The Art of Impact: the Dutch two-year program of € 7 million subsidizing art projects with social impact in two rounds. At the first round, there were 428 applications and 36 projects were approved, in the second round 50 projects from the 290 applications received money. And there is a curator who may choose his own projects. How many? That number cannot be found on the site, but the aim was 40. So in total some 120 projects. The program will cease to exist at the end of 2016.

120 projects should give an enormous boost to the promotion of art with social impact. And one would assume that those projects are extensively supported and that we all will learn a lot from this experience. Research is also being done among the projects. On the Art-of-Impact site itself there is nothing to be found about the research. It is apparently carried out by the Kwinkgroep who report this on their own site. How the research is done, is nowhere indicated.

So what remains after 120 projects that received a single pulse and a research report with undoubtedly interesting answers from the projects? What is the impact of The Art of Impact?

So here are three questions about the impact of The Art of Impact.

The first question is what the six art funds (Mondrian, Performing Arts Fund, Cultural Fund, Dutch Film Fund, Letterenfonds, Creative Industry Fund), which implement the program, will do in 2017 as The Art of Impact has ended. Will it now be natural for them to honor art projects with social impact? Will they change their criteria? Or they see it still as a temporary toy of the Minister of Culture and go back upon their own ways?

The second question is whether the program feels *responsible* for the projects selected after this one-time assistance. Or is The Art of Impact yet another example of the 'project carousel' in which interesting projects once get a cash injection and are then left alone? In the UK funds are discussing this approach because many promising initiatives die a premature death by constantly having to re-apply and meet criteria such as innovative, etc.

One could even say that giving money to some 120 projects is almost criminal. Of course it is nice to support such a wide range of projects, but how many are actually

prolonged in a viable way and have more impact than the duration of the project? Will The Art of Impact select a number of viable projects and ensure that they are supported in their development and funding? Or do we have 120 blanks?

The third question is what will the research generate more than anecdotal evidence of the usefulness of the program. In any case the study could provide answers to the following questions:

What is the purpose of the supported projects?
How the artists went to work? (Tabo Goudswaard, the curator, has a nice story about the different ways in which artists work, which format is actually used?)
What are the results? And what is the intended social impact of the project? Which *theory of change* is handled?
What are the *lessons learned*, what works, what does not?
What can we learn to conceive better projects in the future which have more impact?
How can impact be better reached, researched and described in the future, learning from all those projects?
So it's really not that hard to identify several relevant aspects of impact:

What is the impact of the program for the funds that manage the program? What lessons they draw from this?
What is the impact of the program for the participating projects? What does it mean for their survival?
How do you assess the social impact of the projects themselves and show that impact? What is there to learn for future projects?
And there is the question of what the program The Art of Impact is doing differently from all the many initiatives of artists that already commit their artistry, their skills, their artistic process in society. Does the art of Impact see other possibilities for art with social value than were already there? Or do they put only a magnifying glass on them? Or will The Art of Impact ensure that the absolute separation – which is still being made – between 'autonomous' and 'social' art is finally lifted, especially in the art world itself? If so, the program has had at least impact there.