

## BORJA'S *ECCE HOMO*: NETWORK, DIALOGUED ART AND DEMOPOIESIS

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### Abstract:

The phenomenon that occurred with the restoration of *Ecce Homo* in Borja (Zaragoza) has not gone unnoticed by the mass media in countries around the world, since it appeared in early August 2012 in a small notice of this restoration appeared in the blog of the Borjans' Studies Center. Thus, though the paper aims to deepen the triple determination that we believe has caused an isolated incident to become a worldwide media boom. We refer to the nature on the communicative global level, collaborative or dialogued nature and the interaction that have been generated by the creators and observers. From here we reflect on the social nature that this new pictorial creation has generated both from mass media and from various samples of creativity and different conceptions of art.

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**Key Words:** *Ecce Homo*, media, creativity, dialogued art

### Introduction:

In August 2012, an untrained octogenarian woman's attempt of restoration in a mural painting in the Sanctuary of Mercy in the small locality of Borja, in Zaragoza (Spain), broke the news. The *Ecce Homo*'s painting (from Latin: "*Behold The Man*" or "*here is The Man*"), made by Elías García Martínez, was an oil painting in dry wall which the Borjans' Studies Center dates from the first decade of the XX century. The work lays with a mention of the author which says: "this is the result of two hours of devotion to the Virgin of Mercy". This painting, inspired by the Guido Reni's *Ecce Homo*, had not a high historic and artistic value. In the other hand, the 81 year-old amateur painter who started the restoration, Cecilia Giménez, had restored paintings more times with no repercussion, but this time the restoration was not finished completely and it laid in the first step which she calls "staining", leaving the painting in a condition that turned into a butt of jokes, especially since the comparison that a *BBC*'s journalist made between the work and a monkey<sup>23</sup>. From that moment there was an unprecedented impact in the media and social networks, even also economic impact. This fast diffusion and its unexpected impact dictate the need of make an approach which, without a great empiric support, makes it possible to value this phenomenon from different sociological aspects. This paper, being an essay, is trying to develop that first approach.

The phenomenon happened about the restoration of the *Ecce Homo* in Borja (Zaragoza) is not going unnoticed by the media all over the world since an unimportant post appeared in the Borjans' Studies Center blog telling about it<sup>24</sup>. From that moment, the media has speculated about the decision of restoring the work again, the law aspects of the amateur author about having copyright of her painting and many other headlines more related to an interlude than to social news about the new creation that was happening.

Anyway, the speed with which the news has crossed borders is not casual or exclusive because of the newness of the phenomenon itself, it doesn't even depend on the discussion between what is art and what is expert. Part of that speed in the crossing information is motivated by the use of networks and global communities like Internet (Castells 1996, p.48). This group of networks increases the margins of communication and gives the news a global magnitude. At an international level,

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-19349921>

<sup>24</sup> *Borjans' Studies Center* blog: <http://cesbor.blogspot.co.uk/>

newspapers followed the story after it had already shaken up the social networks and not before, which shows an example of how journalists are not the only ones who can create discussions and opinions of the facts they think are relevant, but also the social networks themselves force, in a certain way, the covering of some news. Thus, a question stands up: what makes an isolated fact to become news? And beyond, why a local event with no repercussion becomes a global media phenomenon?

In the other hand, this “pictorial tuning” act, made in a wall painting of barely 50 centimetres wide and high created by a XIX-XX century’s artist in two short hours (as the description in the painting said) has become a icon for counter-culture people and alternative artists, whose perceptions of art disagree those accepted by established order. We just need to observe the exhibition developed in Barcelona related to this new icon born in Borja. This exhibition, organized by a collaborative art project called *Wallpeople*<sup>25</sup>, showed re-interpretations of this *Ecce Homo*, as a tribute to its author, taking other versions made by pictorial artists as acclaimed as Warhol, Gustav Klimt or Leonardo Davinci as references. The fact of the woman taking the risk of retouching the painting meets the idea of “breaking free”, concept commented by Lehrer (2012, p.128), who indicates that “although this spontaneous method could seem terrible, it is also a very valuable source of creativity”. In fact, as pointed previously, this restoration has been used as an inspiration to other artists and collectives related to art.

The surrealist and extravagant characteristics of the painting are also an answer to the need of laughing, good mood and the parody of daily life and news happening. But beyond having defenders and detractors (because there is a part of the population showing interest about the work and the act itself, but there is another part rejecting and criticizing it) the important aspect of this fact is the relevance it has got worldwide. In fact, searching “*Ecce Homo Borja*” on Google, we get 184,000 results<sup>26</sup>, just two months after the news appeared. Some words used by Spanish media to define the magnitude of the phenomenon are “fever for *EcceHomo*”, “funny accident” and “worldwide attention”, among others.

Another aspect to pay attention in is that the phenomenon is also answering the need of having new icons, being a genuine subversive process because it subverts the established order related to art or to what can be considered as beautiful. From this idea we could ask ourselves: Why are some works appreciated and some others are not? Who is deciding what is considered “art”? In this respect and referring to art perception, Sanmartín (1993, p.115) quotes San Agustín when he thinks about the time and he points that “everybody knows what something is if nobody ask”. Actually, this object, the painting is perceived in a different way by the author, who considers it unfinished, and by an observers and instructors’ class, which think it is already done. But the creator-observer’s joint, having each of them different values (complementary and contradictory), gives rise to more types of art, in which collective existences and different kinds of subjectivities are discussed beyond art itself, affecting more aspects.

From our point of view, on the margins of other considerations, Borja’s occurrence is important from the three foresaid perspectives, on which we are going to reflect deeper. First, its media feature in the network society (Castells) or “flow” society (Bauman). Second, its open, collaborative and “dialogued” role, which Borja’s woman has played and justified so naturally. And third, the game of different looks and knowledge generated by creators and observers about this event and any other aspects of creation, giving us information about different types of society. Those are the facets involved in the *Borjan* intervention that we are going to explain.

### **From a local event to a global phenomenon. Evolution, impact and media repercussion.**

Firstly, it is worth to emphasize the importance of time, especially because of the moment that this event happens and the speed of its spreading. On August 7, 2012, *Borjans’ Studies Center* posts in its blog about “An indescribable fact”, denouncing that a minor author’s work (Elías García Martínez) had suffered what they called an “intervention”, asking for a research of the case and for any step of solution. But it is the 21st when the regional newspaper *Heraldo de Aragón* reports the

<sup>25</sup> *Wallpeople*’s web: <http://wallpeople.org/index.php/homenaje-a-ecce-homo/>

<sup>26</sup> Searching “*EcceHomo* Borja” on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

first news about it: “Wall painting’s restoration in a church in Borja ends as a botched job”<sup>27</sup>. From that moment the event starts to spread everywhere.

▪ **Media and social network impact.**

Despite the news appeared for the first time in Spain in a regional newspaper like *Heraldo de Aragón*, next day the news related to the restoration made by an octogenarian woman in a small church of a small village spread all over the world. One of the main newspapers in the United Kingdom, *The Guardian*, reported the curious incident with an article entitled: “Spanish church mural ruined by well-intentioned restorer”<sup>28</sup>. Just one day after that, August 23, important newspaper like *Washington Post* or *New York Times* publish headlines like “Spanish woman botches ‘Ecce Homo’ painting in an attempt to restore it”<sup>29</sup> and “Despite Good intentions, a Fresco in Spain is Ruined”<sup>30</sup> respectively, pointing in the last one the creation of parodies of the painting on Twitter and several blogs. Besides, the same day of the spreading of the first news, the hashtag #*eccemomo* (name used in Spain to parody because of the comparison of the *Ecce Homo* with a monkey. Monkey=Mono in Spanish) was trending topic on Twitter and it wasn’t hard to find on the web images of the painting with the face of different celebrities. At the same time, new Facebook groups were appearing making fun of the event and we could find t-shirts with the restoration, as *Heraldo de Aragón* itself reported<sup>31</sup>. Also, on YouTube we can see the popularity of the phenomenon with videos like “Ecce Homo Reloaded”<sup>32</sup>, with almost 900,000 views.

Besides, we can emphasize on the *Borjans’ Studies Center’s* blog, which has received more than 130,000 visits from August 2012 to January 2013, all those visits from more than 100 countries, distributed as follows<sup>33</sup>:

- Spain: 84,370
- United States: 8,376
- France: 5,122
- Japan: 4,507
- Mexico: 3,652
- United Kingdom: 2,941
- Argentina: 2,406
- Canada: 1,475
- Colombia: 1,425
- Germany: 1,370

Thus, we can see the worldwide repercussion of the phenomenon in very different countries. On the other hand, it is worth to mention that this event is also registered on Wikipedia, where we can find a post titled “*Ecce Homo* (Elías García Martínez)”<sup>34</sup>, where the characteristics of the original painting and the restoration are described, and also all the repercussion and impact it has been getting. We can also find this post with the name of the amateur but popular restorer: Cecilia Giménez.

<sup>27</sup>

[http://www.heraldo.es/noticias/cultura/2012/08/21/la\\_restauracion\\_una\\_pintura\\_mural\\_una\\_iglesia\\_borja\\_acaba\\_chapuza\\_200865\\_308.html](http://www.heraldo.es/noticias/cultura/2012/08/21/la_restauracion_una_pintura_mural_una_iglesia_borja_acaba_chapuza_200865_308.html)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/aug/22/spain-church-mural-ruin-restoration>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/spanish-woman-botches-ecce-homo-painting-in-an-attempt-to-restore-it/2012/08/23/263bd0e2-ed42-11e1-b09d-07d971dee30a\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/spanish-woman-botches-ecce-homo-painting-in-an-attempt-to-restore-it/2012/08/23/263bd0e2-ed42-11e1-b09d-07d971dee30a_blog.html)

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/24/world/europe/botched-restoration-of-ecce-homo-fresco-shocks-spain.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/24/world/europe/botched-restoration-of-ecce-homo-fresco-shocks-spain.html?_r=0)

<sup>31</sup>

[http://www.heraldo.es/noticias/cultura/2012/08/21/las\\_redes\\_sociales\\_bautizan\\_como\\_ecce\\_mono\\_pintura\\_borja\\_200874\\_308.html](http://www.heraldo.es/noticias/cultura/2012/08/21/las_redes_sociales_bautizan_como_ecce_mono_pintura_borja_200874_308.html)

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p35CDKEeFfE>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www4.clustrmaps.com/es/counter/maps.php?url=http://cesbor.blogspot.com/>

<sup>34</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecce\\_Homo\\_\(El%C3%ADas\\_Garc%C3%ADa\\_Mart%C3%ADnez\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecce_Homo_(El%C3%ADas_Garc%C3%ADa_Mart%C3%ADnez))

All this data means that in barely 48 hours the *Ecce Homo* phenomenon spread all over the world, as we can see in a parody on one of the most popular and watched TV programs in the United States, *Conan O'Brien Show*<sup>35</sup>, where an actor dress up like Jesus Christ stated that “finally someone had painted him a portrait rightly”, fact that we could understand as a “defence” of this new “re-edited” painting.

On the other hand, it is important to pay attention not just to the speed of the news spreading, but also of its evolution, which we can see next with different headlines:

Table 1. International press headlines.

SOURCE	DATE	HEADLINE
Le Huffington Post Québec	August 22, 2012	<i>In Spain, the fail restoration of Christ's painting makes scream</i>
The Telegraph	August 22, 2012	<i>Elderly woman destroys 19th-century fresco with DIY restoration</i>
Euronews	August 25, 2012	<i>Borja's Christ: from Ecce Homo to international mockery</i>
Qué	August 26, 2012	<i>Borja's Ecce Homo: Going on a pilgrimage even from abroad to know "restored" Ecce Homo</i>
La Vanguardia	September 05, 2012	<i>Expert from Prado's Museum thinks Ecce Homo's event "unmasks" problems about heritage restoration</i>
ABC	September 08, 2012	<i>Borja's Ecce Homo, a pop icon</i>
El Mundo	September 24, 2012	<i>Ecce Homo has 3,000 visitors per week</i>
ABC	December 19, 2012	<i>Ecce Homo's "restorer", hired as an art consultant</i>

Authors' elaboration based upon quoted sources.

#### ▪ **Other repercussions**

The considered phenomenon of *Ecce Homo* hasn't been spreading just in different kind of media, but it is also getting more creative consequences like in new technologies and all the possibilities this field is developing. Thus, thanks to the popularity of *Ecce Homo*, several Android applications<sup>36</sup> making fun of it appeared which with anybody can restore the famous painting. In addition, the Sanctuary of Mercy in Borja, where the work remains, has turned from being an unknown place to getting more than a thousand of visits per day since the news spread. Consequently, as a positive aspect to Aragón (region where Borja is located), tourism increases and also the selling of merchandising, as it is already happening in the area. Borja's residents are not just adapting to this new popularity, but they are also taking the advantage of it. We find an example in the special edition of wine bottles that *Bodegas Ruberte* launched with the name “*El Ecce Homo*”, inspired in the mentioned restoration<sup>37</sup>. On the other side, Borja's city hall registered the brand *Ecce Homo*<sup>38</sup>, because of the increasing selling of related products and parodies.

But this impact is not exclusive of the locality, not even Spain. Internationally we find curiosities showing the effect of the phenomenon: last Halloween *Ecce Homo*'s costume was one of the

<sup>35</sup> <http://teamcoco.com/video/real-jesus-defends-restoration>

<sup>36</sup> Aplicaciones Android bajo el nombre *Ecce Homo*: <https://play.google.com/store/search?q=ecce+homo>

<sup>37</sup> Web *Bodegas Ruberte*: <http://www.gruporuberte.com/comunicacion.asp>

<sup>38</sup> Marcas registradas con el nombre *Ecce Homo*: <http://sitadex.oepm.es/Localizador/LocNacSin>

more demanded<sup>39</sup>; the painting appears in one of the most popular international games: *Angry Birds*<sup>40</sup>; Cecilia, the restorer, had a leading role in a special tv program of new year's eve in Spain<sup>41</sup>; and the event is part of the 2012 summary made by *JibJab*<sup>42</sup>, as some examples.

▪ ***The society as news creator.***

There is no denying in these obvious characteristics, this is a summer story, but it does not justify "per se" its rapid international development. Other news that have occurred during the month of August with a high national impact didn't have the same at an international level. One example is the news reported in 2008 in which a lifeguard mixed, incorrectly, two chemical components in a pool causing a toxic cloud. In this case the impact came from the hand of the statements she made to the media which became a kind of cultural heritage: "*vamos, que la he liao parda*"<sup>43,44</sup>. This time social media also reacted to the statements with countless versions spreading almost to the present time; as we can see in a program of RTVE in 2012 which created the awards "*La he liao parda*"<sup>45</sup>. Even four years later, the Spanish population still recognizes this expression. However we should point out similarities between the two stories:

- Both used visual media and diffusing videos, although *Ecce Homo* has a static visual element easily reproducible.
- The main characters in these two stories have an element of naïveté, in the sense that there was no malice in their actions, despite the irresponsibility committed by both.
- Initially the possibility of legal liability claims was considered but, based on the foresaid aspect of naivety, it caused feelings of "sorrow" and laughing in the population.

If we just take as reference these two news, we could think that these events are part of the Spanish idiosyncrasy, which leads us to laugh at all, our positivity, our attitude or maybe the August sun. However, there is a fundamental difference between them: the internationality of the second one.

Another reason why we can not only attribute the high massmedia impact to the fact of being summer news is that they tend to disappear from exhaustion. But in the case of the *Ecce Homo*, far from disappear, the news was been repeated both nationality and internationally during the following months. For example in September 21, 2012, *Yahoo News* published "Disfigured fresh attracts tourists Spain, becomes global sales phenomenon"<sup>46</sup>. The same week, national newspapers echoed the number of visits received: "Ecce homo attracts 3000 visitors a week"<sup>47</sup> (*El Mundo*, September 22), and even the *Daily Telegraph*<sup>48</sup> (September 20, 2012), one of the European newspapers that have made greater monitoring of the news, wrote about how Ryanair (low cost airline) had sales in flights to Zaragoza to visit the *Ecce Homo*.

So, taking into account that both the lifeguard's news and the *Ecce Homo*'s news had impact on social networks, why only one has had an international impact? What is the difference between them? It is necessary to contextualize it more deeply and to point as a factor that currently people is exhausted of negative news, not only Spanish people but worldwide, especially related to the economic crisis. Even more, we must think about the kind of society we are living in to understand this kind of facts. Castells (1996) calls "Informational Age" to the new society model that is replacing the industrial society. This new model is characterized by information and

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.com/jesus-fresco-painting-halloween-costume-hit-online-after-cecilia-gimenez-botched-ecce-homo-835451>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.abc.es/20121030/medios-redes/abci-ecce-homo-angry-birds-201210302018.html>

<sup>41</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/12/notorious-ecce-homo-restorer-cecilia-gimenez-now-potential-art-star/>

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.antena3.com/noticias/mundo/resumen-ano-olvida-nuestro-ecce-homo\\_2012122900113.html](http://www.antena3.com/noticias/mundo/resumen-ano-olvida-nuestro-ecce-homo_2012122900113.html)

<sup>43</sup> <http://video.publico.es/videos/0/17702/5169/recent>

<sup>44</sup> Colloquialism to express that someone has created a serious problem

<sup>45</sup> El programa de radio Asuntos Propios <http://www.rtve.es/radio/20120130/premios-he-liao-parda-2012/493189.shtml>

<sup>46</sup> <http://news.yahoo.com/disfigured-spain-fresco-attracts-tourists-becomes-global-sales-171031385.html>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/09/24/cultura/1348510000.html>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/pay-me-royalties-says-woman-who-botched-fresco-20120921-26aqh.html>

knowledge being the basis of production, social and cultural processes. Both information and knowledge are increasingly affordable for more people, creating new information and knowledge through dialogue (Flecha, Puigvert Gomez, 2001). In this model the economy has become global, since it belongs no longer to a country, but to the world itself. Transnational corporations are increasing, which has led to increased polarization between rich and poor countries and the trigger from an economy with full employment to fewer jobs which require more training. There is greater global mobility, both in poorer and richer countries and within countries themselves, which causes interactions with people from other cultures. This model considers that one third of the population is excluded. But now it is moving from a Darwinian conception of the society model -which only allows the access to the top class- to an inclusive model, the Informational Age for all -where education is considered a key factor, which have to give access to the informational age providing everyone the skills to understand and transform the complex world around us and them- (Gomez and Elboj, 2001).

Under this model of informational and dialogical age, where would art be? So far the art has been held by people that have decided what art is and what is not, and by other people who could afford art. But the dialogic tendency existing in the information society has meant the scientific knowledge to be no longer exclusively to experts. This process is called monopolization of expertise (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1997) and it applies equally to art.

People who are supposedly non expert now have an important role in the creation, acquisition, development and expansion of knowledge. This is one of the facts happened to Borja's *Ecce Homo*. People have asked to themselves why Elias Garcia's *Ecce Homo* was art and why Cecilia Gimenez's one is not. This question has involved the mobilization of social networks that collected signatures calling for the retention of the second one. Such important was the media pressure that the experts team hired to evaluate the possibility of re-restore the painting is considering to save both, which the media also noticed. The following declarations of that experts team exemplify the difficult relationship between experts and non-experts: "if it was possible, we would recover it, regarding the commotion that the repainting of Cecilia has caused". They also added that the painting "is not worth it the commotion caused"<sup>49</sup>, meaning that they do not consider art the one made by Cecilia.

Art has been always understood as something global, whether certain works are more appreciated in specific cultural contexts. For example, we all accept that the Wonders of the world are, in some way, art, and we could discuss the order according to a personal preference, but we still don't question the art behind those wonders. The Sistine Chapel is art, Kandinsky is art, Gaudí is art, Picasso is art, El David is art ... but are they art because we think they are art? Or are we have been said that we have to believe they are art? Currently, we do not believe that this question can have an answer, and certainly that answer cannot be given because society will always influence in what it is considered beautiful. What we can see is that we are immersed in a present time when the general public doesn't agree with a few people deciding what art is and what it is not anymore. The concept of art is constructed and is claimed, as the expertise cessation is claimed including people through dialogue.

The *Ecce Homo* exemplifies this process of demonopolization of expertise, but if we look at our society these processes are taking place in all areas and disciplines. People do not want experts to tell them how to overcome the crisis without taking them into account, so they protest on social networks and on the streets. People do not want experts to impose aesthetic standards, which is being demonstrated in the growth of blogs dedicated to the "street style". And people do not want to be told what art should retain and they protest to preserve, for example, the *Ecce homo*.

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<sup>49</sup> "Las restauradoras del Ecce Homo intentan salvar las dos pinturas", *Aragón Digital*, 30 de Agosto de 2012. <http://www.aragondigital.es/noticia.asp?notid=98627&secid=12>

### **The dialogic and dialogued art and social criticism.**

With the subjects described in the previous epigraph, we consider that the demonopolization of expertise is not the only consequence of the dialogic turn in art. Certain forms of art themselves are becoming dialogic art, concept that Kester (2004) borrows from Mikhail Bakhtin (interested in a work of art as a conversation, 1990) and applies to the experiences in which art is the result of a process of what he calls "performative interaction", in which the artist is involved in the social reality giving voice to living subjects who were traditionally silenced or are part of an active community trying to modify. This example takes as experiences those with artists seeking to establish relationships where dialogue between groups that traditionally didn't have a good relationship had been encouraged, as police and youth immigrants in the project "The Roof is on Fire". In his latest book (Kester, 2011) he spreads the term of dialogic art to the communicative and politically involved art, which would be very close to the concept of activist art. For Kester, this dialogic or collaborative art requires action because it is a way of art creation itself and, as he said, is "a new aesthetic and theoretical paradigm of the work of art as a process--a locus of discursive exchange and negotiation" (Kester, 2011:12). In this regard it is worth to mention an author considered an artist by some people and a vandal by some others: Banksy<sup>50</sup>. His graffiti paintings and drawings have gained a worldwide reputation for representing social denunciation, motivated with no doubt by his anonymity and the fact that most of his works are in public places where they should not be. He even snuck disguised? in important museums in order to expose some of his paintings<sup>51</sup>. They add the concept of "rebellion", giving rise to agreeing and disagreeing opinions, being the last ones from people considered experts in art mainly. However, in the city that people believe is his hometown, Bristol, the cleaning employees of the city trains were given a graffiti art guide in order to learn how to identify his paintings so they can keep them, as it is described in a report published in *El Pais*<sup>52</sup> a few years ago.

As Kester (2004) described, the main characteristic of these artists is a series of provocative concepts about the relationship between art and the social and political world, as well as all the different types of knowledge from aesthetics or art that can be generated. We could understand that this kind of art carries a very specific message to be conveyed to the public with not profit at the beginning. It is also a kind of dialogic art, as described above, because the artist is inspired by certain events of social reality that he is living, giving voice somehow to different groups that a priori do not have it, transmitting a shared message that otherwise might not get this impact.

It is clear that the case of *Ecce Homo* we are analyzing in this article does not correspond exactly to that description, because the author did not pretend to convey a message nor give voice to any group. However, the fact that professional restorers and experts criticized the painting while people around the world defended his conservation shows how the expert knowledge is being demonopolized as we discussed earlier, trying to "discredit" those that make patterns that people do not always want to follow.

That is why we propose, rather than the concept of dialogical art, the idea of dialogued art. In the first case, the dialogue is born, being a process itself. In the second one, the concept of art is dialogically discussed from a creative manifestation. Both concepts give voice to subjects that are not traditionally consulted, the first one gives voice thanks to a vocation of social change and the second one the voice "is taken" not to change society but to discuss the concept of art as a result of the demonopolization of expertise. Looking at the history of modern art we can see that this controversy happened in its origins and even in its development.

- ***The invention of art.***

Since the birth of the art in the mid-eighteenth century it was told that art is related to creativity and it has a sublime due to her relationship with the highest qualities of the human spirit, while the craft is a lower-level activity because of her manual character. In the ancient world this distinction didn't exist. The Greek concept *techné* and the latin concept *ars*, which are usually

<sup>50</sup> Web de Banksy: <http://www.banksy.co.uk/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4563751.stm>

<sup>52</sup> [http://elpais.com/diario/2008/03/02/cultura/1204412401\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2008/03/02/cultura/1204412401_850215.html)

translated as "art", used to include many activities belonging to what we usually call "trades" (Shiner, 2004: 46).

The changes resulting of what currently is called "art" begin in the Renaissance, when princes and nobles became protector of all kinds of artists. In addition, art changed their religious meanings because it was related to a refined world enjoyment. However, during this time, creators had a collective and craft character. Actually, artists were the heads of workshops where the work was produced collectively and the "artist" stamped his signature. This situation began to change during the eighteenth century, when modern art was "invented" with the primacy of aesthetics over liking, market linkage, the consideration of the artist as a "creator", the distancing from handicrafts, etc. (Shiner, 2004). All these changes and some others such as the emergence of copyright and fine arts academies, the exhibition centers creation, etc., were becoming the art as we know it nowadays.

Furthermore, since French Revolution, in which art was elevated to higher levels, there has been also opposed trends attempting to integrate art to life, undoing the distinction between art and craft. Anti-art movements like Dada or Russian Constructivism, individual authors like Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, and other movements like Bauhaus ("the artist is an exalted craftsman", Gropius wrote in Manifesto, 1919) are good examples of this trend. However, concurrently there was another trend considering that art could be different kinds of activities depending on the period: original core activities (poetry, music, painting, sculpture and architecture), photography, cinema or jazz during the late nineteenth century; the "primitive art" in the early twentieth century; even pop music or journalism in the 60s and almost everything from 70s on (Shiner, 2004: 313 et seq.). In the case of fashion, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the American Charles Frederick Worth considered himself an artist and since then countless designers have been related to several art movements. Thus, there is an "artistification" of the new areas and an "unartistification" of the classic areas. The result of these two movements is art being spread even more through the whole existence and today's societies, called "informational" and "cultural", may be "art societies".

So, what is art? It is not a singular space of collective activity. We think it's a force, with varying intensity, cutting across every social sphere. Moreover, we agree with Deleuze and Guattari (1993: 164 ff.) when they explain that the artistic force of the social works with "percepts" and "affects" separates from the flow of perceptions and conditions of common life getting strength and self-uniqueness. However, this autonomy appearance should not make us forget, like apologists of art tried before, the importance of flows and the **immanences** to which art belongs. In sociological terms this fact implies recognizing art as inseparable from collective life in general and everyday life in particular. Borja's case requires taking this into consideration. On the other hand, this also means that everyday life and social world have an artistic nature.

- ***Dissolution of art***

Daily life invades the sphere of art. Borja's intervention is the expression which symbolizes the mixture between art and daily life, which demonstrates two facts. Firstly, aesthetic categories are relevant in the analysis of social reality. Bateson (1991), in his most famous work, he humbly recognized that social specialists have to suppress the desire of controlling the world we misunderstand. He adds that studies have to inspire the curiosity about our own world. The reward is not the power, is the beauty.

Secondly, the dissolution of art requires it to be at the service of power instituting. This power welcomes the lush daily life. The problem is that art, considered as appeared in Modernity, only offers resources in the opposite way. Therefore, it is necessary a non-instituted art which betrays the instituting potential in a lower level. Chinese culture have always had a more sensitive of "not being". This culture has engendered subjectivities and techniques to deal with the instituting. It has been cultivating the "not doing". The silence in music, the emptiness in painting or the line in calligraphy, are techniques that have facilitated to have unfinished works, keeping the meaning and the sensitivity (Jullian, 1991). Something similar happens with Rodin's sculptures or with Chillida and Oteiza's respectful way to create empty spaces. In fact, Oteiza anticipated that self-dissolution, which spontaneously tends art, would make daily life what it really is: artistic. Miles



David may works in this direction with his idea of silence. Another example John Cage's work (2003): *Experimental Music*, where the musicians remain three minutes and forty-four seconds (3'44'') in silence in front of their blank sheet music.

### **Beyond art and sociology.**

In our opinion, Borja's case disputes two aspects: the institutionalized idea of art during the Modernity and the collective character in the work creation. In this respect, Sociology of Art shows the social character of the creation and the Sociology of Science reveals the social constructor of the scientific truths. The problem of this social influence is that it isn't always visible for all. Sometimes the one who doesn't see it is the creator (he thinks he is a genius) and the one who sees everything is the analyst (he returns him to Earth). Other times it is just the creator who see it (is the case of Borja's restorer), while the analyst is absent minded (academics and experts who valued Borja's episode). The first case is an artistic and institutionalized activity. The second case is art with instituting character. It is curious how the Sociology of Art (Bourdieu, 2002., Becker, 1982) has managed to show that individuality, self-sufficiency and artistic creation genius are nothing, because there is always a social background driving it. If this sociology is right, as Latour (1994) said, we have never been modern with our artistic way to create beauty. The pre-modern way of making a collective character art continues operating even nowadays. The Borja's case could only be possible understood from this point of view. The restorer woman is not embarrassed of working creatively in an unfinished painting which is open to collective character creation. For a modern one, this is an aberration. In the world before Art kingdom (about 200 years ago) this intervention wouldn't have caused any problem or quarreling. From a sociologic point of view, the situation occurred in Borja is the explicit expression of the work from the social, through different kinds of networks giving form and content to the works. These networks give rise to some Social Studies of Science called "network object" (Latour, 1992). These "objects" are the result of the activity of multiple sets of relationships. The networks will influence in every concept, idea, device, laboratory, and in the own scientist. If Science secures that the reality is always outside of these networks, the Social Studies of Science treat to prove that scientific truths are the expression of the network activity and they have nothing in common with reality. The only knowledge scientific truth is the network activity and it is not any outside reality. Thus, what we normally called "reality" just means an absence of it, emptiness.

Something similar could be happening in the Art World. The "beauty" of artistic creations could be a result of some network activities. Therefore, just the creations being worth to get the adjective of beautiful have proved to be able to erase the networks influence. Here is where sociology and social studies interfere. Their mission is disassembling the independence and autonomy of the society that scientific truths and artistic beauties are trying to get.

However, in our opinion this "unmasking" reveals just one part of the reality. In general, these suspicion analyses are useful for stable situations in which the participant actors (scientists or artists) seem to mesmerize the magnetism or the aura of the institution (Science or Art). The stable situations are those in which there are truths and canonical beauties. In these contexts, the suspicion for the analyst is quite easy to practice. Instead, producers of truths and beauties do not know what they are doing. Indeed, they believe that the value of truth and beauty is outside of network and it is independent of them.

In *meta-stable* situations or far from equilibrium situations, when institution has disappeared and a chaotic world of ideas, information or stimulus appears, just the opposite happens. The creator knows perfectly this environment and also knows that these movements allow him to get the beauty. On the other hand, the analyst finds the research of the networks connectivity and their influence more difficult. Therefore, in *meta-stables* situations, the practical knowledge of the creator dominates abstract and scientific knowledge, unlike what happens in *stable* situations, where this knowledge is the dominant.

Possibly, art is useful for a stable institution of the classic analysis of suspicion proposed by Bourdieu (2002). However, other arts like fashion, being mutable and evanescent, result more unstable, supporting the institutionalization worse, and requiring analysis based on network notion including the uncertainly analyst (Bergua *et al.* 2007).

In our opinion the Borja's case is located in this *meta-stable* situation and far from equilibrium. In fact, the "author" made her creation naturally, and she incorporated those aspects she understood *Ecce Homo* demanded. But from the makers and experts point of view what happened is an aberration, because they think that just one institutionalized art exists. Qualifying it in this way, with such contempt and categorically, they show they misunderstood what it really happened. Their problem not knowing that they do not know. Actually, the same thing happens to thinkers and scientists when they see other politic ways (as The Indignant) or other ways to understand the Economy (time banks, local coins, exchange...).

Borja's lady may be smiling seeing her incompetence. The same smile of The Indignants seeing the disorientation of politicians, scientists and opinion makers. Hopefully, they will continue mistaking along the time. This will show us where the road of demopoesis is.

### Conclusion:

This phenomenon has the threefold determination we have analyzed in the beginning. It has a global media character, a dialogic or collaborative character, and a set of knowledge generated by creators and observers. The main characteristic of this communicative character is the speed of the information transfer because it has turned an isolated event to a media international boom. The impact has been observed in different events as humoristic TV programs, news, articles of critical journalism, social networks, blogs, etc. Other repercussions are the creative results like redesigns of paintings in Android mobile applications, tourism, branding and many different events which have been generated in Aragón. In order to answer the question about why this *Ecce Homo* have had such an international impact, we consider the Spanish idiosyncrasy and the exhaustion of the models in global population.

Related to the idea about dialogic and communicative art, the first step is differentiating *Ecce Homo* from others voluntary ways of making art referring to a purpose, like social complaint in graffiti. Although the obtained results, *Ecce Homo* was not seeking to give a critic argument or an answer, nor to produce an artistic, social or cultural change. For this reason we propose the concept of dialogued art instead of dialogic art. As we have noted, the first art comes out of dialogue, it is a process itself. However, the second art appears from a creative manifestation discussing the concept of art. Both concepts have in common that they give voice to subjects traditionally excluded. But there are differences: the first art has a social change vocation and the second art argue with its own concept as a consequence of expertise demonopolization. This aspect is related to the concept of cultural democracy and to the culture democratization.

Ending our conclusions, we believe that art is something global and its conception has been modified over centuries. Nowadays, we are in a "desartistification" of the classical fields, so we are approaching the encounter with Nothingness. Similarly, we add that art is a power cutting every sphere of daily life across. Thus, it is necessary an art working for the instituting. We have observed that there is not a specific response about what art is, but traditionally the expert knowledge has instructed people, giving it vision and scoring a number of aesthetic standards. In the Borja's case, defenders of this painting are providing a message which is deeper than the maintenance of the picture itself. This message extends the idea of art and shows the resignation of the expert knowledge imposition as an artistic beauty ideal. All these facts put us in a meta-stable context, where we find "the possible" and instituting, which we call *demopoesis*.

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