

Damien Hirst

Gallery Art in a Material World

Ulrich Blaché



Tectum

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Translated from German by
Rebekah Jonas and Ulrich Blanché

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Proofread by Rebekah Jonas

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1) Introduction

a) How does Hirst Depict Consumption?

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How does Damien Hirst, the former Young British Artist, deal with consumer culture in his art? To answer this question, this study highlights representative works of his art, specifically works dealing with different aspects of consumer culture. At the same time, an attempt was made to select works that show his versatility as well as to introduce and analyze works from different periods of his oeuvre and a range of work groups.

This book on Damien Hirst and consumption is the second part of the updated version of my German PhD thesis »Konsumkunst – Kultur und Kommerz bei Banksy und Damien Hirst« (Consumption Art, Culture and Commerce by Banksy and Damien Hirst) published in 2012. The first part of the updated, English version was published 2015 in my book »Banksy – Urban Art in a Material World«. I divided my thesis into two parts due to its length and also to reach a wider readership. Each of the two books makes sense without the other. Both contain the same chapter about Hirst's and Banksy's collaboration pieces and as well as theoretical chapters about consumption. The benefit of both books is that they can be read as autonomous as well as inter-coordinated. So Banksy-readers get to know more about Hirst and vice versa.

Inspired by the subtitle of the Tate Modern's exhibition »Pop Life« in 2009, a title of the same wording, »Art in a Material World«, has been selected as the subtitle for the present study. This consumer-art retrospective exhibition featured Hirst, Koons, and Warhol, among others, three of the artists also discussed here in detail. The exhibition, »Pop Life« explored phenomena between art and commerce, much in the same vein as the present study. Like some of the works discussed here, the title »Art in a Material World« was influenced by a pop song by Madonna in 1985: »We are living in a material world and I am a material girl«, who took the term »material world« from Karl Marx.¹ The materialistic values and faith in objects still seem representa-

¹ Cf. Madonna's single from 1985: Material Girl. See also Karl Marx: »To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under

tive of contemporary consumer society. The term »gallery art« summarizes the site-specificity of Hirst's art analogous to the site-specificity of Street Art:

»In any case, [...] [Hirst is], as Jeff Koons and Andy Warhol, a savvy gallery artist: His work exposes the process of art production, the market and the art world in the broadest sense of the word as a network of inter-related structures, and it fits best into that environment, it even commented. Like all of [Hirst's] activities [...] established here, a dialectic to the area of the commercial, and his immodest participation in it was accompanied by a critical imitation of the self-celebrating operations of the market.«²

But why choose »consumer culture« as the focus of this study? The first chapter focuses on the terminology of consumption in general as well as its use in this analysis as a phenomenon that transcends time and existence. Consumption in its modern form is, at least »for the masses', a relatively new phenomenon. In the history of art (as dealt with in the chapter »Consumption and Art History«) consumption only first appeared in the 20th century by the DADAists and later, more conspicuously, in Pop Art, with a mix of glorification, observation, irony, criticism, or perhaps all at the same time. The positive aspects of consumer culture have secured, at least until now, rising levels of affluence in the western world, while the negative aspects of (perverted) consumer behavior are associated directly, although this association is often denied, with the most momentous issues of our time: global warming and the international financial crisis. Artists acted as »seismographs« of their socio-cultural environment and reacted to the diverse phenomena of what is here described under the term »consumer culture« in various ways. On the other hand, they also shaped society's image of consumer culture. Along with the question of (over)consumption in consumer cultures, the issue of consumption (and/or capitalism) as a source of meaning and identity will be raised in this study.

the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurges of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.« In *Capital*. Vol. 1. Afterward to the Second German Edition.

² This quote deals originally with the artist Martin Kippenberger, but was transferred to Hirst by the author. Quote by Jessica Morgan: Sankt Martin. In: Doris Krystof, Jessica Morgan (ed.): *Martin Kippenberger : Einer von Euch, unter Euch, mit Euch*. Exhibition catalogue. Ostfildern 2006, p. 11.

Damien Hirst had to struggle constantly with the accusation that he was merely creating popular, salable, or easily consumable art. At the same time, there are very few contemporary artists who, intentionally and strategically organized, have garnered so much attention from the mainstream media as Hirst. The accusation of selling out and, on the other hand, the great popularity that he enjoys are both closely related to one another and act as a sign of our times; a subject examined in his oeuvre. Discussions about the aesthetic value of art – as compared to their financial value as a consumer product – are incorporated into his works, as they also deal with the value and importance of consumer products.

Not only has Damien Hirst's oeuvre hardly been discussed academically, but also the rare publications that exist tend to focus primarily on his depiction of death.³ While the present analysis will show that death continues to be a motif in Hirst's work, it became, like his other provocations, a rather routine ingredient and was eclipsed by a new focus: (over)consumption. As the »most expensive« living artist, an analysis of Hirst in light of the themes of consumption is particularly attractive. The (often) very valuable materials combined with mass production smack of consumerism, and the press surrounding his art echoes the trend: »Try to find one of many popular articles about Damien Hirst [...] which does not mention money.«⁴

Despite ongoing speculation by daily press and art publications that Hirst was just enjoying his 15 minutes of fame, a common phenomenon in modern consumer culture, his art continues to create considerable interest and is experiencing an ever increasing importance in the media and in the art world.⁵ In fact, this long-term media coverage in particular shows that despite all the allegations, the artist has been able to exemplify the consumer culture of his and our age and aptly reflect it in his works. These specifics of our time should be examined in light of Hirst's artwork. Hirst was chosen because on the surface his art seems to be transparent and easy to understand.

³ See e.g. Konstanze Thümmel: »Shark Wanted«. Untersuchungen zum Umgang zeitgenössischer Künstler mit lebenden und toten Tieren am Beispiel der Arbeiten von Damien Hirst. Marburg 1998.

⁴ Julian Stallabrass: High Art Lite. The Rise and Fall of Young British Art. 1999. Revised and Expanded Edition. London 2006, p. 81.

⁵ The majority of large national and international newspapers wrote about Hirst, e.g. the New York and London Times, German F.A.Z. and Süddeutsche Zeitung etc.

Damien Hirst is still often categorized under the label of YBA, even though he developed further in both content and form away from this narrow term. This publication does not deal primarily with Young British Art, but rather with the artist Damien Hirst and his relationship with consumer culture. Hirst increased his artistic innovations of the early YBA-years both qualitatively and quantitatively to the point of creating (self mocking) caricatures or homages of his series, allowing a number of them to end with a sensational finale at the Sotheby's auction 'Beautiful Inside My Head Forever' on 15 and 16 September, 2008. He then dedicated himself to painting for the first time, although he continued to use his previous media. September 15, 2008 also marked the day on which the financial bubble of the international markets bursts with the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers investment bank, sparking the most momentous financial crisis since World War II. The present study is primarily limited to Hirst's work up to this point, while more recent work covers the years immediately preceding 2008.

Before a concrete analysis of the artistic environment of Hirst can take place, an explanation and definition of »consumer culture« and related terms like »consumer society« and »consumerism« is necessary. In the same way, consumer culture will be discussed in the context of religion, particularly with regard to Walter Benjamin's theory of »capitalism as religion«, taken from his 1921 publication of the same name. Another chapter provides an overview of this motif in art history, which establishes continuity from Marcel Duchamp to Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons and contemporary art. In addition, older examples that are closely related to consumption such as the moralizing Dutch genre painting denouncing overindulgence are briefly discussed.

A chapter that deals with the metropolis of London around the turn of the millennium follows this overview of the phenomenon of »consumer culture«. The chapter begins with a socio-cultural-political-economic background of the city; first in the Thatcher era (1979-1990) including the impact on economy and society; and then the New Labour era of Tony Blair, marked by terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York as well as the attack in London in July of 2005. These historical developments are specifically related to the art scene in London since 1980, which, until that time, was dominated by historic structures and strict limitations. A portrayal of the change of system at Goldsmiths College illuminates the university environment of young Damien Hirst, who came to London in the mid-1980s. This

description will be followed by a general overview of the Young British Artists in the 1990s, of which Hirst is considered the best-known representative, as well as an overview of formative influences on his art such as advertising or the first Saatchi Gallery.

For purposes of style, the majority of Hirst's individual works selected for analysis in this work stem from the time after 2000. This time marked a conspicuous shift in his oeuvre in the direction of consumer culture.

Collectors looking to purchase a piece by Damien Hirst usually may only buy an object from a series, because the artist rarely creates individual works that stand alone. For that reason, this study presents four of Hirst's series. The »Natural History« series and its display cases helped Hirst develop a reputation that he later cemented with his other series, which, although usually less provocative and explicit, often utilized similar materials and motifs, such as real dead animals as a main subject.

Each series object mirrors the motifs that characterize the entire set, producing a recognition effect within the series. This study begins with an examination of the »Natural History« series, which Hirst created between 1991 and 2008. These pieces often feature dead livestock, such as cows or pigs, but also exotic animals like sharks, which Hirst presented in glass display cases filled with formaldehyde. One object in the series, »The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living,« garnered Damien Hirst a lot of recognition in 1992. His work with two formaldehyde-cows, »Mother and Child Divided« earned him the prestigious Turner Prize in 1995. The young bull in formaldehyde, »The Golden Calf« in 2008 (figure 6), analyzed below as representative of the »Natural History« series, acted as the »workhorse« of Hirst's »Beautiful Inside My Head Forever« exhibition, which, as a whole, is also seen as a milestone in his work.

In this way, the »Natural History« showcases Hirst's art. It established his reputation as an artist and received the most attention in the media, not in the least because works from this series are among Hirst's most shocking, most expensive, and largest pieces. Nevertheless, as Stallabrass points out, Hirst made the most financial revenue with paintings such as butterfly, spin, and Spot Paintings, of which he also produced and sold quantitatively many more than the more expensive formaldehyde works. Paintings have a much

larger market than installations because they are also less prone to market fluctuations.⁶

16 Hirst used marketing and promotional techniques to structure and influence his works; methods on which he then comments in the works as well. Series and repetitions sell well. The existence of even just two works serves to reinforce the message through repetition.⁷ In this way, the series relates to the general consumer culture in terms of the associated advertising expression »recognition effect«, which, in the case of the »Natural History« series, is triggered by the name or the established »brand« of Damien Hirst in combination with the animal in formaldehyde. Like Warhol, Hirst produced works en masse in his factory with an army of up to 160 assistants, a practice that serves to question the uniqueness of a work of art and its individual production. The masses of consumers need massive numbers of original works of art. At the same time, his mass production reflects the current industrial society, as Warhol's Pop Art before it.⁸

In the same way that Warhol's intentions and motivations cannot be known, whether Hirst used his production techniques to glorify consumer production and consumer culture or comment ironically on the glamour of consumer culture remains unknown. Mass products appeal to different people in different ways.⁹ Most likely Hirst sought to show that glorification of consumption and its criticism are inextricably linked¹⁰: »I try to say something and deny it at the same time.«¹¹

Hirst (like many of his fellow YBAs) did not want to be judged on a moral basis. He is »potentially serious« and his rejection of such moral statements can again be judged as moral or immoral, an attitude also expressed in an exhibition in the text for the artwork »Shark«:

»The extraordinary tension of the piece comes from its neutrality – from raising issues yet refusing argument. The work offers drama without

⁶ Compare to: Liebs 2010.

⁷ Hirst himself stressed the relative market security of painting in an interview with Liebs in 2010. See also: Julian Stallabrass: *High Art Lite*. New York 2006, p. 162.

⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 190-191.

⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 132.

¹¹ Hirst 1997, p. 48.

catharsis, confrontation and resolution without provocation without redress. Responsibility is returned to the viewer.«¹²

The Young British Artists studied postmodern theory in detail in an effort to use and manipulate it in such a way as to hinder its use in imposing a matrix of interpretation and context on their work. In the tradition of Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons, Hirst created an artistic persona and thereby transferred the responsibility of interpreting a work to the viewer.

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What, then, are the implications for an academic study of Damien Hirst? When limited to the traditional and obvious art-history references, any statement in reference to Hirst is not much more than name-dropping: Duchamp, Warhol, Koons; and the artist himself often evokes and encourages these references. According to Stallabrass, Hirst's art is often like a board game that the viewer himself must play, because the artistic originality died with the author. An analysis of Hirst can be conducted only as recombination of fixed discourses. As game pieces, the viewer receives a set of associations: religion, science, death, love, and art history. Even philosophical theories are part of the game. Within one single work, Hirst uses the elements of belief systems like religion or capitalism contradictorily. The elements work both for and against one another at the same time¹³:

»Objects, expressions and stereotypes are hijacked and reworked in order to address traditional themes such as sex, death and destruction, love and loss.«¹⁴

Hirst uses a checklist of expectations in order to create beautiful, salable art. »Anyone who combines images, relies not only on creation of value, but also prepares the foundation for mercantile fantasies and through that, to an even greater extent he is following the logic of the art market. It appears to be both the task and the accomplishment of an artist to merge items that are as profane as possible to create ensembles that are as momentous and, consequently, as valuable as possible.«¹⁵

Hirst's art sustains a certain theoretical inquiry, but fails to impress the viewer with the education and depth of the artist. Instead, Hirst uses irony to prompt individuals to work out their own perceptions of the nuances and

¹² British Council Visual Arts Department: Damien Hirst. London 1992.

¹³ Clarrie Wallis: In the Realm of the Senseless. In: Muir/Wallis 2004, p. 102-103.

¹⁴ Muir/Wallis 2004, p. 98.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Ullrich: Aby Warburg. Denn Bedeutung schlummert überall. Zeit Online 10 January 2013.

shades of gray in his artwork. Hirst's fellow YBA, Angus Fairhurst, said of himself: »I like saying a word over and over again till it loses its meaning, and then it gets it back again.«¹⁶, a statement that equally applies to Hirst. His art, according to Muir, always contains a »much used punch line of an over-told joke«¹⁷. The old joke is a good analogy for his work: he said, »I think a joke is like art, it's like water. It's got to be able to go everywhere.«¹⁸ Muir expressed similar sentiments about the YBAs:

»[...] [They] were preoccupied with a form of visual attack not entirely dissimilar to the language of advertising; recalling Saatchi's own campaigns, especially those punchy one liners that had smoothed the path to Thatcher's political victory.«¹⁹

The simple audio and visual repetition; in pop songs, advertising slogans, and other manifestations of consumption, are always ambivalent. Depending on the viewer, it is just that simple or, on the other hand, rather something that reflects and criticizes that which is so basic and kitschy.

The aim of this study is not to use structure and language to merely ruminate on tired interpretation schemes, but rather turn the tables to focus on the viewer and the manufacturing process of the works as well as the central aspects of money and art as a consumer product, themes that are often avoided in art studies because they affect both art historians and their *raison d'être* most centrally.

The second series analyzed is Hirst's set of Butterfly Paintings, which he created from 1991 until the aforementioned exhibition in 2008. These monochrome canvases affixed with dead butterflies are explained in two examples, both with a different focus: consumption in connection first with pop culture and second with religion. These sets are also divided formally into those with a few whole butterflies and those with many butterfly wings (Wing Paintings). I then deal with a sort of foil to the Butterfly Paintings, the »Fly Paintings«.

In Hirst's »Natural History« series as well as in the Butterfly Paintings (Figures 12 and 13) the animal acts both as the center of attention and as the carrier of meaning. In addition to herbal and geological materials, substances derived from both animals and humans, including bodily fluids, belong to

¹⁶ Gregor Muir: It must be a Camel (for now). In: Muir & Wallis 2004, p. 94.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 93.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 94.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 202.

the group of natural materials. These are among the oldest artistic materials in general; however, they first gained artistic autonomy in the 20th century. Among the first artists in recent art history to integrate animals or animal parts into their work were surrealists like Miró, who used a stuffed parrot in an assemblage in 1936, or Meret Oppenheim with the creation of her fur cup (»Dejeuner en fourrure«) in the same year. After the interruption of the Second World War, natural materials did not find their way back into works of art until the 1950s. At that time, Robert Rauschenberg used them in his collages, which he called »Combines«, including a stuffed goat (»Monogram«, 1959) or a bald eagle. His mixture of earlier Pop Art and Neo-DADA are ironic paraphrases of the dreams of consumer society and of typical characters of his time. Rauschenberg's »Combines« build a bridge between DADA and Damien Hirst's Butterfly Paintings, whose works also combine collage, readymade, sculpture, and painting. Both artists create works that exist between two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, in other words, between art and reality or between art and life. The transition to the third dimension is comparable to an »incarnation«.

Another of Hirst's pieces analyzed here is »For the Love of God« (Figures 23 and 24) from 2007. This work was chosen for this study due to its reputation as the most expensive piece of art by a living artist, a reputation that fits well into an examination of his works with regard to consumer culture. Additionally, the importance of this »Diamond Skull«, its alternate title by which it is often called, within Hirst's oeuvre as well as his references in the piece to many other series were further reasons to select this particular work for analysis. »For the Love of God« can be seen as the beginning of the group of works the »Skulls«, although precedents in Hirst's earlier work already existed. From 1998 onwards, Hirst used whole human skeletons, including »Rehab Is For Quitters« (1998/99) and »Death Is Irrelevant« (2000) and also a skull next to animal skeletons in »Where Are We Going? Where Do We Come From? Is There A Reason?« (2000-2004). As an independent motif, the skull appears first as a cow's skull (1994) and soon thereafter as a human skull (2005). The latter case is a silver cast of a human skull, basically a similar depiction of consumer culture as in »The Diamond Skull«, with the difference that its monetary value is much lower, serving to highlight the integral importance of the sale price (£50 million) for the interpretation of the Diamond Skull.

The last of Hirst's series addressed in this study is the group of Spot Paintings (Figures 34), which he has been creating on and off since 1988. A piece from this series, »Keep it Spotless (defaced Hirst)«, forms the basis of a joint work with Banksy, the analysis of which provides a seamless transition to a comparison of both artists. A short description of his series »Pharmaceutical Cabinets« (since 1989) in relation to these alternatively titled »Pharmaceutical Paintings« will be included in the analysis. The interpretation is particularly concerned with the relationship between consumer culture and science/medicine.

All these works are analyzed in terms of materials, iconography, and history of ideas with regard to their framing of consumer culture. In addition, particular emphasis is given to the position of the viewer and the use of the space that plays a dominant role for Hirst.

At the time of this study, Damien Hirst is only in his early fifties, a fact that limits the definitive scope of statements about his oeuvre. This study regards itself as the first step towards further studies about Hirst.

b) How is the Term Consumer Culture Used in this Study?

The term »consumerism« is a difficult concept often linked to negative-critical connotations such as manipulation and alienation, but is often used differently in various contexts or interpreted to varying extremes. The form of traditional Western European consumer and luxury criticism associated with this negative connotation goes back to the 17th Century or even back to antiquity. As late as the 1970s, the term was often used in a neutral, purely quantitative economic manner. Since the 1990s, the term has begun, according to Wyrwa, to lose its pejorative undertone, and is now less »than passive suffering, but as an act of communication, understood as a moment of social and political exchange.«²⁰

In the context of this study, the term consumption carries this 'positive communicative act' explicitly as well. In this context, consumption implies not just purely economically-neutral consumption, as in the now outdated

²⁰ Wyrwa in Siegrist 1997, p. 747, see also David Sabean: Die Produktion von Sinn beim Konsum der Dinge. In: Wolfgang Ruppert (Ed.): Fahrrad, Auto, Kühlschrank. Zur Kulturgeschichte der Alltagsdinge. Frankfurt/Main 1993.

term »Konsumverein« (cooperative), but rather emphasizes the importance of consumption in today's consumer society and consumer culture (see corresponding chapter). A careful examination of both the act of consumption and of the consumer (i.e. the observation of a human being with regard to what s/he selects, consumes, discards) automatically leads to a critical view of consumption, but not in the one-sided understanding embodied by the classic leftist critique of consumer society (see corresponding chapter), but in the original sense of the word criticism – something balanced, that both describes and evaluates the subject in both positive and negative ways. Nevertheless, the term »consumption« carries with it a slightly negative connotation derived from history in the same way that the term »consumerism« is not entirely neutral. In the present study, I deliberately omitted the concept of capitalism and the use of the term »critique of capitalism«, as consumption is seen here as the main and sometimes the only social action and interaction in the predominant form of modern capitalism. In this study, consumption has the same relationship to capitalism as praying to religion (see chapter consumption and religion), whereby the act of consuming is a manifestation of the current economic and social order. To consume means to be part of society. Both artists work within this present system of capitalism; they comment upon and shape its specific formulation or action, that is, consumption and human behavior within this matrix, with Banksy's sarcastic words:

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»We can't do anything to change the world until capitalism crumbles. In the meantime we should all go shopping to console ourselves.«²¹

Even beyond areas like street art, YBAs, or Pop Art, that are covered in the present study, the relationship between art and the market is ever present. This relationship is also reflected in and closely tied to performance art, a form that at its inception developed as a counterweight to the idea of artwork as a consumable product and, at times, offers highly sophisticated reflections on such market mechanisms of art. As a theater scholar as well as art historian, I often compare performance art with performance; even if, for reasons of space, comparable (in terms of this work also fertile) matters such as fluxus, situationism, or land art cannot be further explored.

²¹ Banksy in Wall and Piece 2005, p. 204.

c) Sources

Academic sources on Damien Hirst are limited, with all the resulting advantages and disadvantages.

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Most texts about Hirst can be divided into two categories: mass press and exhibition catalogues or articles in professional art journals. The former are concerned primarily with the person of Damien Hirst as a celebrity, that is, the persona that he presents to the public, or what he generates for the public. The works are not usually called by their official titles. Instead, they are often simplified to ironically degrading alternative titles such as »Pickled Beasts« for the »Natural History« – series, »The Shark« for »The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living«, and »The (Diamond) Skull« instead of »For the Love of God«. In addition to those titles, publications mention the (estimated or actual selling) price. Often, the open secret or insinuation that Hirst is poking fun at the art market, the buyers, and the public instead of creating »real« art (whatever that might be), is featured in such media pieces. In this study, the art market is the totality of art spaces and action places where works of fine art are traded; i.e. galleries, art fairs, collectors' fairs, or auctions.

Alternatively, exhibition catalogues and professional journals report in an »anything goes« sort of mantra, that Hirst handles elemental themes such as death, life, religion, and love. These publications often use terms such as »vanitas«, »memento mori«, »morbid«, or »beauty«, but the consumer culture aspect of his work is most often completely omitted. However, a large number of interviews with Hirst are particularly striking as sources. They are most often published by himself or his galleries, such as the collection »On the Way to Work« (2001), which he published with his favorite interview partner, the writer Gordon Burn – as a fan of Francis Bacon, Hirst saw Burn as his own David Silvester in a way. Burn succeeded in asking at least some critical questions. In this way, Burn stands in contrast to well-known art historians and journalists such as Rudi Fuchs, Stuart Morgan, and Hans-Ulrich Obrist. Interviews were important sources for this study, although they are still regarded with caution. The interview as an academic or even neutral source is also seen by the leftist author Stallabrass as a source which lacks critical distance and objectivity:

»[I]t is an inadequate form of explication. We have seen that artists can be singularly unhelpful informants, far less concerned with elucidating

the work for people who might be puzzled by it than with using the opportunity to foster a particular artistic image and fend off critique. Nevertheless, such statements have an air of authenticity: no matter how disingenuous or evasive, they have issued from the mouth of the artist, they emanate from the inner circle, the exclusive scene, and thus take on an ineluctable quality, as symptoms of an alluring aesthetic malaise. Precisely because of this they are no substitute for critical thought.²²

The exhibition catalogue of the »Beautiful Inside My Head Forever« auction includes an interview of Hirst by Burns. Other texts in the catalogue as well as texts in the catalogue for Hirst's first retrospective »Damien Hirst. The Agony and the Ecstasy« from 2004 in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, repeat statements by Hirst that are often relatively uncensored and express more or less candid thoughts about his works. The catalogue for the YBA group exhibition »Sensation« from 1997 at the Royal Academy of Art in London is also a fertile source, specifically with regard to the articles by Richard Shone and Martin Maloney although in most cases the articles do not get much beyond inventory. Another helpful source was the Tate Modern »In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida« exhibition catalogue by Gregor Muir and Clarrie Wallis in 2004.

An examination of other printed literature about Damien Hirst reveals the striking fact that most of the books were published by himself and his galleries or in cooperation with one or the other. Despite a career spanning two decades, further »independent« academic publications or catalogue essays about his exhibitions that are not »controlled« by him can be counted on one hand. The English-language based literature by Julian Stallabrass »High Art Lite. The Rise and Fall of Young British Art« (in the second, revised and expanded edition of 2006) dealt with the so-called YBAs in a rather academic, leftist and critical way, in contrast to Gregor Muir's informative and entertaining collection of anecdotes »Lucky Kunst« from 2009. Jeremy Cooper's overview and YBA-summary book »Growing up. The Young British Artists at 50« (2012) was also helpful; a book about some important YBAs, including Hirst. Cooper is interested in the artists' biographies, not so much in analyzing their work and gives helpful background information often without detailed sources.

²² See Stallabrass 2006, p. 273-274.

The unjustly neglected dissertation (published unfortunately only in German) by Konstanze Thümmel: »'Shark Wanted'. Untersuchungen zum Umgang zeitgenössischer Künstler mit lebenden und toten Tieren am Beispiel der Arbeiten von Damien Hirst« (1997) deals with Hirst's early years and is a balanced, in-depth analysis especially with regard to his treatment of animals. Luke White's dissertation: »Damien Hirst and the Legacy of the Sublime in Contemporary Art and Culture«²³ (2009) would perhaps be more aptly titled »The Legacy of the Sublime in Contemporary Art and Culture« based on the small amount of space he actually commits to Hirst in the study. Nevertheless, he handles Hirst's sculpture »The Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living« as well. Especially White's chapter »Und der Haifisch«: Hirst's Shark as an Image of Capital« (like the whole thesis) analyzes Hirst's sculpture in the context of White's theoretical thoughts. In this way, his thesis is a suitable extension to this study, as consumption also plays a major role for White.

Veit Ziegelmaier's German dissertation »Ratio et religio: das Heiligenbild bei Damien Hirst, hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Installation The Apostles (2002/03) und Jesus and the Disciples (1994) in der Londoner Ausstellung Romance in the Age of Uncertainty (2003)« from 2009 is not easy to find as it is neither accessible online nor has it been published as a book. It contains a concise summary in English. Ziegelmaier presents a study worth reading, which focuses on images of saints (»Heiligenbild«) with regards to Hirst's installation »The Apostles« and »Jesus and the Disciples«. The author's detailed and compelling analysis of the artworks shows how the artist brings together the complementary areas of *ratio* and *religio*.

The most influential literature about consumer culture for this study was Wolfgang Ullrich's »Habenwollen« (2006), even though Ullrich's concept of the guilty conscience that arises from consumption and is harmful and unnecessary in the affluent society of today, seems questionable. Furthermore, he largely ignores well-known consumer issues such as environmental degradation and exploitation of the third world, which remain relevant aspects of the critique of consumerism. The essay collection »Europäische Konsumgeschichte« from 1997 edited by Siegrist, Kaelble, and Kocka and Norbert Bolz's »Das konsumistische Manifest« from 2002 provide further valuable stimulation. But Bolz' dubious proposition, influenced by the attacks on

²³ Damien Hirst and the Legacy of the Sublime in Contemporary Art and Culture, A thesis submitted to Middlesex University 2009.

September 11, 2001 (that at the time had just recently occurred), that consumption could act as a counterweight to international terrorism, is more than questionable. Even Zygmunt Bauman's »Leben als Konsum« (2007) and particularly Naomi Klein's »No Logo« (2000) provided important academic ideas and examples. Neal Lawson's »All Consuming« is rather anecdotal and was clearly written for the UK consumer landscape in a similar style to Walter Grasskamp's »Konsumglück. Die Ware Erlösung« (2000).

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Further literature consulted about single aspects include Joan Gibbons »Art and Advertising« (2005), the anthology edited by Dirk Baecker »Kapitalismus als Religion« (2003), Ute Dettmar's and Thomas Küpper's anthology »Kitsch. Texte und Theorien« (2007), and also Sarah Thornton's »Seven Days in the Art World« (2008).

2) Consumption Concepts and their Use in the Present Investigation

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»Consumption has been the leading ideology of our society for a long time.«

Boris Groys, art historian

a) The Term Consumption

The word consumption comes from the Latin *consumere* (use, expend, exhaust) and refers to the use of perishable or durable market goods and services. Consumption is one of the pair of codependent terms »consumption and production«, which form a tight reciprocal relationship: »Consumption is the goal of production.« The concept of using up or decreasing is inherent in the term consumption, a usage that results in the utilization of consumer goods in such a way as to change or transform them so that they are no longer available in another form or dimension. Because the use defines the good, often such goods no longer exist after use, but rather become a secondary product, usually waste, which may be less valuable, completely worthless, or even harmful. As a user or consumer, a natural person is designated to acquire, that is buy, goods and services for personal gratification. Often the term consumer also has a historically negative connotation (»average Joe« or German, »Otto-Normal-Verbraucher«), because it sounds rather passive and manipulated as opposed to the active producer.

Theoretically, the purpose of »doing business«, a close relative of consumption, is primarily to satisfy (cultural) needs. In practice, however, profit maximization plays a large roll, as well as the creation of consumer needs.²⁴ Private households are supplied with the consumer goods they demand. The demand for consumer goods that are not necessary for survival (non-essentials), is influenced by various factors, mostly through different types of advertising. In this way, a need and consequent demand are, at least in part, artificially generated. The demand for one consumer product compared to

²⁴ See König 2008, p. 15, 16 and 52.

another is directed by the price.²⁵ Furthermore, in theory, demand is influenced by the endowed benefits for the consumer, the consumer's needs, and the available income of the household. Rising prices of consumer goods and/or falling incomes usually result in a decrease in demand of households.

b) Consumerism

i) The Concept of Consumerism

The term consumerism generally refers to consumption critique or critique of exaggerated consumption. This consumer-criticism is not aimed at the purchase and consumption of goods that are necessary for survival, but mostly towards the purchase and consumption of non-essential luxury goods and is rooted in the aforementioned luxury debate. What is considered essential is dependent on the socio-cultural and temporal context and is therefore always debatable. The term consumption (German »Konsum«) is, at least in Germany, often equated with consumerism, because life-sustaining consumption is not generally called into question and often discussions concerning the concept have already been loaded with this critical connotation.

The concept of consumerism has been around since the 1970s, discussed, among others, by Italian film director and theorist Pier Paolo Pasolini, who published his »Scritti corsari«²⁶ in 1975, in which he criticized consumption in the western world as exaggerated. Pasolini formulated the thesis of consumerism as a new form of totalitarianism, because it claims to extend the consumer »ideology« to the entire world. The results are the threat of the destruction of social life forms and the equalization of cultures through the creation of a global consumerist mass culture. Consumer criticism and the rejection of excessive consumption are valid features of a consumer society.

»Nothing in the modern consumer society is consumed so happily as the critique of consumption. To consume just seems to be morally reprehensible – in the first place you should create, produce, be creative.«²⁷

²⁵ See Hariolf Grupp: Messung und Erklärung des technischen Wandels: Grundzüge einer empirischen Innovationsökonomik. Hamburg 1997.

²⁶ See Pier Paolo Pasolini: Freibeuterschriften. Die Zerstörung der Kultur des Einzelnen durch die Konsumgesellschaft. Berlin 1975.

²⁷ Quoted in Max Hollein: Shopping. In: Shopping 2002, p. 13.