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"Nothing is Beatleproof!"
In what context?
Art and the artist's image as communication

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ABSTRACT

Art is often defined as a process of creation guided by artist's intention. However, artwork as a means of expression is also a communicative medium.

Does context and audience influence artwork and identity of artists? How? Can one define an artwork as a co-design between artist and context, including the audience? What is the role of communication in this process?

The purpose of the thesis is to explore the idea of art as a communicative co-design process by studying the relation between the popular music band Beatles and its context. Is their image or identity a result of a marketing intention or a co-design, which occurred between the band and their audience and colleagues?

The band's artistic approaches, patterns and strategies are viewed from a communication perspective.

Answers to the above questions are found in communication theories related to creative processes, production and the media, studies in aesthetic theories and popular culture, and examples of communication between the band and its audience as well as between the band and other artists.

The present study finds that interaction with audience had a profound effect on the Beatles' art and image. It concludes that both artwork and artist's identity are shaped through communication and co-design influenced by context, i.e. not simply products of artistic intention nor marketing strategies.

(*Lennon's character in film *Yellow Submarine*, 1:12:57)

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INTRODUCTION

Apparition, four brown English / jacket christhaired boys / Goofed Ringo battling bright / bright / bright white drums / silent George hair patient / silent George hair patient / silent George hair patient Soul horse / Short black-sculled Paul / with thin guitar / with thin guitar / with thin guitar Lennon the Captain, his mouth / a triangular smile, / all jump together to End / some tearful memory song / ancient-two years, / The million children / the thousand worlds / bounce in their seats, bash / eachother's sides, press / legs together nervous / Scream again & claphand / become one Animal / in the New World Auditorium / —hands waving myriad / snakes of thought / snakes of thought / snakes of thought screetch beyond hearing (Allen Ginsberg, excerpt from *Portland Coliseum* 1965)

Does context and audience influence artwork and identity of artists? How? Can one define an artwork as a co-design between artist and context, including the audience? What is the role of communication in this process? Searle in the theory of Speech Act (1969) on speech and language, suggested that in order to make meaning one must have an understanding of the intention. The meaning is aiming to reach receivers, and to be comprehended in order for the communication act to be fulfilled. The act occurs within a certain society, in a specific time and place, and it employs specific tools. In order to comprehend the meaning there is a need to take into consideration the society towards which it aims, the receivers. As the Interpretative and Interaction Theories (Watzlawick, 1974; Griffin, 1997) suggest, in order to make meaning the receivers must be able to understand what the message is about. Pearce and Cronen in the Theory Coordinated Management of Meaning (1980) suggest a construction of meaning between two people who interact socially. The time, the place, and the tools – each of these factors, partially or in whole – constitute the common space within which the communicative act takes place. These factors provide a relative familiarity with the field of information presented to the communicators. They frame communicative fields, assumingly, and to some extent, shared by the sender and the receiver. Givón calls this a culturally shared conceptual map (2005, p. 91). Often, according to Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958), the receiver interprets the meaning by recognizing a context in which a certain choice is relevant. In Semiotics (F. de Saussure, Semiology, 1916; C.S. Peirce, Semiotics) complex meaning-relations are formed by the mutual contextualization among signs, while the mechanisms of meaning-making in a social context are discussed in Social Semiotic Theory (Halliday, 1978). Most of these theories suggest that context contributes to the shape meaning takes in the interaction between the sender

and the receiver. Are there theories that point to the importance of communication between artist and audience in the formation of artwork?

The purpose of the thesis is to explore the idea of art as a communicative co-design process by studying the relation between the popular music band Beatles and its context. Is their image or identity a result of a marketing intention or a co-design, which occurred between the band and their audience and colleagues? The Beatles have been proven both the most successful as well as exceptionally creative pop artists. They are accepted as such by audiences who identify with popular culture as well as by audiences who identify with the elite art. This offers the additional opportunity to explore the role of context in relation to the audience, in communication theories on the Media, such as The Medium Theory (McLuhan, 1964), Priming, Framing and Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1976). Furthermore, we are given the opportunity to explore how the artwork and the artist's identity can be informed by factors related to mechanisms of productivity (Theory of Structuration, Giddens, 1984; Theory of the Altercasting Strategy, Pratkanis, 2000) and technology (Adaptive Structuration Theory, Desanctis and Poole, 1994) in accordance with the artist's image.

BACKGROUND STUDIES

As a first step in this inquiry a few questions are posed about the relation of communication, context, art and its meaning, as well as their relation to the identity of the artist. The artists examined here are the Beatles, a type of artists who positioned themselves between the popular mass art and the elite high art. The popular song as an art form and an expressive medium has a crucial relation with the performer, as well as the performer's image, its formation, its projection to the public and the maintenance of its recognizability in the flow of artistic production within the ephemeral frame of popular art presentation. With these parameters in mind I will first proceed to present existing theories on communication, which discuss the function of context, and which I believe to be relative to the artwork. Further studies will be presented, which are related to the influence of context on the artwork's meaning. Last, studies which explore how context influenced the design of the Beatles identity will be presented.

Communication theories and the function of context

In the theories that attempt to explain the mechanisms of interpersonal communication, mass communication and organizational communication, the notion of context appears as the essential factor that promotes meaning.

The theory of Speech Act (Searle, 1969) focusing on speech and language, suggests that in order to make meaning one must have an understanding of the intention. Language viewed as an intentional behavior, is treated like a form of action. In that sense a statement is a speech act. However, to understand the intention one must be aware of the circumstances. The utterance of a sentence is not just a group of words that are carefully aligned in order to point towards a meaning. The words are also sounds accompanied by gestures and posture, uttered in a specific space at a specific time. According to the Interpretative and Interaction Theories (Watzlawick,1974; Griffin, 1997), all communication is based on meaning and interaction. In the exchange of actions between people, communication is the tool to interpret and form both the self and the situation. In this sense communication is framed in a social and cultural context. The same explanation about how people come to a meaning in communication, is to be found in Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958), where one of the two ways to attribute meaning to one's choices is to interpret them according to related external factors, that is, recognizing a context in which a certain choice is relevant and which reveals the choice's meaning. The Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory (Pearce and Cronen, 1980) supports the idea of a construction of meaning between two people who interact socially. According to this theory the individuals supported by an interpersonal system of communication become able to explain their respective actions and reactions. Hence society appears on the scene.

The Theory of Structuration (Giddens, 1984) adds to the above mentioned CMM theory, in that it suggests that humans act within a context of pre-existing social structures, dictated by norms and laws, distinct from other social structures. This predetermines to some extent their actions according to the various contextual rules they follow. The structure and rules are also sustained and modified, readjusted by human action. Manifestations of societal variations occur in many forms. The Adaptive Structuration Theory (Desanctis and Poole, 1994), which is an adaptation of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, focuses on information technology and the production and reproduction of social systems by its members. In exploring the use of technology it reveals that through related activities, perceptions are formed about technology's role and utility, but those vary according to the social aspects, across groups. Technologies penetrate societies, influencing them, and as a consequence societies influence and modify the original intent of the proposed technologies. In a sense, what they do is adapt the technologies to a suitable societal context. Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer (developers of the Contextual Design Base Strat-

egy, which they base on a Contextual Inquiry, 1998) 'tied together' the working approach within a system with the system's function. Because of this, certain strategies are dictated, as well as use of specific language and work organization. Their theory explores more the functional approach in organizational communication, but recognizes the importance of context, which is embedded in the communication.

Shifting our interest to the unit within the society, as the Theory of the Altercasting Strategy (Pratkanis, 2000) reveals, we see how people accept certain social roles, due to social pressures forced on them, which ensure that the roles will be enacted. Within a social environment the person is expected to be consistent with his / her role. At the same time, the role reinforces itself by offering exposure to information consistent with the role. This works as typecasting within a specific frame, or a context. Seen through a broader frame, if Altercasting Strategy (Pratkanis, 2000) dictates roles within the society, Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1976) suggests that television is responsible for shaping the social conceptions of reality. The exposure to mass media gradually shapes our perceptions of reality and of culture. The attitudes and values may already be present in a culture but the media maintain and propagate them, thus reinforcing a certain context within which society lies. At the same time, the Knowledge Gap Theory (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1970) indicates context as a factor in perceiving and understanding information, in that it recognizes its importance in understanding information according to knowledge on related topics. The same medium offers messages within different contexts, to be processed by various 'receivers'. Priming enhances the effects the media have on the audience, by presenting a prior context – a context useful to the interpretation of subsequent communication acts. Furthermore, mass media propose and promote standards and frames of reference. Framing theory suggests that the media point the attention towards certain events in ways that position them within a field of meaning at the same time. The Medium Theory (McLuhan, 1964) reveals the existence of content embedded in the context, which is embedded in the medium itself, as the symbolic environment of the communicative act.

In Semiotics (F. de Saussure, Semiology, 1916; C.S. Peirce, Semiotics) the production and interpretation of meaning occurs via a network of acts and objects, which function as 'signs' and relate to other signs. Systems of signs spread in space and time form complex meaning-relations that are created between them, by the mutual contextualization among them. Moreover, signs usually relate to more than one systems at the same time of sign relations. More specifically Social Semiotic Theory (Halliday, 1978) taking into account individual creativity, historical circumstances,

and social identities and projects in an ever changing flow, attempts a development of theoretical and analytical frameworks in order to explain the mechanisms of meaning-making in a social context. Social Semiotic Theory examines communication as experienced across a range of semiotic modes. It views signifiers as arbitrarily related to the signified, according to cultural and societal conventions that are negotiated, redefined and reshaped in the flow of time. Currently extending beyond the origins of linguistics, SST takes into account sound and visual images, and the combinations between modes of communication (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

If we accept that the creation of art is an act of communication that occurs within a certain society, in a specific time and place, employing specific tools and that it bears a specific meaning intended by the creator – that is within the framework of a constellation of contexts; then the above listed communication theories can help us understand, each in its field, the essential role context plays in the creation of the original message. The same factors are involved in interpretation by the audience, the 'receivers', who rely on their own constellations of contexts, according to their positioning within a society that informs, supports and at times even dictates their understanding of the message.

The influence of context on the meaning of an artwork

Context informs the artistic choices and actions, and also the related contemplation, examination and evaluation of the artistic product. Aesthetics study the nature of art and beauty in reflecting values, judgements, taste, sentiments generated and related to works of art, and explore the ways we see and perceive the world. Judgements based on aesthetic value involve emotions and senses as well as cultural factors which implicate economical, political and moral values. Various points of view have been chosen in order to explain the course of artistic production over the years, but this is done due to a specific interest in a different discipline, rather than in an attempt to explore how context influences the meaning of art itself. According to Arnold Hauser's *Social History of Art* (1950), content develops along with form and both are directly related to material conditions as well as cultural development, a process into which contradictions are embedded. Hauser's point of view was dictated by his interest in sociology, a context within which art can be viewed and evaluated, but not a study on context in relation to art.

Walter Benjamin in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) discussed the work of art viewed in the context of mechanical reproduction and positioned the technological context as a central factor to the artistic produc-

tion. Theodor Adorno, also concerned with the mass production of cultural products for the mass media and their distribution to the masses also pointed towards the implications the mass media imposed on the arts (*Current of Music elements of a radio theory*, 2006). Both Benjamin and Adorno, pointing towards the context into which art and culture were occurring at the time (and are still today), questioned the validity of the artwork itself and its legitimation to be recognized as such.

Modernism and surrealism, avant garde artistic movements in the beginning of the 20th century, adopted expressive codes not viewed as artistic, which were appropriated from applied arts or newer emerging art forms mechanically reproduced. The artistic value of a work got disconnected from its traditional relation to craftsmanship. Artists started shifting back and forth from one medium to the other according to their expressive needs. In doing so, they were repositioning themselves and their artworks into different contexts, thus making the context's existence and importance more visible. The boundaries between fine and applied arts, as well as between high and low culture got blurred. Consequently, interest rose to pose questions relating to the context within which art was created, and the context within which art was perceived.

Semiotics, as study of signification and communication, and its branch of Semantics (M. Bréal, Essai de sémantique, 1897) with the trinity of sign-signifier-signified as defined by Saussure (Course in General Linguistics, 1916) offered legitimation to an artistic meaning depicted with the use of signs. But to reach the meaning one needed to be aware of the codes and their significance, the intentions and beliefs of the creator. A need occurred to study the meaning in terms relative to context, and how it influenced the message. Icons, indices, and symbols as they were named by C. S. Peirce were appearing in the works of art anyway, but their meaning became clearer through the prism of Pragmatics (C. S. Peirce, 1934), which in its study of how context contributes to meaning, was able to point towards the meaning. Pragmatics depends on knowledge of the creator's identity, the where and when of the expression. But that proved to be only one part of the equation. In *The Key of Dreams*, French painter Rene Magritte depicted a horse, a clock, a jug and a suitcase and wrote underneath them: 'the door', 'the wind', 'the bird', and 'the suitcase'. As John Berger commented (Ways of seeing, 1972): "*the relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.*" In *This is not a pipe*, the message written underneath the painted depiction of a pipe, by Magritte, gives the game away. The French author Raymond Queneau, offered 99 variations of the same story, each from a different viewpoint (*Exercices de style*, 1947), even leaving some extra pages blank for the read-

ers to attempt their own variations. The interest gradually shifted from the message as sent by the creator to the message as interpreted by the audience, as the other part of the equation. Roland Barthes, who declared *The death of the author (Image – Music – Text*, 1977) could have asked *"Is this a pipe, or is it not, after all?"* No matter that conceptualists like Joseph Kosuth, with his work *One and three Chairs* (1965), which presented a chair (the actual object), its depiction in actual size (the icon) and a written definition of the chair picked from a dictionary (the symbol), further cleared the matter. As Berger observed *"What you saw depended upon where you were when. What you saw was relative to your position in time and space."* (Berger, 1972, p. 18). The artists became conscious students of context and invited the audience to play along.

Bakhtin was interested in the context and how it defines the meaning of utterances (Brottman, 2005), through polyglossia, *"as long as it includes a multiplicity of social voices and their individual expressions."* (Brottman, p. 1). As Anita Silvers observed in her essay *Letting the sunshine in: Has analysis made aesthetics clear?*, Aesthetics draws from a world, or more likely from a multiplicity of worlds that stand outside and prior to it, and which provide the subject matter of it. (Blocker, H. Jene, - Jeffers, Jennifer M., p. 118). Thus, appreciation of art does not depend on theories, but more upon literacy, the ability to aurally and visually discriminate, with the accommodation of intelligence as well as open-mindedness and the help of contextual information (Marwick, p. 182). In borrowing Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan's famous declaration *"the medium is the message"* (1964), and using Kosuth's chair as an example I could ask, was Kosuth's chair, 'the chair'? The one any of us would sketch if asked to make the drawing of a chair? Did after the exhibition of this work *this* chair become *the chair?* This is a bit far-fetched because of the qualities of the medium. While McLuhan referred to the mass media, Kosuth's chair was exhibited in an art space, a gallery specific people choose to visit. However, it is because of the existence of the mass media, the mechanical and digital documentation, and the mechanical reproductions of images, radio or television broadcast that allows many more people than the ones who witness an event to become familiar with it. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, as expressed in *Constituents of a Theory of the Media* (1970), viewed that change would be achieved via an emancipation of the productive forces in the field of media. He hoped that people would use their own cameras, tape recorders and movie cameras to document evidence of their lives. Jean Baudrillard on the other hand, in *Requiem for the Media*, (*For a critique of a political economy of the sign*, 1981) directed his critique not towards the technological qualities of the mass media but instead, towards the potential in socialization they could offer. He

suggested that non-response on behalf of the receiver doesn't lie in the medium's inability but in the passivity of the receivers, apparently due to their social priming and framing in becoming receivers.

The arrival and popularization of the use of the internet blurred the boundaries between sender and receiver, thus fulfilling Enzensberger's dream partially, even though not towards the revolutionary goal he was suggesting. The implications of the use of technology today, as a means of communication, a means of socialization, point back to McLuhan's statement, pushing society forward from the post modernist deconstruction of certainties to a digital reconstruction of meaning. While Lev Manovich expresses his joy about the fact that *"The two separate historical trajectories finally meet. Media and Computer—Daguerre's daguerrotype (sic) and Babbage's Analytical Engine, the Lumiere Cinematographie and Hollerith's Tabulator—merge into one."* (Manovich, 2001, p. 25), he does not fail to notice the implications this merging involves. He introduces the term 'software studies' in order to examine and document the effects of software as *"a layer that permeates all areas of contemporary society."* (Manovich, 2008, p. 7). Manovich notes that, the compatibility between still and moving line-art, video editing, 3D modeling, animation, and visual effects software forms both visually and spatially today's software age, where a variety of forms as never before is being offered to us. However, due to compatibility, homogenized techniques, compositions and iconography appear in any media. (Manovich, 2008, p. 148).

Studies on the influence of context in the design of the Beatles' image

Pop music stands on the threshold between high art and low art. It can be disposable, ephemeral or savored for generations to come. Three-minute masterpieces for commercial mass consumption, occurred since the beginning of pop music history. They were created for the uneducated crowds that flooded the cinemas to watch and be entertained by the 'talkies'. They were transmitted by the radio. They were stored on discs known as 'records', which were mass manufactured not only for radio-play, but also in order to reach the homes of people who were not satisfied by simply listening to songs on the radio but wished to own and collect them; the masses collecting mass art. The Beatles appeared on the scene when the 33 rpm vinyl records were on the rise. They not only wrote and sang songs, they made records. They were aware of the relation between the content and its packaging. Record by record they integrated the studio techniques, the tools and the possibilities these offered into their works. In doing so they used the medium as a part of their message. They are considered to be the 'first recording artists' (Zolten,

2009) for working consciously within the context of the medium, as well as for taking paths and making choices that accentuated that context. Charlie Gillett, who wrote the first serious study on rock and roll, and discussed its social origins, noted that the Beatles had a thorough understanding of the culture they drew their style from (Gillett, 1970, p. 263). The production of the band's records is documented in George Martin's (the band's record producer) memoir *All you need is ears* (Martin - Hornsby, 1977), as well as in – specifically about the band's 1967 album – *With a Little Help from My Friends: The Making of Sgt. Pepper* (Martin - Pearson, 1993), and in the BBC documentary *The Making of Sgt. Pepper* (1992). Studio engineer Geoff Emerick offered his version of the stories related to the production of the Beatles records in *Here, There and Everywhere: My life recording the music of the Beatles* (Emerick - Massey, 2006). MacDonald discussed the content extensively in his writings *The People's Music* (2003), and *Revolution in the Head* (1997). Everett in *Painting their Room in a colorful way: The Beatles exploration of timbre* (2006), Marshall in *"I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together": Bakhin and the Beatles* (2006), Covach in *From "Craft" to "Art": Formal structure in the music of the Beatles* (2006), Whiteley in *"Love, love, love": Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Selected Songs by the Beatles* (2006), all relate the band's musical and lyrical choices to specific contexts.

Roland Barthes wrote in *Musica Practica* of two separate kinds of music, the music one listens to and the music one plays. He called the latter 'practical music' and noted that as it was to be heard in the West, it commenced with a different repertoire and made use of different instruments than it did before. He identified the 'practical music' as one played by the young generation, a vocal music accompanied by a guitar (1977, p. 149). The other type he called receptive and passive and he recognized it as being positioned on a pedestal, he called it 'the music'. Thus we shift to an examination of the creation of song in the context of a debate that occurs between high and low art. A representative of 'the music', classical composer Ned Norem, wrote in 1967 an article titled *The Beatles, about the lost art of Song.* (Norem, p. 120-131). He offered explanations as to why people do not wish to go to classical concerts anymore, why there are so few live singers in modern music to perform, and why composers themselves spend little time in writing songs. The repetitive performances of the same classic works provided little interest, the modern composers viewed the use of the human voice as a mechanism, possibly electronically revamped, with no need to interpret poetry, or even words in the process. Little funding, publication, recording or performing possibilities were offered. Opposite to this situation he positioned the singer-songwriters of pop music, who in his opinion reconnected with the tradition

of troubadours, madrigalists, musical artisans of past centuries combining all sung expression (except opera). In the center of this debate between pop tune and recital song, Norem called the Beatles revivalists of the sensual, who by putting the fiction and the fun back into music *"removed the sterile martyrdom from art"* as he called it, by renewing the sense of pleasure (Norem, p. 120-131).

Some intellectuals shared Norem's position, jumping at the opportunity to celebrate both music and the lyrics in the Beatles song writing, and even drew parallels to various classic composers (Mann, p. 45-47). Others, representing conservative views, were appalled, and paralleled the songs to mass-production mental opiates, which, thankfully, the future leaders and creators of tomorrow's culture – who were too busy studying – would not be bothered with (Johnson, p. 51-55). The search for meaning within the lyrics of the Beatles songs has been a constant quest, which began during the era of the songs' creation and continues well into today. I only list a few choices depending of their theme variations: *A hard day's write* (Turner, 2000) discussed the stories behind each song. *Turn me on dean man: The Beatles and the Paul-is-dead hoax* (Reeve, 1969) dealt with the Paul McCartney death rumors. *The Beatles and Philosophy* (ed. Baur and Baur, 2006) discussed how morals, ethics, social issues, existentialism, language, appeared in the songs. *Revolution in the Head* (MacDonald, 1997) offered comments about the lyrics in relation to the social conditions and creative traditions of the era.

Viewed in the context of the communicative act at the receiving end as a standpoint, the interaction between the artist and the audience in identifying the artistic act, participating in it, and in the case of the Beatles inspiring them to become artists in their own right was essential. McCartney and Lennon have been documented mentioning in interviews and biographies written about them how they recognized a way out of the prospect of 'an ordinary life' while witnessing, via mass media, the performances of Elvis Presley. But they both acknowledged British Lonnie Donegan, 'king' of Skiffle, as the one that brought the possibility of them becoming performers closer to home. They were not the only ones, to feel that way. Laing in *Six boys, six Beatles: the formative years*, 1950-1962 (Laing, 2009) quotes Porter in *Before they were Beatles: The Early Years 1950-60* (2003, p. 18) in presenting marketing data from the era, *"In 1957, 250,000 guitars were sold in Britain, compared with an average 5,000 per year between 1950 and 1955"* (Laing, 2009, p. 19). The list of writings related to the Beatles documentation of fame and their interaction with the media is extensive. Monthly music publications such as *Rolling Stone, Mojo* and *Uncut* add pieces to what seems to be a never-ending puzzle. Brian Epstein – the band's manager – before his death wrote his autobiographical version

of their rise to fame in *A Cellarful of Noise: The autobiography of the man who made the Beatles* (Epstein -Taylor 1967). MacDonald discussed their creative / business arrangement in *John and Paul: The start of a partnership* (2003), and their impact on the media and society alike in *The people's music* (2003). Studies as to how the interaction with the media further reinforced their identity – and still does to this day – have been written by Northcutt *The Spectacle of Alienation: Death, loss and the crowd in Sgt. Pepper's lonely hearts club band* (2006), Gleed, *"The rest of you, if you'll just rattle your jewelry": The Beatles and questions of Mass and High Culture* (2006), McCarron, *A universal childhood: Tourism, Pilgrimage, and the Beatles* (2006), Decker, *The Beatles, ideology and the cultural movement* (2006), Kimsey, *Spinning the historical record: Lennon, McCartney, and museum politics* (2006), Womack and Davis, *Mythology, remythology, and demythology: The Beatles on Film* (2006), Frontani, *The Beatles, Image and the Media* (2007).

In university publications such as *Reading the Beatles, Cultural studies, literary criticism and the fab four* (ed. Womack - Davis, 2006) and *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles* (ed. Womack, 2009), the 'creators of tomorrow's culture' (which has nowadays arrived) recognize, study and discuss in academic terms the importance of the Beatles not only as musicians and songwriters, but also in relation to the social context of their era. Long time scholar of the Beatles, MacDonald noted in *The People's Music* (2003): *"An extraordinary thing began to happen to pop music in 1963: the audience started to take over the role of formulating what was performed."* (MacDonald, 2003, p. 192). Mac Donald acknowledged the fact that this was a process which started in the beginning of the twentieth century, but he positioned the shift of power in identifying what is popular, from the producers to the consumers, chronologically in the decade of 1960-70, when as he pointed out, *"[...] the market began to follow and have decisions made for them"* (MacDonald, 2003, p. 193).

The documentation of the interaction between the Beatles and their audience has been extensive. There are publications which documented each of the Beatles performances (Lewisohn, *The Complete Beatles Chronicle,* 1992), the tours (Kane, *Ticket to Ride,* 2003), the TV and film appearances (Pieper - Path, 2005), and nostalgic recollections of dedicated fans (Berman). Collected newspaper cuttings of the era offer documentation and comments on the band's every move (Hill), and provide an interesting perspective on the shift of approach the media took on the Beatles, first viewing them as an amusing 'Unbarbershopped Quartet' (Frontani, p. 45) to Beatlemania – which legitimized the band as worthy performers, to their recognition as catalysts for redirection and change in society (Frontani, p. 177).

So far existing theories on communication relating to the function of context, were presented, in order to help us understand the essential role context holds in the creation of the original message, its interpretation by the audience according to their positioning within a society that may inform, support, and dictate their ways of understanding. As a second step, studies that explore the influence of context on the artwork's meaning were presented. These revealed how the perception and appreciation of art depends upon literacy, or the ability to aurally and visually discriminate, with the accommodation of contextual information. Last, studies which explore how context influenced the design of the Beatles image were presented. These are related to the formation of the band's identity and their interaction with the public both directly and through mass media and the implications thereof.

METHOD

The method chosen for this paper is the collection of information provided by people viewed as the audience, who were communicating with the band in a variety of ways, as well as the band-members themselves. The aim is to cross-examine the information in order to come to a conclusion as to whether the context within which the communication process between the Beatles and the audience occurred, influenced the meaning of the art, and the design of the image of the Beatles, and if yes, to what extent.

As sources of information have been chosen the following: the press, the fans, the collaborators, other artists, and members of the band themselves. The press offers its documentation on the projection of the band's identity as suggested by the artists but also seen from the viewpoint of the audience – the press as a means of promotion will not be examined in this paper. Fans' comments as well as their memories offer a hindsight of how the band's image was perceived by the audience at the time; but also how it is viewed today, seen from the distance that has been created due to the passing of time. Collaborators, technicians, and staff add different aspects of information but also personal views and explanations regarding to the formation of the image. Other artists provide examples of influences that contributed to the formation of the image. The band members themselves, offer their own version of their story, and thus their identity as they intended it.

The examples chosen reflect the image of the Beatles as it was perceived by the audience then and now. The examples represent both male and female fans in various countries, and reflect upon the Beatles image and artwork from the pre-fame era until the dissolvement of the band. The examples have been collected from

newspaper clippings, magazine articles, books in the form of memoirs, personal biographies, documentations, researches, interviews, documentaries and internet sites. Also, the actual artistic product of the band, the songs, the records as well as the movies offer a different view, in that they provide glimpses of how the Beatles identity was created, through the actual product of their work and its presentation. The viewpoints provided are both from the creative era of band as well as seen in today's light.

Studies related to the Beatles and their image, which have appeared so far, projected on a backdrop of theories on communication, that examine the notion of the context will be discussed. Viewing how context affected the design choices made through the feedback offered by the audience, will lead to an understanding as to how and to what extent communication back and forth between the band and the audience is responsible for the formation and the maintenance of the band's image.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In this part of the paper the following will be presented: the Beatles' approach to the creation of their artistic product as well as their interaction with the audience, through the performances, the record releases, the movies and promotional films they created. The existing literature on the Beatles as musicians, lyricists, pop idols, artists and innovators, cultural icons – depending on where one looks for sources – is extensive. The band appeared at a time when technology allowed and promoted the documentation and circulation of their cultural products, their actions, as well as their statements in various ways. The examples chosen are viewed and presented in relation to the contexts into which they occurred. The selective presentation of the audience's responses, comments and observations for both the works and the performances will offer an additional viewpoint about the perception of the image. The information relating to the Beatles interaction with other artists, along with the feedback from the audience will help to better understand how the Beatles' identity was created and maintained in a constant dialogue with the audience that surrounded them.

The Beatles and their songs

In the beginning of the Beatles' career the logical thing for them to do was to pick known songs from established acts, since they didn't have their own material and the few songs they did have written so far were not established with the audience. The band drew from various genres, black soul, rhythm and blues, rock and roll,

tunes from musicals, rockabilly and country songs, as well as pop melodies they were exposed to while listening to the radio when they were growing up. Some tunes, the Beatles had been obliged to play in front of the demanding audiences of sailors at the German clubs of the red light district in Hamburg, during their early pre-fame days.

The band was introducing new elements, and new approaches in combining existing elements so as to distinguish themselves from other acts. McCartney commented about a song they used to play in 1961: "*That was a waltz, a funky soul waltz. We were looking to be different, because we realized the competition out there.*" (Miles, p. 82). When they got a recording contract, the Beatles insisted on releasing only their own compositions as singles, starting with *Love Me Do (1962, Lennon-McCartney)*. In the words of McCartney, that way when they would visit their native city, Liverpool, and faced their friends "*At least there was some credibility in the fact it was a bluesy song rather than 'How Do You Do It' [1963, Murray]*" (Miles, p. 91). Nevertheless, the band did cover romantic ballads such as *Till There Was You (1957, Willson)* and *A Taste of Honey (1960, Scott-Marlow)*. The former song was introduced to McCartney by a cousin, the latter was a standard for the band from their Hamburg days. The Beatles also covered songs sung by girl groups (*Please Mr. Postman, 1961, Dobbins-Garrett,-Gorman-Holland-Bateman; Boys, 1960, Dixon-Farrell; Chains, 1962, Goffin-King; Baby It's You, 1961, Bacharach-David-Williams; Devil In Her Heart* – originally *Devil In His Heart, 1962, Drapkin*), and used linguistic communication patterns which were identified mainly as female as is the case in *She Loves You* (1963, Lennon-McCartney), where they introduced a third character, who talks to a friend about his (the friend's) love affair "*you think you've lost your love / well I saw her yesterday-yi-yay / it's you she's thinking of / And she told me what to say-yi-yay*" (Whiteley, 2006, p. 61). Also they often chose to address the listeners directly in the lyrics of their songs. McCartney recalled in an interview with Mark Lewisohn in *Recording Sessions*: "*We knew that if we wrote a song called 'Thank You Girl' [1963, Lennon-McCartney] that a lot of the girls who wrote us fan letters would take it as a genuine thank you.*" (Whiteley, 2006, p. 61).

At the same time, the Beatles revived rock and roll rebellion. Lennon's delivery while he sang either his compositions or covers, attempted a self-definition as a rebel; he sounded like he meant every word. In doing so, Lennon raised "*the pop performance beyond presentation to revelation*" (Frontani, p. 80). Audiences who had not seen the Beatles but only heard them on the radio, thought that this was a band of black musicians, because no white pop group of the era produced (or had been allowed to produce) such raw sound. As Frontani noted: "*In fact it is difficult to identify another white singer of the period who even remotely approached Lennon's ferocity at the mike.*" (Frontani, p. 79).

After touring the world for a few years, the Beatles presented to their audi-

ence what they had seen in the form of songs, which mirrored various viewpoints and realities. Indian sitar sounds, American-folk influenced tunes, funky soul, a German two-step-meets-Zorba-the-Greek, ska reggae, were included in the Beatles sound. Maturing and not so optimistic perspectives on romantic affairs and propositions about alternative views of the world and society, were topped with autobiographical lyrics. McCartney recalls: "*The early material was directly relating to our fans, saying, 'please buy this record,' but now we'd come to a point were we thought, 'we've done that. Now we can branch out into songs that are more surreal, a little more entertaining'.*" (Anthology, p. 193). Still, the band remained playful by doing – as Lennon noted – "*dirty little things on records. In 'Girl' [1965, Lennon-McCartney] the Beatles were singing 'tit-tit-tit-tit' in the background and nobody noticed*" (Anthology, p. 196). Within five years the lyrics changed from "*close your eyes and I'll kiss you*" (*All my Loving*, 1963, Lennon-McCartney) to "*living is easy with eyes closed / misunderstanding all you see*" (*Strawberry Fields Forever*, 1967, Lennon-McCartney) The method used in writing shifted dramatically from the traditional songsmith craftsmanship they studied and attempted to master in the early years, to narratives which welcomed "*the alternation between positive and negative relationships, [...] creating an ambiguity relatively unheard of in pop music – but lauded in poetry*" (Decker, p. 76), and which successfully merged the casual everyday microcosm with the existential questions about life and death in a few verses "*He blew his mind out in a car / He didn't notice that the lights had changed / A crowd of people stood and stared / They'd seen his face before / [...] Woke up, fell out of bed / Dragged a comb across my head / Found my way downstairs and drank a cup, / And looking up I noticed I was late*" (*A Day in the Life*, 1967, Lennon-McCartney). At the same time they explored the possibilities of the studio technology in sound creation opening the path to future pop musicians, and pushed the technical boundaries of the music industry further. With *Hey Jude* (1968, Lennon-McCartney), a seven minute single they defied the accepted norms of the radio air-play and stated about the possibility of disc jockeys refusing to play it: "*they will if it's us.*" (Anthology, p. 297). In *Honey Pie* (1968, Lennon-McCartney) they used the scratching sound of old records as a signifier which pointed towards a bygone era.

The Beatles as performers

On stage, the Beatles had been instructed by their manager Brian Epstein, who had a knowledge of theatrical codes, to complete each song with a uniform deep bow. Harrison kept a serious face during the live performances most of the time, being consumed by his guitar playing. Starr was positioned on a pedestal in order to be more visible, his drum kit set in an order that would not hide his smiling face from

the audience. He often shook his head, which seemed to exhilarate the crowds. McCartney would wink, play with his eyebrows and smile, constantly directing a flirting gaze towards various directions in the audience while singing (Kane, p. 116). His introductions to the songs were polite and playful: *"Thank you! Thank you, thank you very much, thank you! Ah.. we'd like to carry on now with a song. Before we do we'd like to ask you if you'd join in with us... Join in... if you will...shhh... if you will, as we sing the song just clap your hands [...]"* (The Beatles Drop-in Swedish TV 10-24-63, 3:07-3:27) as opposed to Lennon's which were often on the verge of being slightly sarcastic: *"I hope you can hear me. I'd be awfully disappointed if you couldn't. We'd like to do another one from one of our LPs... albums, long-players, records... (giggle)... It's a slow number and it's a waltz, for all of you over ten."* (Introduction to song; *Baby's in Black, CD single Real Love, 1996*). McCartney was the one who shared a microphone either with Harrison for the vocal harmonies or with Lennon when they sang in unison. This offered him the opportunity to be the most mobile on stage. Lennon would usually stand in front of his microphone facing away and slightly upward towards the audience, or down to his guitar.

In their concerts the Beatles took the opportunity to criticize the established society who were becoming a part of their audience, in acts such as the epigrammatic – nevertheless playful – request by Lennon during the band's appearance at Royal Variety Show in 1963 *"For our last number I'd like to ask your help. The people in the cheaper seats clap your hands, and the rest of you, if you'd just rattle your jewellery."* (Anthology, p. 105). Also, while touring in the USA, they refused to play in front of a segregated audience in Jacksonville Florida in 1964 and had the organizers comply in allowing their audience to enjoy their concert undivided by race and color. (Frontani, p. 99).

According to the excitement of the crowd, occasionally the introductions were skipped in order to keep the performances as short as possible, the songs performed at a faster tempo, the concerts not lasting more that 30-35 minutes. The Beatles were singing, while constantly checking out the audience and the police and guards' attempts to control the frenzied fans who aimed to approach the band (Kane, p. 49). In the last years of touring, the screaming of the fans was negating the performances due to the huge numbers of people in the audience. Lennon often resorted to what McCartney called his 'comedy routines' to release the tension: *"He'd start the faces and the shoulders would start going, and it was very encouraging 'OK, that's good – at least we're not taking it seriously'."* (Anthology, p. 187). While performing *I'm Down* (1965, Lennon-McCartney) at Shea Stadium, Lennon played the piano with his elbows, and acted either crazy or funny (Live at Shea Stadium, *I'm Down*, 4:00-5:40).

The technical limitations in sound amplification made it hard for the band

to continue touring, although technology was 'catching up' fast due to the rising demand. The supportive, positive feedback from the audience became an obstacle in the band's attempt to communicate. Starr's comment on what was the biggest concert at the time (approx. 55.000 people), mirrors the reasons for which the Beatles decided to stop touring: *"It was just very distant at Shea. Sure, we were bigtime, and it was the first time we'd played to thousands and thousands of people, and we were the first band to do it; but it was totally against what we had started out to achieve, which was to entertain, right there, up close."* (Anthology, p. 187).

Short films were used instead from 1967 onwards in order to 'bring the Beatles close to the public'. In these the Beatles saw the opportunity to present themselves neither as music performers, nor as actors playing a role in the plot, but more as organic parts within the stories of their own creative universe. The promotional film of *Strawberry Fields Forever* (1967, dir. Goldman) and possibly most parts of the movie *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) should be viewed as precursors to MTV. Nevertheless, the band-members also presented themselves as regular people who enjoy the simple pleasures of life, such as companionship and nature (*Something, 1969, Harrison*). On occasion they 'grabbed' the opportunity to perform for a live audience even if in a 'controlled' environment. They invited audience to do backing vocals on the promotional film of *Hey Jude* (1968, dir. Lindsey-Hogg) and they did the same when they performed *All You Need is Love* (1967, Lennon-McCartney), which was broadcasted live by television allowing 400 million people in 26 countries, in the first live global television link via satellite on 25 June 1967, during a programme called *Our World* (BBC). They offered one last unannounced free concert, to passers by and anybody who worked and lived around the Apple office building in 1969, when they played on its rooftop during the *Get Back* sessions, which were documented to later become the album and movie *Let it Be* (1970).

The album sleeves and the movies

In the beginning the Beatles were too happy to have made a record, to bother with the sleeve of their first album *Please Please Me* (1963) and probably their opinion would not have mattered. Harrison noted that the album *"'With the Beatles'* (1963) *was the first one where we thought, 'Hey, let's get artistic.'"* (Anthology, p. 107). Photographer Robert Freeman – known until then for his jazz musicians' portraits – who took the pictures for many Beatles record sleeves as well as their publicity shots, was asked to reproduce the harsh light and shade effects achieved by Astrid Kirchherr and Juergen Vollmer in their portraits of the Beatles taken in Hamburg during their

pre-fame era, for their second album. The band wanted their picture to appear on the sleeve with no bleeding or title, but the studio disagreed, because they were not yet considered famous and recognizable enough to sell a nameless cover. Also EMI vetoed the cover because the Beatles were not smiling in the proposed picture. It was only due to George Martin's intervention that the chosen picture for the sleeve was saved.

American film director Richard Lester made good use of the Beatles image in the film *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). Aesthetically, the Beatles' image seemed to come to life almost as if by the use of animation, in a seamless transition from still to moving images. They were presented in the black and white approach of French cinema verite, which matched their already famous image – form and content in perfect harmony; a band of talented lads who were successful, funny and were chased by hordes of girls. The film introduced innovative techniques in cutting and editing to the beat of music, which are nowadays recognized as a precursor of modern day music videos. The accompanying album featured songs from the film, and a sleeve that depicted each Beatle in five consecutive black and white head shots as if on strips of film, directly linking the record to the movie. In 1965, the Beatles appeared in *Help!* This film was also directed by Lester, and it was shot in a variety of locations from the Bahamas, to ski resorts on the Austrian Alps. A James Bond spoof, this light comedy mixed with 'thrilling' mystery presented the Beatles as non-secret agents of jolly good fun. The movie poster and the album sleeve depicted the band on a snow-white backdrop making signs with their arms supposedly in semaphore code. The photographer's original idea was that the coded message read 'HELP' but as Freeman remembered: "*[...] when we came to do the shot the arrangement of the arms with those letters didn't look good. So we decided to improvise and ended up with the best graphic positioning of the arms.*" (Freeman, p. 62). The press of the day wondered "*whether there isn't a correlation between pop music, pop art and a pop movie.*" (Frontani, p. 87).

The Beatles mind expanding experimentations became evident on the cover of *Rubber Soul* (1965), where the band was photographed by Freeman, with the camera aiming at them from the ground upwards. The image was printed distorted to the group's request, in order to provide a weird perspective, which was matched by the 'bubble-like' typeface that was used to spell the title of the album on the upper left corner. *Revolver* (1966) depicted the band-members in a collage of photographic black and white images lost in a maze of their own hair – pen sketches of their heads. The mixed-media artwork was provided by their old friend, visual artist and fellow musician Klaus Voorman. *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

which followed, pushed the art of album sleeve further, although it was not realized as the Beatles and artist Peter Blake planned. It featured the Beatles surrounded by a colorful installation of life-sized cardboard models of famous people (*People We Like*) on the front of the album cover, and lyrics printed on the back cover. The inside spread depicted the Beatles staring directly at the camera, smiling. This particular album cover was criticized by Frank Zappa through his own mock *Sgt. Pepper* sleeve on one of the albums by the Mothers of Invention called *We're Only in It for the Money* (1967), insinuating the Beatles were 'cashing-in' with the use of psychedelic codes.

The Beatles also appeared in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), a self-directed, un-scripted surrealistic road movie, which followed various 'ordinary' people travelling on a bus and having 'magical' adventures, defying the authorities and finding love, under the spell of the Beatle-magicians. In 1968, the Beatle-personas appeared in an animated movie inspired by their song *Yellow Submarine* (1966, Lennon-McCartney). *Yellow Submarine* had an odyssey-like script and a happy ending, in which the Beatles characters brought color and life back to the petrified Pepperland with the power of their music. The movie's style, by Heinz Edelmann, contrasted Disney's and everything else previously released by Hollywood. This style of limited animation paved the way for Terry Gilliam's animations for *Do Not Adjust Your Set* (1967-1969) and Monty Python.

The Beatles (1968), better known as *The White Album* due to its all white sleeve with the Beatles' name embossed on it, was designed by another pop artist of the British scene, Richard Hamilton. The band appeared in single portraits on the in-side spread. The same images offered as free-standing pictures, accompanied by a collage of photos in the form of a folded poster, could be said, were 'depicting' the gradual fragmentation of the Beatles as a unit. One last film, planned as a documen-tary about the band rehearsing for a concert, became possibly what we could call a precursor of today's reality shows, where the participants' every move and reaction become a spectacle to be devoured by the public. The album which accompanied the movie *Let It Be* (recorded in 1969, released in 1970), again depicted the Beatles in four single portraits on a black background. The last album of the band called *Abbey Road* (1969) showed the Beatles walking away from Abbey Road Studios, on the pedestrian crossing in front of the studios' building.

The audience's responses to the performances

The Beatles live performances have been characterized as electrifying. Ger-man photographer and friend of the band-members from their Hamburg pre-fame

era, Astrid Kirchherr called the Beatles, 'human magnets' due of their ability to attract the attention when they were on stage. (Kirchherr, p. xv). Fans remember the Beatles on stage at the Cavern Club, in their hometown Liverpool, before they got a recording contract: *"They would come on, the place would rock I never suspected at the time they would become the world superstars they did."* (MMT, Concerts, Cavern Club, female Ref: 12192). *"[...] That wintry lunchtime in the hot, sweaty Cavern seeing The Beatles play was an experience from which frankly I've never recovered."* (MMT, Concerts, Cavern Club, male, Ref: 12404). As the band appeared in concerts in Europe, the crowds would respond in the way that soon was termed Beatlemania. *"I don't think many members of that audience had ever heard of The Beatles. Then they came on stage - and instantly I knew that I was watching something totally new, totally different from anything I'd seen before. The rockers' girl-friends started screaming around me."* (MMT, Concerts, Circus, Gothenburg, female Ref: 11016). *"I saw the Beatles in Paris at the Olympia. I was 15. I remember all the boys shouting while they're singing. It was like in an another world. [...] After their show Sylvie Vartan couldn't sing. We wanted "The Beatles".*" (MMT, Concerts, Olympia, Paris, male Ref: 11947). After the Beatles went to USA, the massive responses from the crowds became unparalleled, then Beatlemania became the official term for this phenomenon *"The Beatles came out on stage... the crowd erupted in screams... I sat there, all the sounds went dull and I could just see these tiny figures on stage... couldn't even hear the music..."* (MMT, Concerts, Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, female Ref: 12770). Jim Morin, then eleven years old, figured out a way to hear the music over the screams: *"When they bounded onto the stage, the place went mad. Hearing the screaming on video does not come near the feeling of being in the middle of it, enveloped in it. The sound was deafening. There was a flashbulb going off every millisecond; the sight of hundreds of flashbulbs going off constantly was the single most amazing "lazer" experience I've ever seen. These guys were great live. Much is being made of not being able to hear them over the screaming, but I found out soon after the show started that if you were to cup your hands over your ears, the screams were filtered out to a great degree, and you could hear the Beatles quite well."* (Kane, p. 116).

Starr noted: *"I never felt people came to hear our show — I felt they came to see us. From the count in on the first number, the volume of screams drowned everything else out"* (Anthology, p. 186). McCartney framed the audience's feedback responding to the Beatles in a manner that showed the band's appreciation to their fans, acknowledging its importance, when he observed: *"It's like this: you make a noise and they make a noise, and it's the noise together that counts."* (Anthology, p. 187). Expressed in various ways, according to age, gender and temperament, the Beatles offered their audience release. Kane wrote: *"one vivid image I'll never forget is of an ice-cream vendor who stopped in place, stared at the Beatles on stage in front of the grandstand and started crying. I said to him, 'Is something wrong?'*

He replied, 'No, their music just makes me very happy'." (Kane, p. 90). However Lennon's comment about the Beatles being bigger than Jesus, which was referring to fame and the impact the Beatles identity seemed to have on the audiences, was the reason for a campaign that led to bonfires of their records in the Bible Belt of the USA. It was exactly that impact, which was viewed as a possible threat to the fabric of society. The fear of the possibility of an assassination along with the potentially uncontrollable crowds in ever-growing numbers in their concerts, were more reasons for the Beatles to stop touring.

The audience as context

The audience were affecting the choices the Beatles made. They dictated song choices in the beginning of the band's career due to their demand for entertainment. The fans that appeared around the band from the early years in their hometown specified to some extent the choices the Beatles made according to their expectations. The Beatles were reluctant to present *Yesterday* (1965, Lennon-Mc-Cartney), which according to the Guinness Book of Records, has the most cover versions of any song ever written – more than 3,000 recorded cover versions counted to this day – and one that as Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) asserts it has been performed over seven million times in the 20th century alone. They didn't think it fit their profile, and feared that it could 'stigmatize' them as 'softies'. *Yesterday* was not released as a single in the UK until 1976.

Kane, who followed the Beatles on both their tours in the USA., noted how the fans were copying the hairstyle and the Beatles clothing, and how for the first time they showed passion and pleasure in public very actively, expressing their defiance of authority by piercing police lines and becoming frenzied. (Kane, p. 108). Amidst the social changes which affected their audience the Beatles were inspired to write songs that reflected that generation, addressing the issue of a runaway but cautious to present both the viewpoint of the 'betrayed' parents who did the best they could, as well as the rebellious youngster's that left what she felt was an oppressing environment (*She's Leaving Home*, 1967, Lennon-McCartney). At the same time they showed compassion for the old and lonely (*Eleanor Rigby*, 1966, Lennon-McCartney). Moreover, realizing the power they had over the fans, the Beatles were making conscious choices as to what to promote with their music: "*We were big enough to command an audience of that size, and it was for love. It was for love and bloody peace*" recalls Starr about the occasion of *Our World* broadcast (Anthology, p. 257).

Many fans went further than simply appreciating the band and their music.

To the obsessive appreciation the Beatles responded with songs like *Think For Yourself* 1965, Harrison) and *And Your Bird Can Sing* (1966, Lennon-McCartney) in an attempt to empower the audience instead of having them treat the band as some sort of prophets. Nevertheless, obsessed with their idols, some fans went looking for signs and hidden messages in the lyrics. McCartney has mentioned, *"We write songs. We know what we mean by them. But in a week someone else says something about it, and you can't deny it ... You put your own meaning at your own level to our songs"*. (Gould, p. 423-425). After the Beatles began to experiment with tape loops, and to include sounds played backwards in their recordings, some fans started playing the vinyl records backwards looking for clues and secret messages. The saddest and most tragic case was the 'reading' of *Helter Skelter*'s (1968, Lennon-McCartney) lyrics by Charles Manson, who totally misunderstanding the innocence of the meaning 'helter skelter' for the British, read the lyrics as omens of Apocalypse, which consequently led to the Tate/LaBianca murders in 1969. Less serious was a rumor spread by a campus newspaper, *The Michigan Daily*, about the death of Paul McCartney, which was supposedly the reason why the band stopped touring in 1966. The signs were to be read on the Beatles albums, starting with *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band*, continued with the poster collage included in *The Beatles* and the sleeve of *Abbey Road* (Reeve, 1969). The Beatles, teasing their fans about such rumors, responded with a song which was constructed with lyric after lyric taken from previous songs of theirs and concluding: *"well here's another clue for you all, the Walrus was Paul"* the song had the very fitting title *Looking Through a Glass Onion* (1968, Lennon-McCartney). In the same spirit, when a fan broke into McCartney's apartment, sometime in 1969, and stole one of his shirts, which she later returned, a song was written about her and the incident, called *She Came In Through the Bathroom Window* (1969, Lennon-McCartney). As Kane observed, one of the important rules among the Beatles was to love and trust the fans (Kane, p. 96). In the final lyrics the Beatles wrote as a band they chose to acknowledge the importance of their fans in whatever it was they had achieved: *"and in the end the love you take is equal to the love you make"* (*The End*, 1969, Lennon-McCartney).

Interaction with other artists

The Beatles dreamed a career in music entertainment, influenced by the impact of the songs and image of Elvis Presley as presented by the mass-media. They believed they could have a chance and pursued this dream due the emergence of local hero Lonnie Donegan, who with his proximity to their own social reality made this dream seem feasible. During the beginning of their career they measured up to

other emerging acts by adopting their examples or seeking different approaches in the creation of their music and identity. The 'Beatles' name was proposed by their one-time bassist, close friend and visual artist, Stuart Sutcliffe, as a tribute to one of their favorite bands, Buddy Holly and the Crickets. They took the insect-inspired name theme one step further, by switching the second 'e' of the word 'beetle' to an 'a', which accentuated the characteristic of their music, the beat, while at the same time it functioned as a contextual link to the rebellious but intellectual beat poets. The band's haircuts suggested or influenced by German friends and artists, photographers Astrid Kirchherr and Juergen Vollmer, as well as visual artist and musician Klaus Voorman, along with the collarless jackets and drainpipe trousers signature outfits proposed by their manager Brian Epstein, the Chelsea boots with Cuban heels, later renamed 'Beatle boots' were devices chosen to visually identify the Beatle personas in the early years (Frontani, 2007, p. 130) and differentiate them from other bands. A piece of dialogue taken from the script of the movie *A Hard Day's Night*, written by professional scriptwriters, was copied almost word by word from an interview during the band's first USA visit. It referenced the two main identities to be adopted by the musical groups of the day, either mods or rockers, the Beatles fusion approach, but also their sense of humor:

Reporter: *"are you mods or rockers?"*

Ringo Starr: *"we're mockers"*

Lennon recalling the band's expectations from their first trip to USA: *"When we came over the first time, we were only coming over to buy LPs. [...]"* (Anthology, p. 116), points out their interest and concern with the musical production of the day on the other side of the Atlantic. Their influences covered country, rockabilly, soul, rock and roll, and blues, and the band were also studying the song writing styles from Tin Pan Alley to their contemporary songwriters who were successful – Little Richard, Smokey Robinson, Phil Spector, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, Gerry Goffin and Carol King, eager to master the art of song writing themselves. Lennon recalled, *"[...] you can't measure success, but if you could, then the minute I knew we'd been successful was when Roy Orbison asked us if he could record two of our songs."* (Anthology, p. 94).

The carefully chosen outfits of the Beatles, stated Mick Jagger, made him think of switching from playing the blues to playing rock and roll. The Beatles appreciation for the Rolling Stones made Harrison suggest to Dick Rowe of Decca – incidentally the man who turned the Beatles down as recording artists for that label justifying his decision having said, according to a persisting rumor *"guitar groups are on they way out."* – sign them as their recording artists. The Beatles even offered

the Rolling Stones material for a single, a yet unfinished song called *I Wanna Be Your Man* (1963, Lennon-McCartney), which they proceeded to complete within a few minutes (Miles, p. 154). It is said that this inspired the Rolling Stones to write their own songs instead of covering blues tunes. The Rolling Stones attempted to define their position as the Beatles' rivals by consciously adopting a 'bad boys' image counter to that of the 'adorable moptops,' a suggestion of their, then, manager and producer Andrew Loog Oldham (Egan, p. 62). The Beatles album title *Rubber Soul* is inspired by a term coined by an unknown black musician, who in order to describe Mick Jagger's attempts to interpret black soul music called it 'plastic soul' (Anthology, p. 194). The Beatles were careful to 'communicate' their higher status among their peers with various acts. They invited the Rolling Stones and other groups and musicians from the era in their promotional films for *Hey Jude* and *All you Need Is Love*, to sing in chorus. Lennon appeared at the documentary *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* (1996), where he is depicted handing to Jagger a plate of food he had been nibbling from, which Jagger held as if he was about to eat from it, while Lennon went on stage to perform (0:24:20-0:24:30).

During one of their visits to the USA the Beatles met Bob Dylan. They were following his work and he had been following theirs. Lennon's autobiographical *I'm a Loser* (1964, Lennon-McCartney) from the album *Beatles for Sale* (1964) was directly inspired by Dylan's approach in song writing and Dylan – as the anecdote goes – had become interested in the Beatles due to a misinterpretation of their lyrics in *I Want To Hold Your Hand* (1963, Lennon-McCartney), where the group was singing "*and when I touch you I feel happy inside / it's such a feeling that my love I can't hide*"; Dylan mistook "*I can't hide*" for "*I get high*", which led him to believe that they where smoking marijuana, like he did during that era. When they finally met, he did introduce them to it. Along with this introduction, the band got influenced by the new music, mainly folk rock, they heard and collected during their visits to USA. A friendship formed between Harrison and Dylan led to further influence and artistic collaborations.

Jim McGuinn of the Byrds inspired by the music of the Beatles traded his banjo for a 12 string Rickenbacker guitar like the one he saw Harrison play on *A Hard Day's Night*. The Byrds complimented the Beatles by copying their haircuts, as well as echoing the melodic constructions in their album *Mr. Tambourine Man* (1965). They were promoted as the American Beatles. Harrison appreciating them also, responded by lifting a guitar riff from their version of *The Bells of Rhymney* (1958, Seeger-Davies), for his *If I needed Someone* (1965, Harrison), (Cavanaugh, p. 53). One version as to how Harrison was introduced to Indian music is that David Crosby of

the Byrds is responsible, another version is that he became interested in it by the Indian musicians he came in touch with during the shooting of *Help!* (1965).

Harrison's interest with the sitar, led him to a life-long friendship and artistic collaborations with Ravi Shankar and other Indian musicians. In 1971 to the request of Shankar to raise attention to the suffering of the People of Bangla Desh, Harrison organized a benefit concert with artist-friends. The concert for Bangla Desh featured what was thought of as an 'all-star supergroup' of performers that included Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Billy Preston, Leon Russell, Badfinger, Ringo Starr, as well as Ali Akbar Khan and Ravi Shankar. It was the first benefit concert of this magnitude (40.000 people).

Harrison was not the only one of the Beatles to seek inspiration from artists who worked outside the pop music idiom. McCartney was moving around the avant garde circles. He became interested in the works of American composer John Cage, attended a workshop by German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, and was experimenting with tape loops. Lennon, although mistrusting towards the intellectuals, because they needed to *understand* things, they could not *feel* them (Anthology, p. 96), was interested in eastern mysticism and was collecting psychedelic experiences. All these were presented to the mainstream through *Rubber Soul* (1965) and *Revolver* (1966), two albums that included the first experimental, musique concrete, sound effects and soundscapes interwoven in the pop song form. This would not have been achieved without the help of creative sound engineer Geoff Emerick and pioneer producer George Martin, who provided the Beatles with technical support and invented creative solutions in the studio that allowed the band to 'sound like they were singing on the moon' (*Tomorrow Never Knows,* 1966, Lennon-McCartney), or like 'a thousand Tibetan monks chanting on top of a mountain' (*She Said, She Said,* 1966, Lennon-McCartney), as Lennon requested.

The most important and fruitful rivalry was the one between the Beatles and the American surf-sound pop band the Beach Boys. It is said that Brian Wilson, of the Beach Boys, after hearing the Beatles *Rubber Soul* (1965) went on to create *Pet Sounds* (1966), for which McCartney said: "*It was 'Pet Sounds' that blew me out of the water. I love the album so much. I've just bought my kids each a copy of it for their education in life ... I figure no one is educated musically 'til they've heard that album ... I love the orchestra, the arrangements ... it may be going overboard to say it's the classic of the century ... but to me, it certainly is a total, classic record that is unbeatable in many ways ... I've often played Pet Sounds and cried. I played it to John [Lennon] so much that it would be difficult for him to escape the influence ... it was the record of the time.*" (McCartney, Musicians on Brian). Inspired by *Pet Sounds* the Beatles went on to

record *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which in turn influenced numerous artists and works in various ways ever since. Nevertheless it is interesting to notice that the Beatles used surf sound choruses in *Back in the USSR* (1968, Lennon-McCartney) setting themselves apart, positioning themselves above everybody else. They did not surf the sea-waves, they surfed up in the sky, thus stating their superiority, in this song that conveniently had as an opening sound effect the take off of an airplane, while the lyrics discussed the song's main character's return home.

In 1968, when the Beatles founded their corporation they named it Apple. The motto they used was *'a' is for apple,* and it was borrowed from the children schoolbooks. The 'apple' signifies the beginning, it also stands for knowledge, last but not least it is the symbol of temptation. The apple logo and its green Granny Smith apple symbol were inspired by a painting by Rene Magritte, and aimed to demonstrate the band's awareness of cultural symbols and their meanings outside popular or low culture. A division in the company was created in order to produce avant garde, as well as spoken word recordings. This subsidiary was named Zapple and its motto became *'z' is for zapple.* It was managed by British author Barry Miles. Plans were made for American authors and poets Richard Brautigan, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Michael McClure, and American comedian Lenny Bruce to appear on the label. Some of these recordings were made but none was released by Zapple.

Yoko Ono is seen by many as the factor that lead to the Beatles disbanding. In truth, if it were not for McCartney's involvement with the avant garde Indica gallery – co-owned by artist John Dunbar, musician-producer Peter Asher and Barry Miles – where Ono exhibited her work, Lennon would not have met her. Humorously, Lennon commented about her influence on him and his art, *"She forced me to become avant garde and take my clothes off, when all I wanted was to become Tom Jones."* (Anthology, p. 300). In their collaborations they successfully fused pop culture's commercial function with the avant garde explorative artistic spirit, often for activist causes related to human rights, gender and race equality, awareness on environmental issues and peace.

Corean video artist pioneer Nam June Paik created an experimental video-art work named *Beatles Electroniques* (1966-69, 3 min., b/w and color, sound) in collaboration with composer Ken Werner. He used moving image footage and sound material of the Beatles, and presented as a result *"an eerie portrait of the Beatles not as pop stars but rather as entities that exist solely in the world of electronic media."* (Youngblood).

The American avant garde band the Residents released a single in 1977, called *The Beatles Play the Residents and the Residents Play the Beatles*. It presented an audio collage of recordings by the Beatles and Lennon, with a looped clip called *Beyond the Valley*

of a Day in the Life, and *Flying* (1967, Lennon-McCartney-Harrison-Starr) a cover of a Beatles tune which is credited to all four Beatles. The Residents' aimed at reflecting their boredom with pop music and deconstructing the songs. Their debut album *Meet the Residents,* released in 1973, was a parody of *Meet the Beatles* (1964), the band's first US release. EMI and Capitol threatened to sue them, but it is rumored that either Harrison or Starr loved the cover and bought a copy. (Buckley, p. 868). Moreover, the Residents always appear on stage wearing helmets in the form of giant eyeballs, which are directly copied from a comics illustration of the Beatles' song *Why Don't We Do It In The Road* (1968, Lennon-McCartney), by Rick Griffin (1969), which appeared on the book *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* (Aldridge,1969, p. 168).

The Rutles, also named the 'Prefab Four', were a creation of British comedian Eric Idle for the BBC *Rutland Weekend Television,* directly inspired by the Beatles. They were the subject of two mock documentary films, *All You Need Is Cash* (1978), which featured 20 original songs by the Rutles, and *The Rutles 2: Can't Buy Me Lunch* (2002). Harrison, who said that the Beatles' sense of humor had been 'reincarnated' in Monty Python's comedy acts – of which Idle was also a member – financed films made by them and he also made cameo appearances on both the Rutles and Monty Python's movies (*The Rutles All You Need Is Cash, Life of Brian,* 1979).

A fabricated band assembled as a commercial product in 1966 for the American television series *The Monkees* (1966-1968) were created using the Beatles as a model. The actors / band members provided vocals, were given performing and production opportunities, and eventually earned the right to supervise the musical output under the band's name. They also toured and performed as a live band. Although the show was canceled in 1968, the band continued releasing records until 1970. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Monkees).

British pop musician Elvis Costello noted, "*The word Beatlesque has been in the dictionary for a while now. I can hear them in the Prince album 'Around the World in a Day' [1985]; in Ron Sexsmith's tunes; in Harry Nilsson's melodies. You can hear that Kurt Cobain listened to the Beatles and mixed them in with punk and metal in some of his songs. You probably wouldn't be listening to the ambition of the latest OutKast record if the Beatles hadn't made the White Album into a double LP!*" (Costello, 2004). The Beatles' influence in song writing and music production is to be found everywhere within the wide spectrum covered by popular music, from the 1960s onwards.

The Beatles image today
The three following sentences I quote are perhaps the sum of how the Beatles

perceived their own image, how the audience perceived it, and how it is positioned into the socio-political as well as the artistic context of the decade 1960-1970. After their breakup, Lennon called the Beatles "*a little rock and roll band that made it very very big.*" (Anthology, CD 1). Derek Taylor, one time Beatles' press officer, called the relation between the Beatles and their fans "*the twentieth century's greatest romance*" (Derek Taylor, Anthology DVD 7-8, sleeve notes). American composer Aaron Copland has been quoted saying, "*If you want to know about the Sixties, play the music of The Beatles.*" (MacDonald, 1997, p. 1).

DeCurtis observed that the shortness of the Beatles career was ideal in that they did not hang on past their expiration date. He calls their albums, sketches of ideas that succeeding generations of musicians set out to complete. Making use of Lennon's own metaphor about the Beatles' break-up as a divorce, he calls the fans the children that were caught in the middle of that split (DeCurtis, p. xiv-xv). So many years later, when faced with their idols, or just the memories, the fans become children or teenagers again, they revisit the innocence and regain the ability to be surprised and excited as if facing something extraordinary for the first time. Barbara Allen recalls,"*[...] and my father said, 'I'll bet you a dollar to a doughnut, in about four years, you wouldn't walk across the street to see those goofs.' Well, if they were outside right now, I'd walk outside to see them and I'm 55 years old.*" (Berman, p. 76). "*When my mind strays to my earliest memories, they're always punctuated with Beatles songs*" (BBC tribute, 2001, P. Toner UK). *I remember myself being 4 years old and watching my shadow on the wall as I were* (sic) *dancing along with Beatles music...*" (BBC tribute, 2001, Valeria, Argentina). To their fans the Beatles stand for joy and they stand for comfort, "*Three friends and I always kidded ourselves about how much we seemed to resemble the characters of the Beatles. When John died in New York in 1980, we were stunned. But when one of our gang died in 1995, we turned to the Beatles to soothe the pain.*" (BBC tribute, 2001, Al Sullivan, USA). They stand for revolution and freedom, "*I remember we, Moskow University students, organized a meeting in memory of John Lennon, December, 1980. For that we spent sometime in prison. Now George... They were teaching us to be free. And we are.*" (BBC tribute, 2001, Andrei March, USA / Russia). American (of Ukrainian Jewish origin) author and translator David Gurevich, who grew up in the Soviet Union intertwines his life story with the Beatles in his autobiographical book *From Lenin to Lennon: A Memoir of Russia in the Sixties* (1991). To the devoted fans who are still growing in numbers the greatness of the Beatles image encapsulates musical richness, artistic integrity, fun, joy, love, peace, personal memories, comfort in times of sadness, but also the privilege of being part of the largest fan club in the world, the sense of belonging by choice to an ideal extended family.

Because they have repeatedly intertwined with memories of their lifetimes, they are called the sound track to their lives. As Costello was to realize when he performed in a McCartney concert in 1999, *"The second he sang the opening lines -- "Close your eyes, and I'll kiss you" [All My Loving, 1963, Lennon-McCartney]-- the crowd's reaction was so intense that it all but drowned the song out. It was very thrilling but also rather disconcerting. Perhaps I understood in that moment one of the reasons why the Beatles had to stop performing. The songs weren't theirs anymore. They were everybody's."* (Costello).

Art historian Emma Lavigne quoted Lennon, from a 1970 encounter with McLuhan, to whom he complained that the Beatles had become 'a museum, an institution' (Kimsey, p. 246). Martin recalls an incident in 1976, when EMI decided to issue a collection of Beatles songs called *Rock and Roll Music*. The Beatles had issued and edict that their original tapes should be re-issued exactly as they were recorded. EMI had used a transfer machine in order to turn them into stereo, coming up with a disastrous result, the voices on one channel and very forward, the backing on the other, and a lot of 'noise'. Martin, then living in the USA was informed and re-dubbed the tapes for the US reissue despite the instructions, while in England the album was probably released without any sound retouching (Martin, 1979, p. 146-147). Either due to the limitations of technology of the era, or because of the Beatles edict to EMI, or both, when their albums were first issued on CD, they did not have satisfying quality of sound. Nevertheless, their sales did not suffer. It took twenty years more to remaster the Beatles' music to be released in digital format, with good sound quality and both in mono and stereo variations. These were received with immense excitement. Prior to those reissues of the whole official Beatles catalog, came the reissues of their US Capitol releases, which until *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967 presented a different order and amount of songs on each album and even altered titles and sleeves. As listeners of the reissues raved about the sound of the mono recordings – long buried in their memory, the same happened to the Americans who first bought the Beatles albums in the sixties. To them, respectively, this was the 'original' sound and these were the 'original' albums.

Almost fifty years after the Beatles appeared on the music scene, forty years after their break-up, thirty years after Lennon's death, interest about the band is alive. A fan after Harrison's death wondered *"what kind of world only has two Beatles?"* (BBC Tribute, 2001, Michael Pardys, USA). A novel titled *Liverpool Fantasy* (Larry Kirwan, 2003), exploring the possibility of a world where the Beatles would have broken up before becoming famous, presents an alternative 'dark reality'. Books and magazines promote

the Beatles music and image. The Beatles sell records, and they sell games. Movies present their story, and a circus performance (*Love*, Cirque du Soleil) presents a seamless stream of sounds, colors and movement to honour their musical legacy. When NASA recently beamed a song – for the first time ever – directly into deep space, the Beatles' *"Across the Universe"* (1969, Lennon-McCartney) was chosen (NASA). Taylor, called the band *"an abstraction, like Christmas"* (Kimsey, p. 254). Apparently, if 'A' is for apple, 'B' is for Beatles, but its shape varies according to the 'handwriting' of each and every fan.

DISCUSSION

> *"By the device of the context, we may see how activity receives its*
> *fundamental organization and how even creativity is context bound.*
> *Stated differently, the concept of the context explains how culture*
> *intrudes on behavior encouraging us to reproduce society."*
> (Wentworth, p. 105)

Based on that statement we can assume that since art emerges from within society, it also exists within the contexts the society spawns. The society is formulated by a number of factors – cultural, philosophical, political, economical, etc., which linked in various combinations, in a specific time and place define the contexts by which we can understand and interpret it and the culture it forms. It should be noted that, the occurrence of factors is not to be viewed as a static condition, but rather as a constantly changing process. Art and culture within a society are linked with its specificity, and are thus to be read, interpreted and understood through the contexts, which emerge from it (Blocker - Jeffers, p. xi). According to an etymological definition, context originates from middle English, and means the weaving together of words, from Latin contextus connection of words, coherence, from contexere to weave together, from com- + texere to weave (http://www.merriam-webster.com). Context is the set of facts, circumstances, environment, background, that surround an event, or a situation, which determine, specify, or clarify it. Taking into account the communication theories presented in the background studies, and making use of the examples presented in the communication process, the issues to be discussed in this part of the paper are the following:
The influence of context on the meaning of art. The ways in which context influenced the design of the image of the Beatles. Whether the Beatles' identity is a result of a marketing intention or a co-design.

The influence of context on the meaning of art

Givón discusses how, in order to achieve interpersonal communication there is a need for shared generic mental categories, a *"shared conceptual map of the universe"* – at least in parts, a presumption of shared cognition as a pre-condition for communication. This assumption need not be confirmed during each actual communicative interaction (Givón, p. 91). Based on the assumption that we have an understanding of the intentions we are expected to make out a meaning in communication. Based on the assumption of common understanding did the primitive painter draw the fish on top of a background of wavy lines that depicted sea waves, without offering to the viewer the mistaken impression that a fish lies on top of water instead of being immersed in water. Based on this assumption Searle's Theory of Speech Act (1969) does have an application on the artistic product as the artist's intention to communicate. Since context is 'woven' by factors such as: the circumstances, the incidents, the background, the environment, it is then co-created and co-inhabited by both the artist and the audience, as stated in the Interpretative and Interaction Theories (Watzlawick, 1974; Griffin, 1997). The artistic communication attempt is framed within specific social and cultural contexts, through which meaning is attributed according to related external factors as stated in the Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958). Pearce and Cronen in their Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory (1980) propose a construction of meaning between two people who interact socially. If we view art – both creating it as well as relishing it – as a social interaction between the artist and each member that the audience is constituted from, then this theory holds true. Somewhere along these contextual parameters occurs communication through art.

However art creates and challenges the contexts, often leaving the audience guessing, looking for clues, but also inviting the audience to create their own contexts using art as a starting point. Blocker and Jeffers in *Contextualizing Aesthetics* mention Schopenhauer's notion that our perceptions and theories stemming from the everyday life, even the philosophical and scientific ones, are 'representations' of the world from a cognitive standpoint which is utilitarian and self-interested. In his view there are levels, or grades of representation and some reveal more of reality than others. Schopenhauer's argument is that artistic representation is much more adequate in revealing reality (Blocker - Jeffers, p. 63). When Picasso painted *Guernica* in 1937, it was to let the world know about the destruction of the specific city by the German and Italian allies of General Franco. It presented horror, destruction, death and mourning, through a depiction of stylized, fragmented human and animal figures among ruins. In representing the world through a sensual intermediary, the

representation, the signifier of what is signified is "*no longer tied to the pragmatic, utilitarian, functional aspect of a mundane perception and cognition.*" (Blocker - Jeffers, p. 63), hence Magritte's depiction of a clock titled '*the wind*' in *The Key of Dreams*. Art, in achieving a higher level of representation, reaches a different level of communication. The audience's interpretations, however distant from the creator's intentions, impose their own valid meanings as Barthes observed in *The death of the author* (1977). Picasso pressed to explain the depiction of a horse and a bull included in his *Guernica* responded, "*If you give a meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it is not my idea to give this meaning. What ideas and conclusions you have got I obtained too, but instinctively, unconsciously. I make the painting for the painting. I paint the objects for what they are.*" (http://www.pbs.org).

Could one say that Knowledge Gap Theory (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1970) which indicates context as a factor in perceiving and understanding information according to knowledge on related topics, applies in the Picasso - *Guernica* case? Does it really matter for the viewer to know, that Picasso was appalled by the slaughter of bulls and bullfighting in his native Spain, considering them to be meaningless sacrifices, a monument of human cruelty? Are we to perceive *Guernica* in a different way, knowing that the cruelty of bullfights is one of the contextual pools Picasso drew from in order to depict the meaningless cruelty of war? Probably not. In other cases it does make a difference. There is an installation called *Wall of Sound* (sadly the name of the artist who created it slips my mind). The installation consists of a line of boom boxes – which were popular in the 1980s – tiled one on top of the other, literally building a wall. The title is self-evident, however if one is familiar with the term 'wall of sound', as the sound production technique in studio recordings developed by Phil Spector in the 1960s, the meaning of this artwork changes to become a comment on popular culture in more than one ways. In that sense, the contextualization between systems of signs which spread in space and time, and form complex meaning-relations as stated in Semiotics, is essential in the creation and perception of art. As signs usually relate to more than one systems at the same time, taking into account individual creativity, historical circumstances, social identities and projects, they also offer the theoretical and analytical frameworks proposed by Social Semiotic Theory (Halliday, 1978) in order to make meaning of art in a social context.

The Theory of Structuration (Giddens, 1984) suggests that humans act within a context of pre-existing social structures, dictated by norms and laws, distinct from other social structures. Moreover, as the Theory of the Altercasting Strat-

egy (Pratkanis, 2000) reveals, people accept social roles, and they are expected to be consistent with these roles, due to which information consistent with them is offered, leading to the roles' reinforcement. This works as typecasting within a specific frame, or a context and it applies to artists as it applies to any other group formulated around a professional identity. It can go as far as to dictate whether a creation is to be viewed as art or not, as important or not. When Alfred Stieglitz exhibited in the same space controversial modern paintings, traditional, accepted art and photographs in his New York gallery *291*, in the beginning of the twentieth century, he broke new ground by exhibiting a variety of artistic works. He presented a possibility for dialogue between painters, draftsmen, sculptors, photographers, older, established, younger, newer practitioners, from Europe and America, while revealing to visitors differences and similarities between artists of all ranks and types. By disregarding set 'barriers' between various arts Stieglitz also disregarded the typecasting which the artistic circles forced upon artists, galleries and artworks alike, as dictated by the existing norms of the day.

According to the Adaptive Structuration Theory (Desanctis and Poole, 1994), perceptions are formed about technology's role and utility. If we apply this theory to the technology used in various forms of art, it becomes obvious how these affect the artists, their work and its meaning. This was more clearly stated by McLuhan in the Medium Theory (1964) which revealed the existence of the content embedded in the context, which is embedded in the medium that communicates it. In both theories the meaning is 'tied' to the technology used to express, present and perceive it. Warhol, when he created his *Carcrash*, was clearly influenced by the function of the print and its ability due to the multiple copies to affect the public, but also to spawn feelings of indifference exactly because of that quality which offered repetitive exposure and thus familiarity with gruesome subjects. Repetitive exposure which offers familiarity, allows audiences to accept works by artists, which they otherwise would reject. Priming could be viewed as a gradual 'education' the audience receives, a step-by-step familiarity slowly forming contexts, which allow the artist to express ideas, or use means of expression that if attempted one-off would fail to reach the audience. Then again, it is important to remember Georges Braque's quote "*Art is meant to disturb*", which speaks of art's role to express ideas in a way that calls attention, in which case priming would contradict the goal. Then again, the priming might refer to the exposure of an artist and not the work itself, resulting to different people doing similar works, for which one – due to already acquired fame gets credit for, whereas the other along with the work goes unnoticed.

In the same way Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1976) mainly referring to television and its responsibility for shaping the social conceptions of reality, also shapes social conceptions of artists and art – or specific manifestations of it. While the exposure to mass media gradually shapes our perceptions of reality and culture, it also informs and influences the arts, their expressive means and consequently their meaning – here I need to point towards the, already mentioned, Media theory by McLuhan (1964). The media are responsible for much of the exposure artists and art are enjoying today. It is due to the context created by, for example Warhol making use of the media and everyday objects, that we can interpret artists like Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst and their works. The work of Warhol may be useful as a frame of reference in this case, but by framing the works and pointing attention towards his direction we position them within a specific field of meaning.

Context affects and influences the meaning of art and it does so in various ways and for various reasons as it was pointed out so far. No matter whether the artistic products are in agreement with the contexts that spawned them or not, they are related to them and the art's meaning opens, or continues a dialogue with them.

They ways in which context influenced the design of the image of the Beatles

"Being born in Liverpool brings with it certain responsibilities" is the title to the first chapter in Miles' biography *Paul McCartney Many Years from Now* (1997). Liverpool as origin should be viewed as the context woven from the band-members' memories of their childhood and growing up, and their interaction with their fans. The background of the band-members may reveal reasons behind their identity choices as would do the social and political factors of the day. In this paper however only the relations between the Beatles and their audience have been examined. The focus is on the Beatles perception of their hometown and its people. The response of their families, friends, former classmates, the audiences in the small clubs, their preferences in music, their suggestions, these are the threads that wove the context out of which the Beatles emerged, along with the band's musical preferences, the influences from various musical genres and styles they were affected by. In such examples of influences the effect of what Givón called a *"shared conceptual map of the universe"* (2005, p. 91) is evident, at least in the Liverpudlian universe shared by like-minded teenagers immersing themselves in the pop culture of the era. The same analogies can be used about the forging of the Beatles as a band and their image in relation to Hamburg. In that sense the audience dictated the musical choices the Beatles made in order to

continue performing, and the Beatles offered their audience their own interpretations of existing known tunes. Often the reason for a song choice instead of another was not the 'sugar-coating' on the potential hits proposed to the Beatles, but that certain songs were considered to be within the context of their musical choices, because they came somewhat 'recommended' by their own social circle and were thus familiar and viewed as acceptable choices by their fans. The formation of the identity of the Beatles was informed by the relative subjects for pop music lyrics (mostly love songs) and by the need for the audience's response. As it was exhibited in songs like *Thank You Girl* (1963, Lennon-McCartney) and *She Loves You* (1963, Lennon-McCartney), which have been mentioned already, the Beatles wrote their songs in such a way as to invite and please the audience. Consciously or subconsciously, they occasionally used linguistic communication patterns which were identified mainly as female, thus positioning themselves in a different context than most boy bands, at the same time the rawness of their sound positioned them in a context related to black musicians rather than white pop groups.

The Beatles were taking the audience's interests, preferences, reactions, and communication codes into account, something which is in accordance with the Interpretative and Interaction Theories (Watzlawick, 1974; Griffin, 1997). However, they were not merely followers of the audience's will, they adjusted their communicative ways and presented their musical creations considering the parameters stated in Searle's Theory of Speech Act (1969), which would allow them to communicate with their public within specific contexts. The Beatles were aware of the impact of their appearance and performances. Being well-groomed and well dressed meant paying respect to their audience. The uniform bow offered a flair of professionalism to their performances, while its uniformity promoted the idea of unity, and visually it communicated the band's appreciation to their audience and their response to the music. At the same time concerts offered the Beatles the opportunity to test and if possible push the boundaries of propriety, in incidents like Lennon's *"rattle your jewellery"* statement, and the Beatles refusal to perform in front of a segregated audience. In the last year of touring, Lennon's reactions to the massive noise produced by the audience at Shea Stadium revealed the band's doubt about the point of playing live music since no one was able to hear. The mass communication attempt was negated by a massive, positive feedback.

Becoming more famous and established, and having fixed their image to the public's minds, through the recognizability fame assures, the Beatles were offered freedom of movement. Although they took their art – song writing, performances and

recordings – seriously, they were cautious not to take themselves too seriously, while at the same time positioning themselves above their peers with acts that could easily go unnoticed to the conscious mind but still be perceived on some mental level. Such acts were the 'sky-surfing' in *Back in the USSR* (1968, Lennon-McCartney), Lennon offering his plate of leftovers to Jagger, or the use of other famous musicians and singers as backing vocalists to the recordings and promotional movies of their songs. Gary Burns discussing the image of the Beatles in today's market, noted: "*One reason the Beatles became so popular is that people thought they were good. And one reason people think the Beatles are good is because they were so popular.*" (Burns, p. 223). Not to say that the Beatles were not good, but this is how constant exposure reinforced the status of their identity (Cultivation Theory, Gerbner, 1976). Priming of the audience over the years, and the cultivation of the Beatles image through the media, put the band in a position of power, they were well aware of. They could act and create works setting their pace and speaking their minds and being granted their wishes. Within this context they were allowed to design their record sleeves, appointing known artists to do it, as was the case with *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) and *The Beatles* (*The White Album*, 1968), which was released in a plain white sleeve without any visible lettering or images to recognize the band, hence its unofficial but better known title *The White Album*. Let us note that only five years prior to this release they were not allowed to release *With The Beatles* (1963) without their name printed on the sleeve despite their already famous faces spread on it. Aside from visually signifying an affiliation with the avant garde of the late 1960s, *The Beatles* (*the White Album*, 1968) was at once a declaration and the affirmation of the eponymity and recognizability of the band in terms of Social Semiotics.

The same type of freedom was enjoyed in the studio, due to the fame and the success the band enjoyed. The Beatles were allowed many studio hours for experimentations and recordings, gradually transforming the role of the studio from a post-creative, recording and production phase to a creative part of the process. In the decades prior to 1960, this would have been perceived as a waste of time and resources on behalf of the studios and the recording companies of the music industry. Priming was not only a tool to hold on to the audience's attention, it was also the Trojan horse which allowed the Beatles to take over the recording studio along with its technicians and use it as an essential part of their artistic creation, and in the process to raise their status as recording artists. Under such circumstances did it become possible to take the risk of producing and distributing the seven minute long single *Hey Jude* (1968, Lennon-McCartney). At the same time the reason behind the band's image change from the biggest live act to one which stopped touring and performing live altogether

to turn towards the studio, was a consequence of the audience's response. It is to be understood within the context of the audience's feedback. Moreover the Beatles' creative choices continued to be informed by the audience and its need to 'interpret' the band's lyrics looking for clues and secret messages, as the Beatles added stub clues to entertain this interaction, even writing a whole song (*Glass Onion*, 1968, Lennon-McCartney) as a sequence of unrelated marked 'clues'-lyrics collected from previous songs. A case of Coordinated Management of Meaning (Pearce and Cronen, 1980), which appears in closed circuit as a privileged exchange between the devoted fans who can 'read the message' and the artists.

Gillett noted how "*with stamina and versatility that were themselves worthy of admiration, the Beatles did their best to keep up with expectations*" (Gillett, p. 266) throughout their career. According to the Theory of Altercasting Strategy (Pratkanis, 2000), the Beatles could have been framed within their specific, straight forward role as pop entertainers. They were expected to be consistent with it in exchange to their identity's reinforcement. Instead they used the power their position offered, to experiment, to express new ideas and explore new territories. If one could view high art as one context and popular art as another, then the Beatles balanced between the two, contrary to the Theory of Structuration (Giddens, 1984) by denying to act within a context of pre-existing social structures. They 'mixed and matched' norms and laws, they were picking from various social as well as artistic structures. Frontani noted that a measure of the effectiveness of the Beatles image was the amelioration of apparent contradictions in enjoying broad appeal, while at the same time modelling the values of an oppositional youth culture (Frontani, p. 11). Both revolutionary and entertaining, ground-breaking and familiar, exhilarating for youths and accepted by the older generation, topping the popular charts and receiving raving reviews by serious music critics and composers alike, the Beatles first drawing from various contexts, gradually became themselves the symbolic center point where numerous contextual threads came to meet. Whiteley quoted Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, comparing his band to the Beatles and concluding, "*the Rolling Stones might speak to one's personal condition in a way that the Beatles did not, but the Beatles were universal*" (Whiteley, 2009, p. 216). Whiteley further wrote that one suggested explanation is to be found in the Beatles songs' unique way of mirroring the changing face of that decade (Whiteley, 2009, p. 205). Swift calls the Beatles 'collectors of diverse experiences' and notes how they aimed to challenge their world views and along with them their audience's (Swift, p. 204). Marwick observed, "*a Beatles song was always instantly recognizable, yet the variety of styles they essayed seemed almost endless*" (Marwick, p.

139), and he went on to note that *"it is in part because of their variousness that the Beatles have so often been spoken of as the voice of the age"* (Marwick, p. 139), as opposed to other important artists of the era. Context, by influencing the songs as well as the acts and choices of the Beatles consequently influenced their identity.

Is the Beatles' image a result of a marketing intention or is it a co-design?

Although in this paper, the role of the press as well as the political and social issues of the day are neither presented nor examined as factors, it should be mentioned that they played their role in the formation of the context into which the audience received the image of the Beatles and responded. In that sense this inquiry is far from complete. However, focusing on the interaction between the band and the audience, it has been revealed how on numerous occasions the audience was partially responsible for the choices, decisions and career turns the band made. From the personified small scale audiences who suggested songs and reacted to the Beatles performances in the beginning, to the larger audiences who were capable of nullifying the performances altogether due to the endless shrieking, and who expressed their favorable opinion by buying the records and the beatle-related merchandize, went to the cinemas to watch the movies, sat in front of the television or by the radio every time the Beatles music and performances were broadcasted and read anything written about the band, as McCartney observed – both literally and metaphorically 'it was the noise together that counted.'

The audience may have not pointed the creative paths the band should take, but in order to keep their audience pleased and intrigued – in the field of the pop form entertainment which is by nature ephemeral and extrovert – the Beatles were constantly on the search for new ideas, techniques and sounds to involve in their songs. The audience's feedback was not viewed as a one-dimensional response of shrieking at concerts, and purchasing records and beatle-related products en masse. As the Beatles had been part of the audience to pop musicians prior to themselves, they empathized with their audience, wishing to offer what they would expect to receive had they been in the audience. Creatively they worked outside the norms, irrespective of rules and professional boundaries, aiming to offer their audience a product that would satisfy their wishes for entertainment, while maintaining relevance to their lives, in order to bring them back for more.

The Beatles' song writing and performing was a dialogue co-conducted with the audience. It was the massive acceptance of the audience, that caused the attention of people from other layers of society and intrigued high art composers to note

and affirm the quality of their music. British music critic and editor William Mann, noticing 'the noise' as early as 1963, praised both music and the lyrics in the Beatles song writing, and drew parallels to various classic composers from Mahler to Gershwin, using musical theory terminology which agreed with his cultured audience, calling the band 'the Beatles Quartet' and writing about the Aeolian cadence in *Not A Second Time* (1963, Lennon-McCartney), (Mann, p. 45-47), in the spirit of Schopenhauer's belief about the higher function of art in the Apollonian sense, detached from life and appreciated as an uninterested, cultivated aesthetic value. Lennon, during his Playboy interview in 1980, specifically commented, *"[...] But the basic appeal of the Beatles was not their intelligence. It was their music. It was only after some guy in the London Times said there were Aeolian cadences in 'It Won't Be Long' [1963, Lennon-McCartney] that the middle classes started listening to it—because somebody put a tag on it"*, adding that to that day he did not have any idea what the Aeolian cadences are, and that they sounded to him like exotic birds. (Sheff, p. 216). Classical composer Ned Norem would not have noticed, if it weren't for the audience's Bacchic noise, in order to contemplate on their effect and write his 1967 article *The Beatles, about the lost art of Song*, in which he positioned the Beatles as revivalists of the sensual, *"who removed the sterile martyrdom from art"* by renewing the sense of pleasure (Norem, p. 120-131). An opinion shared today by Swift, who opposing Schopenhauer's belief about the higher function of art in the Apollonian sense, agrees with Nietzsche and his Dionysian approach towards art as being capable of intoxicating, instilling passion, frenzy, and thus being life-affirming (Swift, p. 204).

The Beatles earned recognizability and consequently power over society and the music industry, in order to further extend creatively, with a lot of help from their friends. If it weren't for the noise they made together with their audience, the band would not have been given the opportunity to be accepted in higher social circles, and get in touch with other art forms and non-pop music approaches, which they proceeded to incorporate in their work. Had they been less successful and thus been viewed as less important they would not have had the opportunity and the confidence to push their agenda for, in example, non-segregated audiences in their concerts, simply because the organizers would not care to listen. Had the band not been so popular, their opinion would not have mattered. If it were not for the massive acceptance by the audience, the Beatles would not have had the opportunity to take over the studio and create the works they did after they stopped touring, because EMI would not have allowed to a pop group of lesser importance, to occupy a studio for months as a creative space instead of one for recording and production; it would be viewed

as wasted work hours for both studio and technicians. Moreover, Lennon's wishes to sound like 'they were singing on the moon' (*Tomorrow Never Knows*, 1966, Lennon-Mc-Cartney), or like 'a thousand Tibetan monks chanting on top of a mountain' (*She Said, She Said*, 1966, Lennon-McCartney) as descriptions for the technicians and the band's producer in order to help create soundscapes for their songs would have been met with amusement and not taken seriously and would be disregarded as ridiculous, had they been spoken by an unknown musician.

Evidently, one cannot speak of a marketing intention in the sense that each next step was revealing itself after the previous one had been taken. The 'toppermost of the poppermost' Lennon was aiming at along with his fellow band-members at the beginning of their career, was not accompanied by a well structured strategy with steps to be taken from start to finish. In fact the marketing trends in the beginning of 1960 were that 'the guitar bands are on the way out', as the Decca executive Dick Rowe had – allegedly – informed the Beatles when they were still after a recording contract. If the Beatles had followed the type of communication model proposed by the Decca executive, and stood at the receiving end they would not have succeeded. In the same way if they had been creating and 'sending' their creative product ir-respective of the feedback, and had not taken into account the responses of the au-dience, keeping in touch, themselves receiving information and incorporating it in their work, there would not have had the tremendous success and acceptance by the audience they did and still do enjoy. Lennon insisted, as have done all four Beatles in numerous occasions, on the audience's and the society's contribution in the creation of the Beatles and consequently their identity, "*Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles, too. I'm not saying we weren't flags on the top of a ship; but the whole boat was moving. [...] we tuned in to the message. That's all. I don't mean to belittle the Beatles when I say, they weren't this, they weren't that. I'm just trying not to overblow their importance as separate from society.*" (Sheff, p. 215-216). It was the step by step success which allowed the next steps to be taken in the way they were taken, according to the sensibilities and further experiences of the band-members, each following decision based on the previous state. As MacDonald noted, the Beatles were observant, not causing the social and psychological changes of the era, but mirroring them, picking ideas still at an elite state of development and broadcasting them to their audience, the effect magnified due to the millions of fans (MacDonald, 2003, p. 87).

In Kimsey's words, the Beatles seem to succeed in the impossible, selling out in terms of immense popularity without selling out in terms of compromising their integrity. There seem to be two polarities harmonically encapsulated in the

Beatles identity, *the band* – the music as an organic expression, self contained and self sufficient, made by talented autodidacts, and *the brand* – the golden goose of music industry (Kimsey, p. 252-253). It would have been impossible for the brand to exist without the band as it was. The identity of the Beatles is multifaceted. The Beatles themselves proposed a series of images that took shape one after the other. These were the reflections of the society as the Beatles perceived it through their eyes in the 1960s, and as informed by their personal mythologies woven with the contexts they emerged from. The perceptions of the Beatles' image are to be approached according to the eyes of the viewers (Attribution Theory, Heider, 1958). Moreover, because of the magnitude of the audience and their different viewpoints one could say that there is a kaleidoscopic construction of identities which constitute constellations of contexts, from with the Beatles image continues to shape.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the influence and the importance of context in the creation of the artwork and the artist's identity. The creation of art was viewed as an act of communication that occurs within a framework of a constellation of contexts. A presumption of shared cognition as a pre-condition for communication needs to exist between the artist-sender and the audience receiver, for an actual communicative interaction to occur (Givón, 2005). The theory of Speech Act (Searle, 1969) stands to the extent that the artistic creation is a conscious, planned, intended act of communication. The intention for communication should not negate the existence, nor the importance of common contexts as crucial factors in communication and the creation of artwork. The Interpretative and Interaction Theories (Watzlawick, 1974; Griffin, 1997) and the Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory (Pearce and Cronen, 1980) are also proven valid in meaning-making, as is the Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958). They offer hindsight but also the possibility for new readings of the artwork, thus suggesting further new approaches. These also comply with the theoretical and analytical frameworks proposed by Social Semiotic Theory (Halliday, 1978). The importance of the Knowledge Gap Theory (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1970) is perhaps as relevant as the importance of the information offered to the meaning of the artwork, or the image of the creator, as it is processed by various 'receivers' in various levels.

McLuhan's Medium Theory (1964) about the media and how they affect the message's meaning tie content and technology together. Via the effect of priming, media empower and reinforce the artist's identity, and promote the artwork, as

it is suggested in Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1976). These theories may not be relevant in manifestations of artistic expression, which are not to be mechanically or digitally reproduced and /or presented and promoted via mass media. They still may apply to the image-making of the artist though.

In the examples presented in the communication process and the discussion which followed, it became evident that the Beatles were aware of the importance of context in the creation of their work and the formation of their image. The contexts they drew from to inform their work and shape their identity were shared with their audience. Nevertheless, contrary to the Theory of Structuration (Giddens, 1984), which suggests that humans act within a context of pre-existing social structures, and the Theory of the Altercasting Strategy (Pratkanis, 2000) which reveals that people accept social roles, the Beatles chose to emancipate themselves instead of following the given structures. The wide variety of the choices and the quality of the work, supported by an assured eponymity, secured the longevity of their image.

The Beatles identity was an act of communicative co-design, between them and the audience, which informed their choices. Nowadays, due to the perceptions of the Beatles according to the eyes of the viewers, and considering the magnitude of the audience and their different viewpoints, a kaleidoscopic construction of contexts continues to shape the Beatles identity. In that sense, their image already belongs to the field of public domain. As it has been shown in this research, context was a crucial factor in the creation of the band's identity. Further examination of the social, political, technological and marketing issues, which informed the choices of both the Beatles and their audience in their communication, would be beneficial in understanding the implications, which allowed and assisted the co-design of the Beatles work and their artistic image.

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