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How Does Visual Fine Art Support Improvement in Marketing Communication? Selected Examples

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The purpose of the study is to describe the potential role of visual fine arts in marketing as a suggestive instrument of marketing communication.*
Design/Methodology/Approach: *The following research questions have been formulated: Can fine arts and other forms of visual communication be employed in marketing to involve people/customers and encourage them to perceive a message deeply to formulate their feedback for the sender of the marketing message? Why should people's experiences be considered a necessary component in marketing communication? To answer these questions, desk research and observation in museums and city space were implemented in this study. The presented examples of works served as a basis for an individual assessment of their impact on the process of marketing communication without suggesting generalization of the conclusions.*
Findings: *The study results showed that visual fine arts could play an important role in marketing as a tool of marketing communication and of shaping customers' feedback. People's experiences should be considered in marketing practices to stimulate recipients of the marketing message to deep processing and response. The novelty of the findings relates to the role of visual fine arts in a process of creating specific feedback between a recipient and the sender of the information in the effort of marketing communication.*
Practical Implications: *This study has implications for how managers could encourage people to participate in the service market of visual fine arts by using the arts themselves. Furthermore, visual analysis of art in several Polish museums shows how visual fine art can influence understanding of its meaning in a contemporary society. The study's practical implications are connected with the possibility of using artistic works, exhibitions, and other events in marketing communication, mainly on the service market.*
Originality/Value: *To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first attempt analysed in the literature to discover a particular role of visual fine arts in search of a dialog between arts and society, including feedback in marketing communication.*

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1. Introduction

The analysis of the role of visual fine arts in marketing communication requires reference to the concepts in this field found in the literature. The most common terminological distinction is that between fine arts on the one hand and visual arts on the other. For the purposes of this work, the authors adopt the definitions of both of these conceptual ranges reflected in the following statement: "Fine art – be it theatre, dance, sculpture, or painting – is more narrowly focused on beauty and aesthetic expression.

Visual art, in turn, uses a variety of mediums for different visual artistic expressions, from painting and digital art to animation and art installations" (https://300magazine.com/visual-arts-vs-fine-arts-demystifying-the-main-peculiarities/).

The aim of the research discussed in this article is to demonstrate the role of visual fine arts in improving marketing communication. Based on the definitions cited above, the authors assume that visual fine arts primarily serve to stimulate the senses through a visual experience, conveying ideas, feelings and beauty rather than have a functional purpose. It means that artworks are created to be admired and analysed for their aesthetic values.

The interpretation of visual fine art is subjective and can evoke different experiences and emotions or thoughts in viewers. Visual fine arts are artistic disciplines which focus on intellectual engagement including traditional forms like painting, sculpture, drawing and some modern mediums like, for example, photography. On the other hand, visual art is a broader term that also encompasses arts with practical purposes, e.g. graphic design. Marketing can be seen as a "practical" discipline of knowledge which "teaches" how to shape processes on the market. Therefore, the term "visual fine arts" more deeply expresses its role in marketing communication than fine arts.

Earlier studies show that the role of art in visual communication has been significant since the beginning of its development. "If we dig into history, paintings and manuscripts were the primary forms of communication. And in this fast-paced world, visual communication is the most effective approach to spreading the word" (Sawant, 2023).

Scientific debate highlights the special role that visual aspects of communication play in the process of conveying information (Lee and Lee, 2017; Marciszewska and Marciszewski, 2021; Sztuka, 2025).

However, its impact on creating feedback loops, which is the true value of communication resulting from the interaction of two parties, seems to be underestimated. If we agree with the statement that "the human brain processes images much faster than text, this makes visual messages more effective in attracting the audience's attention" (https://michal.wiercimok.pl/komunikacja-wizualna-w-

marketingu-znaczenie-i-wykorzystanie), there will also be grounds for assuming that visual forms of communication are a source of the recipient's reaction to the message and that they create feedback – including the visualization of phenomena.

It should be noted here that "when we think of visual communication design, it's impossible to imagine it without art" (Sawant, 2023).

This interdependence takes on particular significance in marketing communication, not only because images immediately attract attention and are processed faster than text or even voice but also because visual elements facilitate faster comprehension of the message and often evoke strong emotions, allowing a given message to linger longer in the mind.

Thus, images become an attractive form of communication in social media. This refers to visualizations specifically designed for advertising or product or brand promotion, but the influence of fine arts displayed in various forms and locations cannot be overlooked in the context of their message and their impact on shaping social and purchasing attitudes.

"Art visual communication is the practice of using artistic elements and design principles to convey messages, ideas, or information. It encompasses a wide range of mediums, including painting, sculpture, graphic design, photography, and digital art.

By combining aesthetics with purposeful design, art visual communication serves as a powerful tool for storytelling, persuasion, and education" (art visual communication - Artsea). Art visual communication is significant because it enables conveying complex ideas, engaging audiences, and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Elements of visual design are the main pillars of communicating the idea effectively, and "a well-balanced and creative blend of these elements helps narrate the message without speaking a word" (Sawant, 2023).

Therefore, when thinking about the role of visual fine arts in shaping marketing communication, one should note that their reception by individual visitors to exhibition venues is very diverse, and the effects of this contact with art depend not only on marketing strategies but also on personal sensitivity and knowledge.

Some researchers focus "on the use of visual arts in advertising" (Estes *et al.,* 2018, p. 396) and its influence on a brand image (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). To complement this line of research, it is important to consider the purpose of communicating with the visual arts market.

As noted earlier, this may be to stimulate purchasing decisions regarding art or other goods associated with specific works of art. Often, the purpose of the message is implicit and relates to the process of building the brand or image of the artist, the exhibitor, or another entity not directly involved in the art creation process.

2. Literature Review

Contemporary marketing literature increasingly discusses the interplay between visual arts and marketing communication. In particular, the special role of fine arts in creating visual messages within digital marketing is recognised. For example, it is pointed out that "in the realm of content marketing, the fusion of time-honoured artistic techniques with contemporary digital platforms can yield a rich tapestry of visual communication" (Fine Arts Communication…. 2025), which justifies the usefulness of analysing the impact of fine arts on the effectiveness of information transmission to the market and the received feedback.

In visual communication with the market through fine arts, as a process based on the exchange of information, emotions and experiences between various entities on the market through images, the artist – the creator of the work – plays an important role. Thanks to him or her, a work of art is created with its own value but at the same time with a specific (unpredictable or intended) message for the recipient.

Every creator brings originality, uniqueness, beauty, symbolism, and many other values to their work. For the artist, this work reflects their personality and soul, and – just like for the viewer – it is a value in itself. Thus, the artist is the "beginning" in the communication chain, its first link creating a unique relationship with the surrounding world.

However, Kiklewicz (2023) notes (citing Filipiak, 2003; Goban-Klas, 2006; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007; Baylon and Mignot, 2008; McQuail, 2007; and others) a lack of reference to art in publications of recent decades concerning social communication or mass communication, as if it remained outside the realm of communication.

An analysis of some works by the authors mentioned above (Baylon and Mignot, 2008; McQuail, 2007; Goban-Klas, 2004) confirms the validity of this observation.

Proving this thesis, Kiklewicz notes that in the case of mass aesthetic communication, "when we are dealing with artistic communication, direct physical interaction between the sender and the recipient does not occur — it has the character of an institutional exchange of values within art as a functional system of culture. [...] artistic communication is organised and collective, meaning it involves the cooperation of several institutions: writers, readers, publishers, museums, libraries, critics, etc." (Kiklewicz, 2023).

Thus, the creator is a significant subject not only as the author of a work but also as a participant in the collective artistic communication resulting from the collaboration of many entities, including museums. In this situation, the artist meets the condition of communication, which is understood as "equivalent to interaction through signs" (Kiklewicz, 2023).

The role of art in the process of interpersonal communication is defined by Poselska (2021) as follows: "discovering various forms of art, and its role in communication can be an incredibly fascinating experience that opens us up to new perspectives and inspirations." This statement lacks the clarification that both the creator and the viewer of art are inspired by this specific interaction. The artist brings their talent, artistic visions, experiences, emotions, personality, and sensitivity to this interaction, while the viewer interprets them and reacts.

One must agree with the authors who claim that the key to understanding how art affects the viewer is to recognise the type of stimulus that a work of art provides for the perceptual and emotional system. "One thing is certain: it is a special stimulus, as the task of the artwork is to stand out from the surroundings, attract and absorb the audience's attention, move them emotionally, and evoke a flow of thoughts thematically related to the artwork" (Markiewicz and Przybysz, 2007).

The above functions of art actively influence society – its attitudes and behaviours – which, in a feedback loop, provides a new impulse for the artist-creator. The subjectivity of the artist translates into product brands, because "artists have an incredible marketing power since brands fell in love with art" (Gałązkiewicz, 2016, p. 140).

Their talent, wealth of creativity, social position, personality, and experience that provides a sense of special value becomes a stimulus for brand development and strengthens it. It is true that "artists create products, but also brands and their environment" (Gałązkiewicz, 2016, p. 140), but it cannot entirely be agreed upon that artists are brands, as this would strip them of their subjectivity.

Pierre Gervois, proposing a five-step strategy to incorporate art into the promotion of tourist destinations, sees a special role of artists in this process, stating that "artists from every community should be proactively invited to celebrate the rich and unique arts heritage of every American city, country or state" (2021). In this way, he refers to their rich knowledge of art, experiences, and competencies, directing the manager's attention to their subjectivity. A brand is mainly an attribute of products, and it would be unjust to consider artists as such.

Every work is a result of an "embodiment" of the artist's vision in what they create. Regardless of its form – a painting, sculpture, graphic – it communicates to the audience the message contained within, although its reception may differ depending on the viewer.

The unique freshness of the work ensures that it effectively reaches the audience, aligning with the opinion that "visual communication is one of the most effective ways to reach the audience, convey information, and create strong impressions" (https://uniqueseo.pl/komunikacja-wizualna/). Despite the potential subjectivity in the reception of art and the message contained within it, art is and will be a value in every communication.

This dual nature of art – as an original work of art with aesthetic value and a message on the one hand, and as a means of communication on the other – may be of interest in the context of enriching marketing communications, given that images and other visual elements often create a stronger impression and are more memorable to recipients than words alone. However, visual fine arts as a means of communication have not always been recognised in scholarly discussions.

Goban-Klas (2004) notes that social communication utilises an incomparably richer arsenal of means; in addition to speech and its substitutes (writing, print), he lists gesture and facial expression, song and music, sculpture and drawing, and many others. Visual fine arts are not fully reflected in the analysed work as is influencing the effectiveness of the communicated messages.

Visual communication, especially in marketing, requires adherence to certain principles for its effectiveness. These include:

• consistency of the visual style across all communication channels, especially in the brand building process;

• a prerequisite of high image quality, requiring time and appropriate resources to produce;

• avoiding information overload from the image;

• consistency in following the above principles, as a lack thereof, such as evoking too many visual stimuli, can distract the viewer from the main message. The content of a visual message must be tailored to the target market.

"Art is values, experience, and emotions – it allows us to visualise the often-abstract values of brands" (https://culture.pl/pl/artykul/igor-galazkiewicz-art-branding). This highlights the unique potential of art – to create and strengthen brands of products or institutions. "Never before has art been such a crucial element in building a brand's identity strategy, nor has it ever determined its image to such a degree" (https://culture.pl/pl/artykul/igor-galazkiewicz-art-branding).

Therefore, art and fine art are a value in themselves, but also a creator of value. Both brands and organizations, including commercial ones, gain value by leveraging relationships with art.

Gałązkiewicz (2016, p. 35) states that "the model adopted by Brera Design District is broader and designed for continuous action aimed at integrating design with traditions and craft values, as well as consulting and communication".

Design understood as a special type of art becomes an expressive communication tool thanks to which the brand of the selected product gains strength and, in a way, "provokes" further interest in it.

3. Materials and Methods

The purpose of the study is to describe the potential role of visual fine arts in marketing as a suggestive instrument of marketing communication. Achieving this goal required utilising several research methods, as the specificity of works of fine arts does not allow one method applied to study them to identify the message contained within them. The study was conducted using the following methods: critical literature analysis, participant observation, and content analysis.

The latter method aimed at drawing conclusions about the potential effects of the message of a given work of art exerted on its audience. Considering the limitations of this method, as highlighted in the literature, the two aforementioned research methods were also applied to assess the role of fine arts in market communication. Describing this research method, Bell (2025) points out the limitations regarding the application of content analysis to visual images: "Content analysis alone is seldom able to support statements about the significance, effects or interpreted meaning of a domain of representation."

The spatial scope of the study involved purposefully selected museums in three major metropolitan centres in Poland, particularly important in terms of conditions of exhibiting works of art: Gdańsk, Kraków, and Warsaw. Due to the method used to select the exhibits, the results can be analysed as characteristic of a given case study.

Content analysis was used to examine the significance of street art in shaping marketing communication, and its spatial scope encompassed selected examples of works of an artist known as Banksy. The criteria for selecting this artist as the author of the visual message are his international recognition and the socio-political context of his art, which creates the basis for exploring its intersections with communication in political marketing.

The works analysed in this article are examples demonstrating both the autotelic value and the function of communicating a thought or message to the recipient, which the latter will convey in a market environment – in the broad sense of the term.

4. Findings and Discussion of the Results

4.1 Art in Public Space in Poland: What Does it Communicate? Selected Examples

The aim of this primary research is to identify the role of fine art in social communication, with particular emphasis on influencing marketing communication.

The research was conducted between May 2024 and August 2025 in several museums in Poland: Krakow, Warsaw and Gdansk. Analysis of the case studies shows that "art visual communication is significant because it enables us to convey complex ideas,

engage audiences, and foster cross-cultural understanding" (https://duitdesign.com/what-is-visual-communication-in-art-and-design.html).

4.1.1 The National Museum in Krakow: Polish Painting of the 19th and 20th Centuries

1.1. At the entrance to the exhibition, a viewer is greeted by Olga Boznańska's *Girl with Chrysanthemums* from 1894. Interpretation of this painting is subjective, but the following is worth noting: "This portrait exudes many understatements, complicating the interpretation of the work. The eyes […] and the pensive expression on the face give the painting a slightly melancholic mood.

This is complemented by a bouquet of chrysanthemums. The girl clearly establishes a psychological connection with the viewer, implying her need for a greater sense of security. The childlike innocence, the calm pose, the subtle features of her face, and the delicacy of her hands contrast with the mood of anxiety" (https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dziewczynka_z_chryzantemami).

Figure 1. *Girl with Chrysanthemums*

The uniqueness of this painting, displayed right at the entrance to the museum building, serves as a "tool" inviting visitors to visit the exhibitions located there. Regardless of the artistic and social value of this work of art, it becomes an "intermediary" between the museum and the visitor, conveying an inviting message stemming from its own beauty.

Arguably, no verbal invitation to visit the exhibition will be as powerful an impulse for a museum visitor standing at the door as this mysterious image. It is therefore a powerful marketing tool, provoking a return visit and/or conveying inviting information to the surrounding. This environment becomes a segment of the market, where the experience derived from the artwork is the desired product and the money paid for the ticket is the medium of exchange. The ticket purchase transaction does not result in a change of ownership of the artwork, but rather in the "acquired" experience of the visitor, created throughout the exhibition, beginning with the entrance to the Museum and the *Girl with Chrysanthemums*. This is the marketing impact of the image presented above.

4.1.2 The Manggha Museum in Krakow

The "Background" exhibition, which opened on May 17, 2024, welcomed visitors with a verbal introduction that emphasised the following idea: "our intention is to share with exhibition visitors the privilege of forming their own interpretations and narratives. This amounts to an invitation to forge your own path through the display".

The words quoted above constitute a suggestive form of invitation, but only once inside the exhibition space does one experience the uniqueness of the immediate surroundings, where art speaks to the visitors, engaging them in the process of co-creating experiences. The photograph demonstrates the difference in artistic expression compared to, for example, Polish painting.

Figure 2. *A picture from the "Background" exhibition at the Manggha Museum*

Thus, this transports the visitor to a different reality and stimulates the desire to physically visit the country of origin of this art, that is, it invites one to Japan.

Art, therefore, is a powerful message that sensitises one not only to the art itself but also to the places it represents or originates from. Undoubtedly, the above example demonstrates the possibility and need for art to be present in the marketing communication of tourism destinations.

4.1.3 Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk

The Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk is not a museum exhibiting works of fine art, but a place commemorating World War II, the devastating war on humanity and the most terrible armed conflict in Polish history.

This facility emphasises that its "mission is to preserve its [the war] material and immaterial evidence, to conduct research on both micro and macro scales, to create a comprehensive and accurate account of the war, and to disseminate knowledge about it to audiences worldwide. […] We also believe that a profound reflection on the past should inspire the rejection of violence as a tool of politics" (https://muzeum1939.pl/en/our-mission/4370.html).

These powerful words convey the power of communication through exhibits of various kinds, as well as the expectations of the museum and visitors regarding the effectiveness of this site's visual communication in influencing public knowledge and attitudes.

Each section of the museum conveys not only the martyrdom of nations but also an equally powerful and painful message to visitors and their social circles about the cruelty of this war and the need to ensure that such barbarity never happens again.

However, it would be untrue to say that it contains no art, only artifacts of historical significance. It can be noted that numerous posters in various languages calling for war in various contexts are a visual embodiment of human desires – unfortunately, not always peaceful ones. Some of them illustrate post-war reality – expressing social oppression, coercion, violence, and political terror.

These phenomena occur in the contemporary world, so art depicting war is also a means of communication that enters the sphere of politics, and therefore political marketing understood as examination of the processes of exchange between the environment and political actors, as well as among the political actors themselves.

The following example, referring directly to World War II, through its aggressive tone is, however, a natural cry for an end to contemporary wars resulting from numerous policies pursued in various regions of the world.

Figure 3. *A poster from the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk calling for fighting bolshevism*

4.1.4 Street art

This form of art has an exceptionally broad appeal – it does not target a specific audience, but it has a powerful impact if the artist incorporates a profound social message into their work. Its impact can be – and often constitutes – effective marketing communication. An example is some works of Bristol-based artist Banksy.

A documentary about his work describes it as socially conscious art and a new kind of visual language (*Banksy*, 2020). This refers to murals or large-scale installations in open spaces, which exert an impact on the viewers' emotions through the "touch" of sensitive phenomena.

It is commonly held that the overall message of his works is "anti-war, anti-capitalist, and pacifist" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banksy). One example that substantiates this assessment of Banksy's street art is an inflatable doll dressed in a prisoner's outfit resembling those of persons detained at the controversial Guantanamo Bay detainment camp (an orange jumpsuit, a black bag over the head and shackled hands). It was placed in Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California, as a form of protest against the terror associated with high-security prisons (Figure 4).

"In his art, Banksy often refers to controversial topics, such as the Guantanamo Bay case," (Banksy - Wikipedia), which is symbolised by, among others, the above painting. It is difficult to judge it from the perspective of artistic merit, but it carries an important social and political message and is a characteristic element influencing the shape of political marketing.

Figure 4. *A 2005 painting symbolising protests against violence in prisons like Guantanamo Bay.*

Source: *Banksy – Wikipedia.*

Also Banksy's latest mural on the wall of the Royal Court of Justice, London (Figure 5), has been perceived as controversial and shocking. In all likelihood, it refers to the protests that have recently taken place on the streets of London. However, this mural can also be interpreted as Banksy's critique of the British government, which increasingly restricts the British society's freedom to express their opinions, their right to dissent, and even their right to privacy.

Placing this mural on a wall of a historic courthouse could be interpreted as a slam against the hypocrisy of the authorities — perhaps the judiciary? This reading is suggested by the judge depicted in the mural, who, instead of upholding human rights and representing justice, whacks a protester with a gavel.

The entire scene is rendered in monochromatic colours, emphasising the seriousness of the message. The red colour of blood on the protester's sign expresses the pain and suffering of society.

It is likely that a significant portion of London and British society identifies with the artist's message, embodied in the figure of a man being beaten. Another interpretation of this painting by Banksy treats it as a manifestation in support of the protesters involved in the Palestine case.

The essence of the artist's social message is important, but considering the scale of impact of this painting, it is important to emphasise that the artist, through this image, drew attention of more than just British society to the problem occurring in his country. Banksy's powerful message has touched the world.

Figure 5. *Mural by Banksy. September, 2025*

Source: *https://www.fakt.pl.*

The essence of the artist's social message is important, but considering the scale of impact of this painting, it is important to emphasise that the artist, through this image, drew attention of more than just British society to the problem occurring in his country. Banksy's powerful message has touched the world.

Without a doubt, this painting more forcefully "communicated" the existing social paradoxes. Yet, can one assume that it will exert an influence on changing social consciousness and shaping a new approach to political marketing? At the present stage, one can only pose the question of whether this form of visual expression will contribute to the development of marketing communication conducive to the system of governance. This constitutes a new, significant research problem, and attempting to solve it appears to be a necessity.

Street art by Banksy as well as by Polish artists often communicates opposition to social and political phenomena, such as poverty, terrorism, and armed conflicts. In doing so, they shape human attitudes and behaviours, including the market ones. By protesting against war, they influence the arms market, fashion, culture, art itself, and the forms of entertainment.

"For many street artists, their work is not only a way to express themselves, but also a tool to comment on reality and influence the environment" (Sztuka ulicy – graffiti, murale i ich ukryte znaczenie). Some segments of the market belong to this environment, and consumers' attitudes and behaviours could clearly be shaped by street art.

5. Practical Implications of the Results

The results of this study indicate the need to pay greater attention to the importance of fine arts in the process of marketing communication. Their autotelic value is a "carrier" of the power of an emotional message directed at the recipient of art, which can play a significant role in shaping the recipient's purchasing attitudes towards various goods.

Therefore, exhibition organisers should be aware that exhibited works can influence the shape and effectiveness of marketing communication thanks to the persuasive potential of visual fine arts. On the other hand, managers can encourage the placement of fine arts in various service locations, which can foster the promotional message conveyed by the art itself. An analysis of visual fine arts in selected museums in Poland indicates that fine arts should be viewed not only in the context of their autotelic value but also as a factor shaping social and market attitudes.

Therefore, the practical implications of the presented study are related to the possibility of using artworks, exhibitions, or other events dedicated to popularising visual fine arts to increase the effectiveness of marketing communication, understood as resulting in positive feedback.

6. Conclusions

The examples of the impact of artworks displayed in the studied museums on visitors presented in this article stand out with their artistic value or the message conveyed by the artist. The nature and strength of their influence on the viewer vary depending on the exhibition location, the type of museum, its mission, and the specific placement of the artwork within the exhibition space.

However, the subjectivity of the perception of the autotelic value of fine arts by an individual visitor leaves room for variation in the range and the intensity of the impact of particular works as a communication medium which can serve an important marketing role.

Considering the above limitations and in view of the possible different communicative effects stemming from the viewed artworks, which depend, among others, on the visitors' perception, it seems reasonable to formulate a new research problem: Does the impact of a work of art viewed on a museum wall also persist in the viewers' consciousness as a factor encouraging them to revisit a particular place, country, city, or museum?

Addressing this question would require expanding and deepening the analysis of the results of available research on the emotions and experiences of visitors to museums or fine art exhibitions in order to identify their beliefs regarding the possibility of "viewing" a given work or art as a means of marketing communication. This approach

is supported by the fact that the reception of marketing communication – similarly to the autotelic value of the work or its social message – is affected by the visitor's subjectivity and many personality factors. It is ultimately up to the visitor to decide whether they agree with perceiving a marketing role in the work.

Therefore, this study solely aims to raise awareness of the hidden "marketing potential" contained in works of fine art alongside their autotelic value. One can pose a hypothesis for verification in future research that the ubiquity of street art communication makes its marketing potential broader in scope than that of the other images presented in the article, regarding its contribution to the quality of marketing communication.

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