

31.10.2021

Dear artists, gallerists, art workers,

You may have seen “a proposition by CASE” on the artist list. CASE, or Communal Artist Sharing Economy, is a proposal formed with the aim of building more equitable economies within our complicated and often ill-balanced industry.

To this end, we have a proposal for how the economic model of group exhibitions could function, one that we hope could serve as a prototype for others going forward. It is generally accepted that group exhibitions in galleries operate on the economic premise that some artists are more likely to sell while others bring in other forms of value — be it symbolic, or cultural in nature. We believe that this fact perpetuates established economic imbalances while ensuring the under compensation of certain forms of art, while achieving the same nominal visibility in the exhibition context. As an effort to address this, we believe that, as a temporary community of artists in an exhibition, all participating artists should partake in an exhibition's financial success. Therefore we propose that 10% of all sales profits (after production costs) in a group exhibition (5% from the artists' portion and 5% from the galleries') be split equally and redistributed among all participating artists. This way we veer away from purely individualised accumulation towards promoting the collective value of a group of artists based on mutual recognition, appreciation, and compensation. This could also be seen as a low-risk alternative to compensation through artist fees.

With the growing privatisation and stratification of the art world, and an individualised outlook of success where winners and losers are clearly defined in financial terms, we believe that more collective-minded and conscientious economic models must be proposed to intervene in the art system's established structural imbalances. There are clear economic barriers preventing entry into the art world and matters of class accessibility persist throughout the industry. We hope that proposals such as these can move us towards ensuring a mutual sustainability of artists' practices regardless of their economic background and status. While this proposal does not solve the deeper structural economic issues facing artists and cultural workers, we see this as a modest and achievable gesture within the established rules of the art economy — as one step in the right direction, with more to follow.

Sincerely,

CASE

(Nicholas Tammens, Sung Tieu, Studio for Propositional Cinema)