

BLANK PROJECT
Alexandre Ouairy

Silk-screen prints on art paper, 21 x 29,7 cm, edition of 100, 2007.

Blank Project questions the role of the artist, artworks and their environment and economic values, the legal system that protects him, and the free market which allows the artist to "have a career".

Blank Project is a series of 100 silk-screen prints on art paper, all numbered and signed. These imprints have been produced for being sold and the contract that is signed during their acquisition defines the terms and condition of their usage. French Law defines an artist as the moral owner of his artwork, whether it is owned by a private collector or a museum. This is to say that the artist can at any moment modify or even destroy his artwork. Therefore the collector who buys a "Blank Project" is actually buying a potential future artwork. As the title indicates, the project is "blank" because it has not happened yet. The contract stipulates that the artist can at any moment revise it (through any means) or even destroy it. This is the artist's moral right.

The collector is taking a risk: he does not know what he is actually buying, he does not know what shape the artwork will take, or if it will even continue existing in the future. So the collector does not know if his investment is a good one.

Alexandre Ouairy artworks are therefore like stocks. Each Blank Project will initially have the same price and will appear to be the same, i.e. they will just be pieces of paper. The artist's signature, which will define the artwork as his creation, is its only identification.

As Blank Project are like stocks the buyers of the prints become 'shareholders' and investors. By making buyers owners of his 'enterprise', he in a way makes them responsible for his destiny.

Though sold by an artist and bought by art collectors, these securities will not appear in traditional stock trading centres but on the art market and their values will be defined by the art market. What is sold is not an artwork but the idea the artwork represents and its value as determined by galleries and art collectors.

By making himself a company, Alexandre Ouairy participates in this nihilist side of the market economy. He does not make art as this is no longer necessary. Instead, he shows his willingness to make a profit before anything is created. The speculative object is above all himself, a young artist, rather than these non-yet- realized artworks.

Based on a text by curator Anaëlle Pirat.