



Today's artists have grown savvier at crafting corporate identities than corporations themselves.
Left: Tom Sachs, *Nutsy's McDonald's (1:1)*, 2001.

HOW ARTISTS BECAME THE NEW BUSINESS GURUS

BRANDING. PRODUCTION LOGISTICS. PRODUCT PLACEMENT. EMPLOYEE INCENTIVIZATION. TODAY'S ART-WORLD SUPERSTARS HAVE MASTERED THEM ALL. SHOULD CORPORATE LEADERS TAKE A PAGE FROM THEIR PLAYBOOK?

IT'S NO SECRET THAT INTERNATIONAL ART stars have been raking in the dough, even as the global business climate remains sluggish. The usual explanation: Deep-pocketed moguls with recessionproof fortunes and a yen for contemporary art (Russian oligarchs, China's new business elite, American hedgefund managers) keep buying. But give credit to the artists for effectively marshaling their resources to create great product and an enviable business model. In fact, many of the biggest names in art today seem better at

running businesses than the people actually running businesses.

Consider three of the most famous (and prolific) artists of their generation, all of whom operate like CEOs. Jeff Koons, who started out as a Wall Street commodities broker, is a legendary delegator—"I'm basically the idea person," he once told an interviewer. He employs more than a hundred fellow artists to churn out paint-by-numbers (literally) art and kitsch sculptures while also managing the outside vendors and fabricators needed to produce

technically sophisticated pieces like his tulip series (one of which just sold for \$34 million). Japanese superstar Takashi Murakami maintains studios on two continents so he can operate 24 hours a day. He also constantly looks for new means to disseminate his brand, lending his signature "superflat" aesthetic to Louis Vuitton leather goods and Kanye West album covers. British artist Damien Hirst operates a 97,000-square-foot production facility in a converted British plastics plant, where his company, Science, Ltd., employs hundreds of artists, metalworkers, and taxidermists to create his signature spot paintings and assorted pickled animals; he also has a knack for identifying new revenue streams, turning eight-figure works into three-figure wallpaper designs and skateboard decks for the plebs. An art economy unto himself, Hirst left his longtime gallerist, Larry Gagosian, last December, having apparently decided he no longer required the services of the world's top art dealer.

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Suits, take note. "In a crisis, creativity is more important than ever," says Jerry Wind, a marketing expert and professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Companies fail when they stagnate and become complacent. That's why, he says, "it's critical for businesses to look to artists, who rethink, reinvent, and find the new"; he cites Picasso, Duchamp, and Brancusi as prime examples.

Most people chalk up that kind of restless creative innovation to id and instinct. But according to Brad Grossman, principal of Grossman & Partners, a cultural consultancy

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that advises clients like General Electric and Microsoft on the practices of artists and other culture producers, it's the result of left-brain thinking. Grossman works closely with Shepard Fairey, the pioneering guerrilla artist known for his "OBEY Giant" posters and his "Hope" campaign for Barack Obama. Fairey's the sort of creative force you might assume would be all bravado, but in fact he's highly calculated. "He backs up everything he does by inundating himself with tons of information from outside his field," Grossman says. Most public artists do. Christo and Jeanne-Claude became famous for their gargantuan installations of umbrellas, fences, and gates, but those undertakings were as much about the production logistics of navigating bu-

reaucratic red tape as the breathtaking end products the masses experienced.

But there may be no more important lesson artists can offer than to invest in your people. Take Tom Sachs, who has emerged as an unlikely expert in organizational efficiency—the art world's answer to Peter Drucker, the original management consultant. Ostensibly, Sachs' 2012 exhibition "Space Program: Mars"—a collection of life-size sculptures of surface rovers, landing modules, and mission-control equipment at the Park Avenue Armory in New York City—set out to approximate the experience of interplanetary exploration. But the show was really about Sachs' team-oriented management philosophy. To enter the landing module, visitors first had to watch his 2010 short film *Ten Bullets* and pass a test based on its tenets. Cheeky and sincere, it's a creative manifesto that spells out the daily working code of Sachs' studio for current and future employees. Its core principles—such as "Sacred Space" (treat your work area like a temple), "Sent Does Not Mean Received" (follow up on all communication), and "Be Thorough" (never half-ass it)—are pragmatic and persuasive. So much so, in fact, that corporations like Nike and Kohler, not to mention NASA, have shown it to their staffs.

Underscoring the film is a conviction that successful businesses are fueled by employees who feel a sense of autonomy and see tangible results from their efforts. It's simple, Sachs says: "The thing art has over industry is love. Make great things and you'll do fine. It's about doing the work for the love of the work—and the reward for good work is more work." □

The King of the Takeover: Gallerist David Zwirner

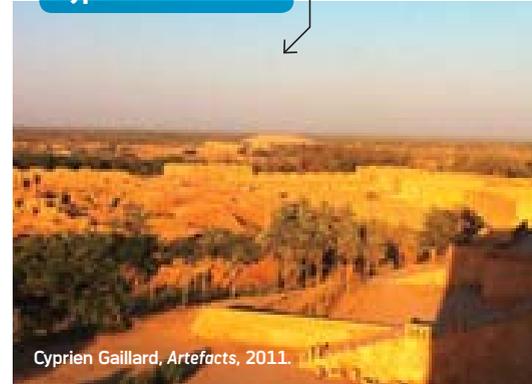
Already one of the world's most powerful gallerists, representing blue-chippers like Luc Tuymans, Raymond Pettibon, and Neo Rauch, the 48-year-old German-born New York art dealer David Zwirner is now expanding his empire. Last October, he opened a London outpost, then in February he celebrated his gallery's 20th anniversary by inaugurating an additional, five-story Manhattan loca-

tion. In May, Zwirner will mount a one-off show of work by Jeff Koons, who is represented by rival gallerist Larry Gagosian—a major coup. Following the recent defections from Gagosian of Damien Hirst and Yayoi Kusama (the latter is rumored to be headed Zwirner's way), this mergers-and-acquisitions ace seems poised to become the new king of the art world. davidzwirner.com



Zwirner with a work by the artist Jason Rhoades.

On the Fast Track: Cyprien Gaillard



Cyprien Gaillard, *Artefacts*, 2011.

This 32-year-old Frenchman is set to become a global brand. Working across media, Gaillard depicts entropy in its myriad forms: crumbling apartment blocks, bucolic forests menaced by clouds of smoke. After winning several prestigious European prizes and becoming a darling of the art-world cognoscenti, Gaillard will make it in America this year. "The Crystal World," at MoMA PS1, his first New York solo show (through March 18; momaps1.org), explores mankind's impact on landscapes over time, juxtaposing images of Babylonian antiquities with scenes from desiccated postwar Iraq, Mayan ruins with Cancun's modern-day megaresorts. His self-titled exhibition this spring at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (April 20–July 18; hammer.ucla.edu) will show California in a similar light.