

**Alina A. Kalashnikova**  
**V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University**

## **Specialist media as the art field and the art market evolution reflector**

### ABSTRAKT

Artykuł opisuje wkład lokalnych mediów specjalistycznych funkcjonujących w procesie produkcji rynku mediów. Analizie poddano media zwracające uwagę na podstawowe kwestie potrzeb, cech i specjalności lokalnej społeczności artystycznej. Sfera artystyczna i lokalna, społeczność artystyczna jako fragment fraktalny są traktowane z punktu widzenia teorii pola P. Bourdieu<sup>1</sup>. Dlatego wyspecjalizowane lokalne media służą jako środki artystycznej konsolidacji społeczności, a tym samym są w stanie odzwierciedlić swoje podstawowe wartości i zamiary. Cecha ta została sprawdzona na przykładzie jednego z lokalnych mediów artystycznych - gazety "Proart" (Ukraina, Charków, 2012). Dokonano analizy w oparciu o metodologię analizy jakościowej zawartości. Stwierdza się, iż wyspecjalizowane media stają się, na polu artystycznym, ważnym czynnikiem ilustrującym powstawanie na określonym terytorium konkretnego rynku medialnego.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** media specjalistyczne, pole sztuki, lokalna społeczność artystyczna, rynek sztuki, analiza mediów, ProArt

Media are obviously the central means of contemporary marketing. Creating the constantly renewing informational space for all kinds of social relations to exist, shuffling patterns of fashionable and out-of-fashion, as well as approved and condemned, mass media give the strong impact to cultural trends. Aside of the fact that media in essence are focused onto the socially significant information, they grant the space to the critical discourse, therefore – for the struggle of agents, competing for the respect (in the P. Bourdieu's theoretical approach). On the other hand, for the spheres of production the media establish favourable conditions for producers and consumers so they could find each other.

As arts, along with science and literature, are considered by P. Bourdieu<sup>1</sup> the symbolic production field, the specialized artistical media have to execute the unavoidable function of the main informational struggle field. Social scientists,

<sup>1</sup> Бурдьё П., *Рынок символической продукции* [Электронный ресурс] – Режим доступа: <http://bourdieu.name/content/chast-pervaja> (20.03.2012).

especially those of post-Durkheimian approach and further representatives of the cultural anthropology, traditionally regard the appearance of media as the starting point of the sociality itself, and thus – as the main condition of the community consolidation process. Here media are understood in the ultimately wide way, which implies all information exchange forms including oral and written language, gesture and symbols. As for the modern media, that have already become truly mass, they are often seen to be the actively influence-exerting phenomena after the famous Macluen's workings.

Media get the most of their intents from their creators and the characteristics of the audience aimed to be achieved. The struggle for the right to nominate in the art field is regarded as intrinsic to this field, because it is able to be proceeded exclusively within the discourse of the stated rules which all the participants are concordant with. From this perspective media of the certain professional orientation serve both the tool saving the existing conventional rules and the source of reference for individual agents and newcomers. For the fields of symbolic production this means the priority presence of expert meaning producers within the media discourse. They establish standards and provide critical reviews of the colleagues' work, that is why the key principles of the certain field or subfield expressed by the media are able to be caught by the interested researcher.

The media maintaining the certain commodity production sphere, as it is stated above, with necessity comes to the role of the stakeholder between the producers and consumers. Specialized artistical media, therefore, deals with artists and true art lovers. Except for these categories, its audience also comprises the representatives of connected or satellite spheres, who participate in both production and consumption, e.g. art critics, museums staff, art galleries, journalists specialized in culture. The activity of consumables producers participating in media discourse aim to the primarily commercial success procurement. On the contrary, symbolic production fields have to avoid the commercial logics, because it threatens their autonomy and the very existence.

Thereby, the media specialized in arts have to have at least two diverse or even contradicting modes of functioning, by what they could be distinguished as special class of media. The aim of this paper is to study the case of certain media specialized in fine arts and its impact onto the becoming of the art field and the art market in a certain Ukrainian city, giving the theoretical opportunity to expand the conclusions to the specialized media concept.

As the media are engaged in the constant process of the field's autonomy threatening and defence, they are expected to execute it in the same way the institutions of art marketing do, what means the balancing between logics that is nicely delineated with the term “switch” by I. Kuesters<sup>2</sup>. For the art critics “switching”

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<sup>2</sup> Kuesters I., *Arts Managers as Liaisons between Finance and Art: A Qualitative Study Inspired by the Theory of Functional Differentiation*, “Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society”, 2010, Vol. 40 Issue 1, P. 43-57.

is actually the way of professional life, while for the media this could be a rather destructive strategy. This happens due to the psychological aggregation shown by the person who “switches”, that obviously can't be shown by the synthetic social phenomena which the media are. That is why media use another strategy, much closer to the frank preference of one pole, whether this pole is defined as serving to the art field or to the art market.

However, even the art marketing institutions could be defined as such not if they are creating the commodity core of the artistic work only and not if they are regarded as such exclusively in the context of existing art-market. On the contrary, these institutions are embedded into the social sphere in part of its socializative influence, so that they exert the forming effect onto the personality of (potential) art consumer and thus benefit from the art field autonomy, too; and vice versa. For instance, a fine arts schooling is deeply embraced by the educational system. Engaging students into the art making, it creates the type of competent art consumer, that is intended to the collectioning (i.e. to the inducing of further arts commodification) more than those not engaged. Being familiar with the artistic production difficulties in childhood, adults who once participated in arts, never ask question that non-artists often do – ‘Why does the artwork cost so much?’

The complete absence or latency of this question creates a principal condition for the art market to exist. If the artistic production is seen as a job to be professionally included in and to be adequately paid for, it rarely faces the doubt in its right to set the price. The credit to inner rules of the art production field provides unquestionability of the arts criteria and artistic making itself, so art consumers trust artists not only in their competencies to be able to paint a good work, but also in the ability of the art itself to develop its own understandings of the aesthetic. In other words, to be truly autonomous, the art production field has to have the status of a bit sacred sphere, where newcomer ought to learn respectfully and doubtlessly what is said to be considered beautiful and artistic nowadays.

Being a typical member of the society one never calls for too much artistic taste: the average person's spiritual satisfaction needs rarely demand sophisticated cultural participation practices. In fact, we all are inclined to rest consuming variable forms of the mass culture, preferring to entertain rather than think, learn or create. Some scholars assign the entertainment to be the key determinant of the future civilization. The importance of entertainment can be seen in a study conducted in 1990s by Brock and David Livingstone, who surveyed 115 American undergraduates with a question how much money they would demand for giving up television for the rest of their lives. More than a half said they would require more than a million dollars<sup>3</sup>. As arts are neither a form of entertainment nor the popular culture, their consumption requires some preparation, carried out by the media. The non-

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<sup>3</sup> Bates S. and Ferri A., *What's Entertainment? Notes Toward a Definition*, “Studies in Popular Culture”, Fall 2010, P. 1-21.

commercial media delivering messages from the art field core to the members of unincluded publicity could be regarded as the specific socialization agents. They give the synoptic sight of processes flowing into arts and about from the beneficial point of view, so that one might be gaining the reverential attitude towards art through the media. That also contribute to the art market reinforcement.

All this results in the quantity of people respecting arts strongly increasing what in turn makes the art consumption fashionable and attractive cultural practice. "Consumption" here stands for two forms of direct conversation with artwork, (1) attending free of charge art exhibitions, and (2) the artwork purchase for collection (i.e. for individual consumption). Though artwork collecting is too expensive for the majority, strong community of art lovers stimulates artists to proceed their work and builds the basis for the translation of art valuing to the next generation. Based on the prepared consumership, the rise of the art market (and the art producers group) begins. Here the need in competent art critics and the multiplicity of critical institutions appear. Alongside with the increasing number of people familiar with arts there also media supporters arise, building the PR between the outer world and the art making field.

Still, at the very beginning no one is interested in the arts except for those already engaged. That is why the only-artistic media at first function as means of the artistic community consolidation rather than execute outward communication or attracting new consumers. However, with the figuration of autonomous art field and the institutionalized interaction patterns establishment there emerges the marketing intent that seeks for the constant extension of customers community.

After the Soviet Union dissociation, regional artistic communities faced the necessity to work on their own, that brought a multiplicity of effects. As to specialized artistic media, those of the National Union of Artists gained the status of the national mass media specialized in arts. But at the local level in early 90s topics of culture and especially arts weren't popular, so the media maintenance of the creative communities decreased. The rare coverage of the cultural events by wide-audience TV, radio and press delivered some information on fine arts, but wasn't able to fulfil the functions of specialized media. Despite the art-focused sectors existence in the "generally" cultural media, the first national non-state printed media, exclusively dedicated to arts, appeared only in 2007 ("ART Ukraine" magazine). Since that time things changed just for a little, particularly when speaking about the specialized media of the local artistic communities.

The local artistic community of the Kharkiv region nowadays has the opportunity to express itself in a few media channels. Having the access to the global media, such as social networks of professional kind (for instance, the ArtCross Internet portal), local cell of the art field still can't be recognized the active Web attenders. Digital media and global networks gave rise to the new format of the direct communication with the audience. Still, participation in them and the Internet usage with an aim of professional development for the specialists in traditional fine arts, peculiarly for

elders, stays unacceptable. The local galleries are more inclined to use Web, what is true also for younger artists. The majority of professional talking, rules and standards establishing, lastly, orders and purchase operations happen in the flow of personal talk. This corresponds to the theoretical image of artistic world as the close and closed sphere. We also consider this preference of the personal and materially provided conversation a psychological consequence of artistic and about-art profession, as fine arts producers and stakeholders primary deal with the material mediums of the visual content. Moreover, the authenticity of artistic work often seems almost its main value. That is why, hypothetically, the preferred form of field insiders media is the printed one.

For Southern, Eastern Ukraine and the closest regions of Russia Kharkiv is a local centre of cultural and particularly artistic life and education. Thus, the local artistic media foundation and existence demonstrate the Bourdieuvian maturity of artistic community and (probably) its preparedness to the art market development. Kharkiv art-specialized medium called "ProART" is a newspaper founded in September 2012. Issues are printed monthly, excluding a two-month gap in summer (during July and August). This answers the same gap in the galleries activity: they have the defined vacation months and season starting in September – the inherited tradition of the high life, which is also kept up by theatres. In the same period artists belonging to the Artists Union of Ukraine have their creative vacations, too. "ProART" audience, as it is stated in the editor's column of the very first issue, consists of professional artists, art critics, galleries staff, students of art schools, art dealers and everyone interested in arts, so the timetable choice seems to be logical. However, this newspaper is distributed through the few sources, including mainly four galleries, artistic shop and central higher school of arts, so it obviously finds the auditory already inclined to be interested in. The newspaper staff consists of the chief editor and the makeup man. The correspondents are local art critics and art critic students, Kharkiv artists, historians and people interested in arts. All their participation is volunteer and non-commercial.

After newspaper existed for year and a half, there was initiated a charitable auction "Kharkiv is a culture city" to support it. It was introduced in March's issue and has brought few visible transformations to the design and structure. The sponsoring galleries appealed to artists asking them to give their artwork for sale to form the basic fund for the newspaper further editing and this call resulted in participation of more than 60 artists. The newspaper shrewdly changed in April 2014. Its volume increased from eight to twelve pages. The newspaper's first page previously consisted of the title on the top, illustrations row in the middle and the editor's word in the bottom, leaving much of free space outside this improvised cross. The editorial board and contacts were situated in the bottom of the last page. From the 17<sup>th</sup> issue "ProART" got a simpler title – crossed "Pro" and "ART" in the upper left corner of the cover, that practically allows to state starting of the newspaper branding. The leftover of the last issues' first page contents the cover image. The editor's word,

editorial board and contact information moved to the second page, that is immanent for larger printed media such like thick journals. Moreover, the paper had introduced the start of the “Arts & Literature”, “Music, Theatre & Cinema” and “Design, Architecture & Fashion” sections headed by special editors. Though articles written on these themes had already appeared in “ProArt”, in this way it officially widened its subjects, showing an ambition to reflect all city cultural space.

Basing on the media content analysis methodology<sup>4</sup>, we attempted to study the mentioned media. Having all the issues from the beginning (September 2012) to the current time, we made a sample with a one year step, taking the first issue of every season. That means the first, the tenth and the twentieth issues, all titled by September, accordingly, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Then every issue was thoroughly measured, analysed by key words, topics, events geography and so on. This synoptic, almost explorative, analysis has let us draw few interesting results.

Within two years geographical focus has literally changed from the high interest to foreign arts in 2012 (25% of space, other – local events) to the attention to the events and topics touching Ukraine outside the Kharkiv region in 2013 (17% of active space dedicated to Ukrainian-but-not-Kharkiv arts, 11% only – to the foreign arts). Finally, in the 2014, 96% of active space were covered with local news and analytics, the rest was describing the war related cultural actions (in the study the war topic is regarded as non-local because of its obvious all-national status) and beauty of the historic sights. On the one hand, it tells clearly of the cultural events multiplicity existence, that gives informational handle to the local artistic community conversation through media. On the other – giving up the page with information of the foreign and local auctions disabled the public rating of the world and Ukraine most expensive artists. Moreover, publications on the world art market have accented on the world-famous Ukrainian artists. In the last issue, this topic stays completely unenlightened, as if it is not interesting for Kharkiv artistic community at all.

However, in early issues, questions of the art market had occupied the separate space on the very last page. We can hypothetically explain the change as the cumulative effect of several factors. First, the situation in the country conducting the military operation completely rejects any intent to pay a fortune for artistic working. Second, being more concerned with Kharkiv events and personalities, the newspaper staff finds the amount of news big enough to fill the space completely without appealing to community of higher levels. Third, the market topic itself didn't seem interesting to the majority of “ProART” readers. Words usage and articles themes change reflect the interrupted trend to the sophisticated media-for-insiders becoming. In the first analyzed issue, for instance, the terms meaning “fine arts”

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<sup>4</sup> Macnamara J. , *Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and Best Practice Methodology*, “Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal”, 2005, 6(1), 1–34. See also: Michaelson D., Griffin T., *New Model for Media Content Analysis*, published by the Institute for Public Relations, 2005. Available at [www.instituteforpr.com](http://www.instituteforpr.com) (Access date: 13.03.2015).

('искусство' or 'мистецтво') is met with the frequency coefficient equal 0,25. In a year its number grows to 1,5, and in the last, already wartime, it falls to 0,5. The same dynamics can be traced for concepts of 'artist', 'artistic', 'creation'.

We also compared the word meeting frequency of the native words meaning arts ('искусство' and 'мистецтво') and the term 'art' that was borrowed from English. In newspaper of 2012<sup>th</sup> coefficient is equal 1,14, excluding the presence in the paper's title and the editor word. Articles of the issue-2013 show the coefficient at 0,43. Finally, the last analyzed paper has no word 'art' in the text at all. This decrease from the first measure to second may be explained by the grown usage of the native words denoting the same concept. However, the last issue shows low level of all these and related words, that means deactualization of concept itself. In the last issue speaking of the arts 'in general' made way for the detailed analytics of certain artworks and events. Preferring of concrete specific words and phrases indicates professionalism increase. As the paper has no official correspondents list, this words usage shift indicates the rise of professional art critics participation.

'Art' in Russian and Ukrainian stands mostly for a part of word and is common in the terms 'art market', 'art critic', 'contemporary art' and so forth. They are borrowed from the Western artistic community discourse and represent modern phenomena of artistic sphere, i.e. institutionalized roles of the producer and critic, that are of great importance at the stable art market. That is why the terms containing 'art' active usage corresponds to the commercial regarding of arts and the artwork. This last conflicts with the autonomous logic of the field, so the field at the stage of becoming crowds commercial logic and these categories out to set up its autonomy.

While the first newspaper shows the primary orientation to tell more about artists and has the poor trope amount but objectivistic tone, the mid one shows the daring rise of the, conceptually and lexically more complicated artwork analysis. However, the second studied paper articles deal more with subjectivist perceptions of artists' works, that leads to the text complexity grown, that isn't considered good for the average media. From the local – moreover specialized, – media perspective, though, this means growing interconnection between the media and the local community it serves to. The media for professional producers of symbolic value obviously is always more sophisticated, in that way segregating its highly competent audience from profanes.

As to the last studied issue, edited in time of the increasing military activity, it shows again the simplification of categories used. Notwithstanding, it doesn't mean the articles' language impoverishment. In general, the style of the very first issue refers to the ambition and a bit self-irony, second keeps in tone, though demonstrating the enthusiastic gravitation to the "serious" publicistic. Instead of deeply analytical points of view, expressed in sometimes sounding too scientifically concepts, the disturbed, highly emotional tone has come in the third. This issue makes accent primarily on neither artists' personalities nor analytical opinions of viewers, but on the event, making the prospect of the arts' escapist

implementation and social meaning. Besides, the articles of the last analysed issue significantly more intend to deal with some historical aspects of the artistic life in the city, tying up the present to the past as its legitimate heritor. This indicates the strengthening of the artists` identity to be Ukrainians, evidenced also by articles language change. Though the newspaper is bilingual, the issue of 2012<sup>th</sup> consists of the text in Russian completely, the issue of 2013<sup>th</sup> contains 86% of the text in Russian and the issue of 2014<sup>th</sup> is written in Ukrainian for 33%.

According to the analysis results, "ProART" newspaper as the specialized local media reflects such features of Kharkiv artistic community as:

- Seasoning of the artistic and exhibitional activity of the city;
- High level of social activity and volunteering, that indicates the strong solidarity of the artistic community;
- Interest to local artistic personalities and events, their historical and social relevance to the city context;
- The growing competence of the newspaper audience, represented by speakers` expression level;
- Non-commercial inclination of the art consideration by critics, that shows art market latency and low development at the current stage;
- Tendency to the field logic prevailing in the future newspaper issues.

From the sociological perspective, we can state the "ProART" newspaper has not only found its niche as the specialized artistic media, but also launched the wider process of the local artistic field further consolidation and, therefore, the art market future becoming. Started as the narrow-topic source of informational notes about the fine arts, primarily focused on Kharkiv events, now it functions as the space for analytical reviews of various culture productions that can be regarded as high art, considering them in the local context. Open and public art critic in the media contributes to the forming of competent art consumers local community, that is a base for the further art market development. The specialized local media are to be regarded as a reflector and potentially the factor of producers local community becoming and strengthening.

### **Specialized media as the art field and the art market evolution reflector**

#### Summary

The article considers the contribution of the specialized local media functioning to the process of the symbolic production field becoming. The core media needs, features and specialties of the local artistic community are been analyzed. The artistic sphere and a local artistic community as its fractal fragment are regarded from the perspective of P. Bourdieu` field theory. Therefore, the specialized local media serve the means of the artistic community consolidation and thus are able to reflect its core values and intents. This preposition was been checked on the example of the local artistic media – the

newspaper “ProART” (Ukraine, Kharkiv, 2012–present). It was analysed basing on the qualitative content analysis methodology. It is concluded the specialized media are the reflector and important factor of the artistic field becoming at the certain territory.

Key words: specialized media, art field, local artistic community, art market, media analysis, ProArt.