

# ART, ETHICS AND BUSINESS. AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPH STUECKELBERGER, ACADEMIC, PROFESSOR OF GLOBAL ETHICS ON THREE CONTINENTS, WHICH HAS LED FOUNDATIONS, DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ADVISED BUSINESS COMPANIES, BANKS AND UN AGENCIES ON ETHICS FOR DECADES, ARTIST

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**Abstract.** Christoph Stueckelberger, professor of global ethics on three continents in this Q&A interview tells us about a specific area of ethics - the ethics of the art business, which is closely related to aesthetics on the one hand and law on the other. As in the love business, there are norms of behavior in this business, but the specificity of the art business lies in the uniqueness of each product. The professor concludes that art engages many human senses: eyes, ears, taste, smell, touch, that is, it goes beyond rational thinking and engages the whole person. Also, that practice shows that the leaders of the artistic process today are not the owners of fine taste, but the owners of financial resources. Unethical intermediaries in art or just traders - art managers, gallery owners and others, working on the principle of “business as usual”, can do their work with the aim of making maximum money and perceive art business as any business, even with higher profits. Other intermediaries perceive the art business as a vocation, just as good artists have a vocation - an inner calling to a “mission”. Ethical intermediaries therefore act as midwives: they help artists give birth to their precious art as their “baby” and present it to the world. A remarkable role for art mediators. This interview concludes: the artist must learn from others; grow to become authentic; strive for excellence; the creative person must earn and remain grateful for having been given the gift of being an artist.

**Key words:** Art business, Art management, art, artist, business ethics, sustainable development, ethics, art business ethics.

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**Alessya Jurt:** You represent ethics and art. Two different worlds! What does it mean for you?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** I am first an academic as professor of global ethics on three continents. In addition, I am since decades leading foundations, development organisations and consulting business companies, banks and UN agencies on ethics. I am an artist in order to express visions, dreams and values with other means than words and actions. I do it not for sale. However, I recognize the importance of the question of art business for those who depend in their income from art.

**Alessya Jurt:** What exactly is an art business?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** Art business is business of art objects: buying, selling and storing all types of art, from drawings to sculpture, from books to clothes, from music to dance, from artistic furniture to installations in nature.

**Alessya Jurt:** How does it differ from other businesses?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** Similar to other businesses is that it is a transaction of property from one to another owner, including temporarily lending etc. Each business as such a transaction differs. Business of shoes, electronics, academic courses, food or tourist travel differ. Art is specific in the sense that it is not mass production. X thousand print copies of a piece of art may not be counted as art business. Art business is rather the transaction of single, unique objects (or of a few hand-signed special copies). More important is that the producer of the art piece is an artist, not a manufacturer or a machine. Here, delicate questions come up if the artist is a robot.

**Alessya Jurt:** Business ethics is a set of moral requirements based on honesty, openness, fidelity to the given word, ability to function effectively on the market in accordance with the current legislation,

established rules and traditions. Are you sure that all this can be attributed to the art business?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** Yes, fair conditions of business traditions are applicable to all kind of trade relations. It would be interesting to take my book “Global Trade Ethics”\* and apply it to art business. Values such as fairness (fair prices) and virtues such as honesty and integrity are compulsory also for art business. Respecting legal requirements (e.g. in art business from tribal origin or historical artefacts) is even the minimum requirement for art business.

**Alessya Jurt:** What do you think is the ethics of art business? After all, many people read, hear about “lying” deals. Once in one book I read about Gagosian, that on the formation of his career, he asked his ex-wife to buy a painting, and he will return all her money. Although she did not agree, according to sources, but he conducted such false deals. How would you describe such behaviour of people in this business?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** Crookes, thieves and falsifiers exist in all business fields, from watches to brand clothes, from wine to art. In each of these sectors, it is unethical business as it is not telling the truth about the product (its origin, quality etc.) and therefore is not based on fairness and free choice of the buyer.

**Alessya Jurt:** Are there rules in the art business, if so, what are they?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** The ethical rules for art business are in general the same as for other products and have to be respected and – in case of non-respect – be sanctioned by law as in the other sectors.

However, the specificity of art business is in my view the uniqueness of each product. Many art pieces are not valued at the beginning, especially because art is often beyond convention and tradition. It breaks standards and walls of convention and therefore is often not appreciated now

of production. Only later, its artistic value and then financial value because of its uniqueness – is recognized.

Another specificity is the artist as the producer of the product. Some are business-minded or have to sell to survive. Others have the inner drive and energy to express their visions, dreams, fears and phantasies in their artwork, but are not interested or not able to produce for selling. They can become victims of art business buyers – and we as tourists may be among them when we buy a precious piece of art for almost nothing on the market in a developing country. Other artists are overestimating the value of their art. Business art therefore needs a highly developed sensitivity for the artist, his/her material needs and attitudes, for the environment, for the community around in order to get a fair deal in mutual respect between seller and buyer.

**Alessya Jurt:** Business is a mutually beneficial agreement between two or more parties. Within the art business, I more often meet three parties - the artist, his manager and the gallery. However, the main (in my opinion) player is the artist. What should he pay attention to first within the framework of ethics?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** Art in my understanding is a great gift of humans to humanity as it widens and deepens the understanding of human existence and of the whole creation. It makes the invisible world visible, turns the inner world outside and gives meaning or dismantles meaning. Art activates many of the human senses: eyes, ears, taste, sense of smell, touching. Art in the best sense touches the heart and soul, it means it goes beyond rational thinking and engages the whole person. The art managers, gallerists or other intermediaries can do their job in order to make the maximum of money and see art business as any business, even with higher profits. I would call them unethical art intermediaries or just “business as

usual” traders. The other intermediaries see art business as a vocation as the good artists have a vocation as an inner calling for a “mission”. The ethical intermediaries therefore act like midwives: they help the artists to give birth to their precious art as their ‘child’ and to present it to the world. A wonderful role of art intermediaries.

**Alessya Jurt:** How should the artist behave within the framework of Ethics?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** The same criteria for ethical production of any product is valid also for the artist: ‘not stealing’ means not to copy paste others art work, but thankfully recognizing the influence of others on the own work. The Western contemporary individualistic perspective is wrong where as individuals need or want to show ourselves as single stars. Humanity was always in its majority community-oriented. The community produced music in South America, not a single composer. The Ubuntu ethics in Africa tells us “I am because we are”. Christian medieval hand-painted illustrated Bibles want to glorify God and not the monk who was drawing. I am not criticizing the single artist. He or she are part of our individualistic world as ourselves.

**Alessya Jurt:** And how is art itself responsible for Ethics?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** Let me mention my own path as example: I am a university professor of ethics as my profession. I started working with wood, metal, photography and stones as handicraft, in order to express my values by not only words and books, but other senses. I never called myself an artist until others said “but are an artist” and I dared to exhibit publicly (in 2024 also in Venice, during beside the Biennale). Two motifs motivate my modest work: I want to express the beauty of creation in order to strengthen ease, joy, admiration and thus to liberate inner energy. I call it CreationArt\*\*. The second is not to be praised, but to praise the true artist, the Creator of this wonderful

planet and universe, which no human being can ever create. I therefore call myself assistant of the artist.

**Alessya Jurt:** You are the Author and Editor of many books including Consumer Ethics, Labour Ethics, Corruption and more. What advice would you give to creative art people?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** 1. Learn from others. Copy-paste is a phase of each child and each community. Of course to copy with honesty, that it is the copy-phase.

2. Grow then to become authentic. Try not anymore to copy somebody or something, but express what is your inner calling and vision.

3. Do it independent of applause or not by others.

4. Strive towards improving in precise expression. I do not like the word perfection, but constant improvement in

order to be able to express as beautifully as possible what you have to express.

5. Creativity means overcoming walls. Dare new ways, but avoid forced innovation just for the sake of getting attention.

6. Most artists cannot live only from art. They need additional income elsewhere. Try this model in order not to become slave and produce art just to survive. If you are successful and make a full living, congratulations.

7. The snooty, self-centered artist is not the ethical example. Remain modest and thankful what you received as gifts and what you are.

**Alessya Jurt:** And tips for the art businesses?

**Christoph Stueckelberger:** 1. Do not exploit artists.

2. Be a good midwife of the artists and make a decent living of it for the artist and you.

3. Be more than a broker and try to share the vision and mission of the artists.

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### ӨНЕР, ЭТИКА ЖӘНЕ БИЗНЕС. ОНДАҒАН ЖЫЛДАР БОЙЫ ҚОРЛАР МЕН ДАМУ ҰЙЫМДАРЫНА ЖӘНЕ БИЗНЕСКЕ, БАНКТЕРГЕ ЖӘНЕ БҰҰ АГЕНТТІКТЕРІНЕ ЭТИКА МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ ЖӨНІНДЕ КЕҢЕС БЕРУМЕН АЙНАЛЫСҚАН АКАДЕМИК, ҮШ КОНТИНЕНТТЕГІ ЖАҒАНДЫҚ ЭТИКА ПРОФЕССОРЫ, СУРЕТШІ КРИСТОФ ШТУКЕЛЬБЕРГЕРМЕН СҰХБАТ

**Аңдатпа.** Кристоф Стюкельбергер, үш континенттегі жаһандық этика профессоры, осы сұрақ-жауап сұхбатында этиканың белгілі бір саласы – бір жағынан эстетикамен, екінші жағынан заңмен тығыз байланысты көркем бизнес этикасы туралы әңгімелейді. Кез келген бизнестегі сияқты, бұл бизнесте мінез-құлық нормалары бар, бірақ өнер бизнесінің ерекшелігі әрбір өнімнің бірегейлігінде. Профессор өнер адамның көптеген сезімдерін қамтиды деген қорытындыға келеді: көз, құлақ, дәм, иіс, жанасу, яғни ол рационалды ойлау шеңберінен шығып, бүкіл тұлғаны қамтиды. Тәжірибеге сүйенсек, бүгінгі таңда көркемдік процестің көшбасшылары нәзік талғам иелері емес, қаржы ресурстарының иелері болып табылатыны мәлім. Әдепсіз өнер делдалдары немесе жай саудагерлер – өнер менеджерлері, галеристер және «әдеттегідей бизнес» принципімен жұмыс істейтін басқа да дәнекершілер өз жұмысын мүмкіндігінше көп ақша табу мақсатымен орындауы мүмкін және өнер бизнесін кез келген басқа бизнес сияқты, тіпті одан да көп пайда әкелетін бизнес түрі деп қарастыруы мүмкін. Дарынды суретшілердің қабілеттілік ықыласы – «миссиясы» болатынындай өзге арасы-медиаторлар өнер бизнесін өзінің ішкі түйсігінің әуестігі ретінде қарастырады. Сондықтан ондай этикалық арасы-медиаторлар ақушер ретінде әрекет етеді: олар суретшілерге өздерінің асыл өнерін «баласындай» дүниеге әкелуге және оны әлемге ұсынуға көмектеседі. Өнер делдалдары үшін тамаша рөл. Бұл сұхбатта суретші шынайы болу үшін, кемелдікке талпыну үшін басқалардан үйреніп, өсуі тиіс; шығармашыл адам табыс таба білуі керек және Жаратқанның берген суретші болу сыйын бағалап, оған риза бола білуі керек деп қорытындылаймыз.

**Түйін сөздер:** өнер бизнесі, өнер менеджменті, өнер, суретші, іскерлік этика, тұрақты даму, этика, өнер бизнесі этикасы.

**Дәйексөз үшін:** Юрт, Алеся. «Өнер, этика және бизнес. Ондаған жылдар бойы қорлар мен даму ұйымдарына және бизнеске, банктерге және БҰҰ агенттіктеріне этикалық кеңес берумен айналысқан академик, үш континенттегі жаһандық этика профессоры, суретші Кристоф Штукельбергермен сұхбат». *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies*, т. 9, No 2, 2024, 308–315 б. 10.47940/cajas.v9i2.828

*Автор қолжазбаның соңғы нұсқасын мұқият қарап шығып, мақұлдады және мүдделер қайшылығы жоқ екендігін мәлімдейді.*

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### ИСКУССТВО, ЭТИКА И БИЗНЕС. ИНТЕРВЬЮ С КРИСТОФОМ ШТУКЕЛЬБЕРГЕРОМ, АКАДЕМИКОМ, ПРОФЕССОРОМ ГЛОБАЛЬНОЙ ЭТИКИ НА ТРЕХ КОНТИНЕНТАХ, НА ПРОТЯЖЕНИИ ДЕСЯТИЛЕТИЙ ВОЗГЛАВЛЯВШИМ ФОНДЫ, ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ И КОНСУЛЬТИРОВАВШИМ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ЭТИКИ БИЗНЕС-КОМПАНИИ, БАНКИ И АГЕНТСТВА ООН, ХУДОЖНИКОМ

**Аннотация.** Кристоф Штукельбергер, профессор глобальной этики на трех континентах, в этом интервью в формате “вопрос-ответ” рассказывает о специфической области этики – этике арт-бизнеса, которая тесно связана с эстетикой, с одной стороны, и правом – с другой. Как и в любом бизнесе, в этом деле существуют нормы поведения, но специфика арт-бизнеса заключается в уникальности каждого продукта. Профессор приходит к выводу, что искусство задействует многие органы чувств человека: глаза, уши, вкус, запах, осязание, то есть выходит за рамки рационального мышления и задействует всю личность. Также практика показывает, что лидерами художественного процесса сегодня являются не обладатели тонкого вкуса, а владельцы финансовых ресурсов. Неэтичные посредники в искусстве или просто торговцы – арт-менеджеры, галеристы и другие, работающие по принципу “бизнес как обычно”, могут делать свою работу с целью заработать максимум денег и воспринимать арт-бизнес как любой бизнес, даже с большей прибылью. Другие посредники воспринимают арт-бизнес как призвание, так же как у хороших художников есть призвание – внутреннее призвание к “миссии”. Поэтому этические посредники выступают в роли акушеров: они помогают художникам родить их драгоценное искусство как своего “ребенка” и представить его миру. Замечательная роль для арт-посредников. В этом интервью мы подводим итог: художник должен учиться у других, расти, чтобы стать подлинным, стремиться к совершенству; творческий человек должен зарабатывать и оставаться благодарным за то, что ему дан дар быть художником.

**Ключевые слова:** арт-бизнес, арт-менеджмент, искусство, художник, деловая этика, устойчивое развитие, этика, этика арт-бизнеса.

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