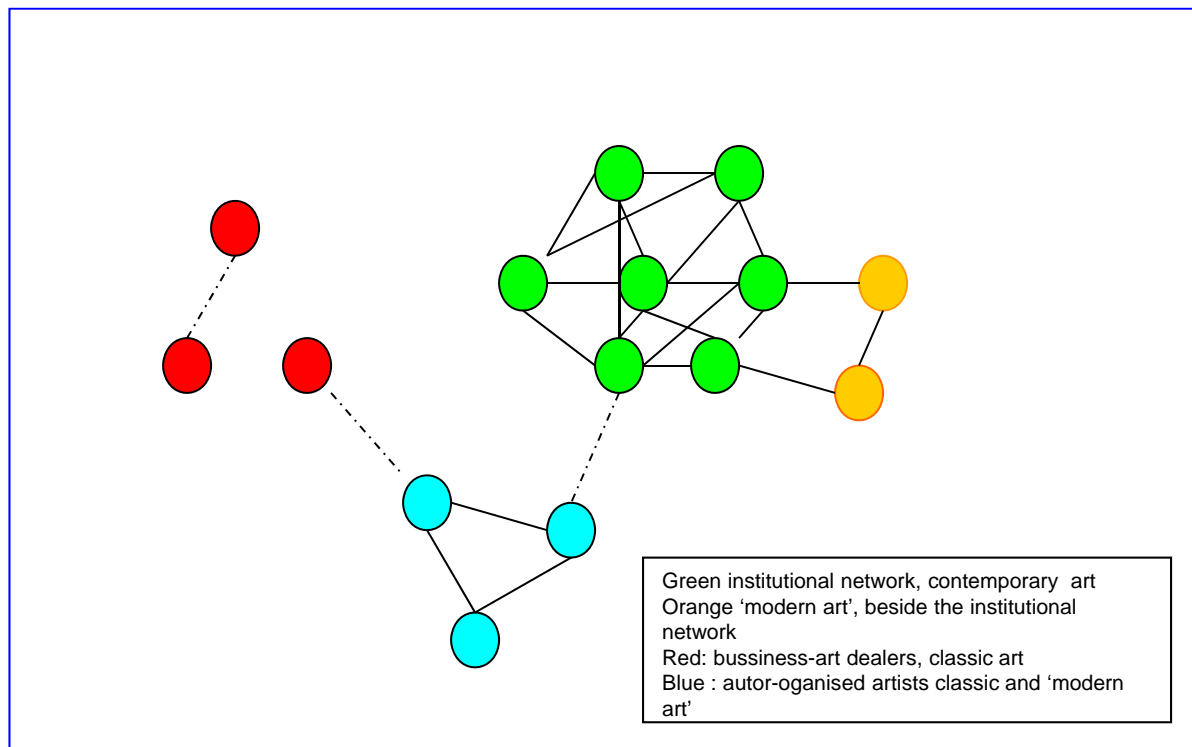
## II Methodology

- Distributors survey / networks of cooperation
  - All activities involving at least two stakeholders (exhibition, preview, booklet, catalogues, loans, purchases and sales).
  - Aims
    - Sort out networks of cooperation
    - Do different conventions of quality appear ?
    - Test the assumption of impermeable words
  - Tool : Software UCINET for the network analysis
- Artists survey / half-open questions

# III Results

## III1 Distributors survey

- Standard Art Network in the 4 areas





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## III Results

### III1 Distributors survey

- Two opposite worlds for the quality definition
  - Classical art world and contemporary art world are totally separated
- Two opposite organisations for the assessment :
  - ➡ Contemporary art: dense networks  
Innovation serves as a reference for the quality assessment
  - ➡ Classic art : competitive market of independant art dealers without any relationship with others actors  
Easy assessment : by measuring the difference that exists between with the compositon of the piece of art and the norm (tradition)
- What about the « in between art », *i.e.* 'modern art' ?

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# III Results

## III 2 Artists survey

- Two ways for managing artistic activities
  - The production of the artist does not depend on the demand : the supply is totally free «**Inspiration principle**»
  - The production of the artist depends on a specific requirement or the artist produces services: supply follows demand «**industrial principle**»

# III. Results

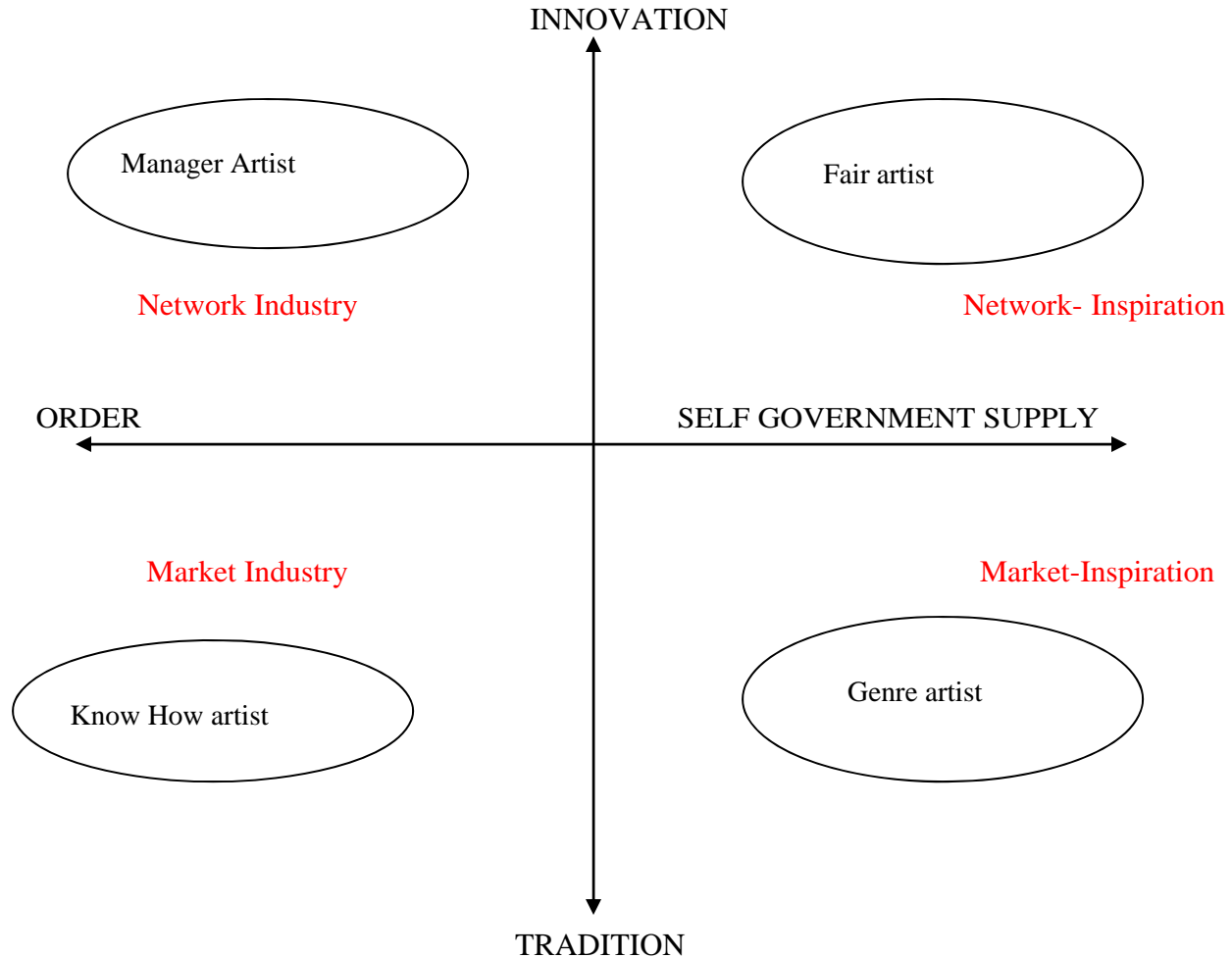
## III. 3 Towards four artist profiles

By crossing the assesment and the labor principles, we obtain four cases (common art worlds) : Market-Inspiration; Market-Industrial; Network/Inspiration et Network-Industrial.

	<b>Autonomous Supply</b>	<b>Order</b>
Tradition	Market/Inspiration	Market/'industrial'
Innovation	Network/Inspiration	Network/'industrial'

# III. Results

## III. 3 Towards four artist profiles



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## III. Results

### III. 3 Towards four artists profile

- According the results of the surveys artist's profiles (of these common art worlds) differ regarding :
  - Quality convention
  - Background
  - Diffusion and assesment (intermediary)
  - trial
  - Gain from trial
  - Incomes, other activities

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## III. Results

### III. 3 Towards four artist profiles

- « Genre artist »

- Quality convention : Classic, traditional art equipment (painting, sculpture)
- Background: self taught
- Diffusion and assesment : Independent supply, Merchand intermediary (no institutional intermediary).
- Trial: Retail outlet, gallery, trade fairs.
- Crucial trial : sale
- Incomes: only artistic incomes (sales of artworks, auxiliary merchandise). Prices mainly depend on the artist reputation.

# *Journée de la Peinture*

17<sup>e</sup> édition

en Loire et Layon

## *La Possonnière (49)*

le 11 Mai 2008



Invité d'Honneur : Krystoff ANTIER

**VENTE aux ENCHÈRES** (vers 16h)  
Concours «GRAINE DE PEINTRES» (de 9h à 15h)

**En prélude**

Exposition «CROQU'EN ŒIL»  
du 2 au 10 mai à la Mairie de la Possonnière (49)

Renseignements et inscriptions 02 41 78 01 05

au profit des 

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## III. Results

### III. 3 Towards four artist profiles

#### ■ « Know how artist »

- ❑ Quality convention: Classic artist.
- ❑ Background: no artistic training, sometimes applied art school. Mainly sculptors, (ability to meet public order). Works as a little firm with subcontracting.
- ❑ Diffusion and assesment : Distribution place : public areas. Intermediary : local community. The assesment of the quality of the work depends on the ability of the artist to correctly fit the demand (technical skill, suitability with the proposal)
- ❑ Crucial trial: call for tenders or artistic proposal.
- ❑ Gain from trial: sale and artist visibility
- ❑ Incomes: billing order work on quotation + secondary activity (private lessons)





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## III. Results

### III. 3 Towards four artists profiles

- « Business artist »
  - Quality convention: contemporary art, innovation
  - Background: art school, often high school (national)
  - Diffusion and assesment: network organisation (artist agent, photographer). Crucial role of institutional intermediaries, low use of merchant internediaries (ability to work without any gallery. Institutional network (and few firms) assess the quality..
  - Trial: website design, curator, non profit exhibition places, public order  
Ability to fulfil a request (technical constraints + innovative production)
  - Gain from trial: acknowledgment and increase of the income

ACCUEIL ■

# **FAITES TRAVAILLER LES AUTRES**

de la démarche artistique au démarchage d'entreprise



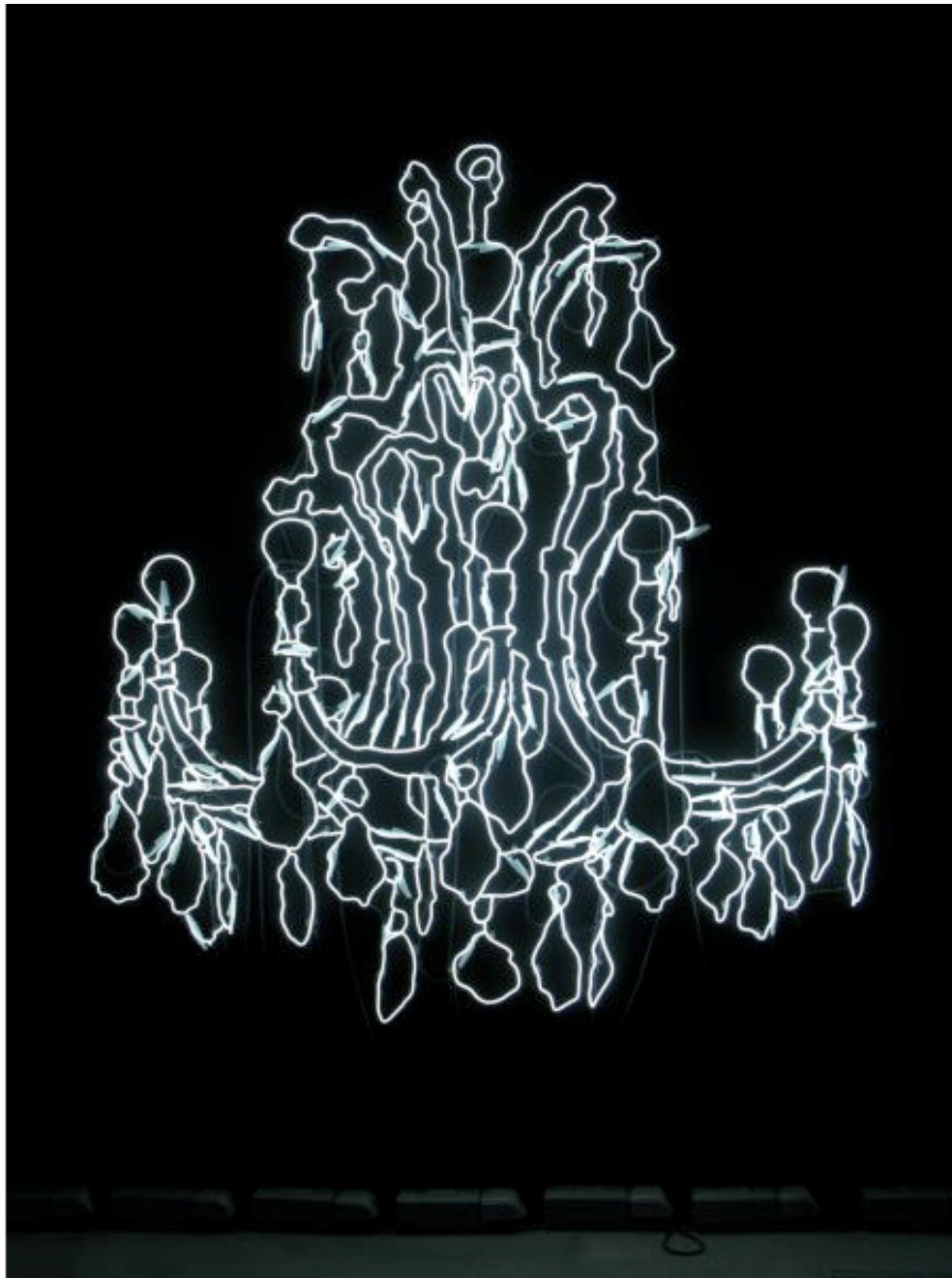
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## III. Results

### III. 3 Towards four artist profiles

- « Art fair artist »

- ❑ Quality convention: Contemporary. Production of artworks independently of any demand (only creativity).
- ❑ Background: Art school formation
- ❑ Diffusion and assesment.  
Intermediaries: both developing/promoting galleries and institutions
- ❑ Crucial trial : international art fair (Milan, Madrid, Bâle, Bruxelles, Londres, New-York, Paris)
- ❑ Gain from trial : sale and acknowlegment by the network
- ❑ Main incomes sources : sales (collectors, galleries, public collectivities), often teacher in art school



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# Conclusion

- The role of conventions for qualifying art
- Consequences for the definition of artists profiles (separate art worlds, careers and stakeholders)