

The New Patrons make use of an original participatory protocol which guarantees the successful generation of quality artistic projects. Invented by artist François Hers more than 30 years ago, the protocol establishes a new division of responsibilities among citizens, artists, and cultural professionals, based on collective action, and thereby contributes to the education of generations of people committed to the common good :

*"This protocol offers, to any person from civil society wishing to do so, without exception and in any place whatever, either alone or in association with others, the means to assume the responsibility of commissioning an artwork from an artist. As a patron, it is henceforth this person's responsibility to understand and to articulate a reason for the artwork's existence, and for the collective investment in artistic creation.*

*It invites artists to invent forms which could respond, in their infinite diversity, to the demands of a given society, and hence to accept a division of roles which turns artistic creation from a solely private responsibility into a collective one.*

*It invites the mediators to establish links between the works and the public, and to do likewise between the people involved: the artist, the patron, and, moreover, between all the social actors who may be concerned. The mediator organises their cooperation. He/she provides the knowledge necessary for an appropriate choice of medium and artist, as well as the skills which will ensure the successful accomplishment of an artwork that respects the rigours of both the commissioning process and artistic creation.*

*It invites elected representatives, benefactors, and those responsible for public or private institutions to commit to contributing to a "democracy of initiative", as well as to politically mediating the work's inscription within the community for which it is destined. They can likewise take personal responsibility for a commission that meets a collective need.*

*It invites researchers from different disciplines to support the recognition of art as something necessary, to put the action undertaken into perspective, and to help to ground it in an understanding of contexts and issues which can be more widely shared.*

*In committing to an equal sharing of responsibilities, all the stakeholders agree to use negotiation to manage the tensions and conflicts inherent to public life within a democracy. The artwork, now itself an agent in public life, is no longer just the emblematic expression of a single individual, but of a group of people who have resolved to constitute a society by giving a shared meaning to contemporary artistic creation.*

*Financed by private and public funds, the work becomes collective property; its value is no longer commercial, but is now that of its collective use and the symbolic value the collective confers on that use."*