

## **Abstract**

Title: An Institutional Critique of Corporate Patronage:  
How Corporations Influence the Curatorial Content of Institutions that use  
Art to Present Science to the Public

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Scientific and technological research is increasing being incorporated into the practice of artists. At the same time, cultural institutions are emerging to present this artwork to the public. Taking the form of a public spectacle, I will choose artwork and exhibitions to examine the dissemination of techno-utopian and technological deterministic ideals in exhibitions that deal with them in either a positive or a negative way. I will critique each ethos in order to compare and contrast them.

Adapting a methodology that looks at both the influence of the corporate patron, and the presentation of the artwork. I look at why the corporation might want to associate themselves with the scientific art by relating it to Bourdieu's critique of cultural and economic capital. I look at the different agendas behind the different types of patrons, and how they affect the curatorial agenda, and how curators come up with strategies to present more critical, scholarly work to the public.

I also look at the Frankfurt School's analyses of the culture industry, and use that to examine how artwork is used to propagate the agenda of the corporate patron, to desensitise the public to shocking ideas. Furthermore I critique the consumer capitalist industry that exploits the Modernist desire for new innovations in art and science. I specifically look at the influence of the Biotech industry on curatorial content. In chapter 4 I look at field of speculative design, known as design fiction, which employs irony and parody to critique the system from the inside.

In light of this discussion, I conclude that the exhibition of art that uses scientific or technological content must be either presented as overtly utopian, or as a covert parody of techno-utopianism. I ask how this could change in the future, if science-art projects are so financially intensive to produce, there is doubt as to how they could exist without the backing of multinational corporations. I question how art-science work will ever be accepted by the mainstream art world, if its autonomy is put into doubt by the agenda of its corporate patrons.