



Decommodification

1. Applicability

This document is a policy of BURN Arts, Inc. (“**Association**”).

This document applies to all members of the Association (“**Members**”) and where reasonable, serves as a guide to individuals attending our events, including Modifyre, and individuals accessing our resources at any of our event venues, including East Brisbane Bowls Club and Hackerspace Brisbane (“**Participants**”).

2. Purpose

To provide guidance on the expectations for what constitutes Commodification at a BURN Arts event and where its use is acceptable by any member of the Association and its Participants.

3. Overview

Decommodification is a hotly contested concept among burners worldwide, and differs in its interpretation. Being one of the Principles by which we promote our ethos to the wider community and each other, we must take the concept into account whenever we are hosting an Event, and strive, wherever possible, to create Decommodified spaces.

This document is intended as a guideline for anyone wishing to hold an Event under the auspices of BURN Arts, and is not intended as expectations for those wishing to hold burner events outside of our auspices, or for individual decisions when attending a BURN Arts Event.

BURN Arts draws a distinction between Modifyre, which strives to be completely Decommodified, and other BURN Arts Events. This Policy acknowledges that it is part of the role of the Association to seek certain opportunities which might involve Commodification, in order to grow the capacity of our Members and Events, while also protecting Modifyre from becoming a Commodified event.

This Policy also acknowledges that Commodification is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, in some cases best reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and the procedure reflects this.

4. Scope

This policy applies to anyone who wishes to hold an Event under the auspices of BURN Arts. It is up to the Management Team for that event to ensure that their team members are aware of this policy.

5. What is Commodification and Decommodification?

Commodification: Definition

Commodification is the transformation of goods, services, ideas and people into commodities or objects of trade. A commodity at its most basic is "anything intended for exchange", or any object of economic value.

Commodification is an action, activity or viewpoint. It is important to note that non-commercial and not-for-profit entities can also therefore engage in Commodification.

The following activities can be viewed as Commodification:

- Sponsorship- where a logo, or written/verbal attribution of an entity external to BURN Arts is displayed publicly, resulting from an exchange of goods, services or money (Note: Sponsorship can be Commercial or Non-Commercial)
- Advertising- where the cultural capital of a burn is utilised for commercial purposes, for example when photos of a product displayed at a Burn are used to sell that product.
- Branding- Public display of colours, logos and other identifiable cues that connote a particular commercial entity, for example on vehicles, trailers, tents and generators.

The following activities are typically not viewed as Commodification within the BURN Arts Community:

- Publicly thanking an individual for their time, effort or donated goods, as long as their business is not mentioned. If someone is a sole trader, using their personal name is fine, without linking to a business page.
- Spreading information about a business, social enterprise or not-for-profit entity that is engaging in activities in-keeping with the burner Principles, without them having solicited us to do so.
- Sharing the sale of items created by the burner community for the explicit purpose of fundraising for the burner community and activities.

Decommodification: Definition

Decommodification is the process of viewing utilities as an entitlement, rather than as a commodity that must be paid or traded for. It aims to reduce the effects of commercialisation, which relates to the exchange of goods and services, especially on a large scale.

Decommodified activities include:

- Gifting is an example of an act which is Decommodified, as it is done without expectation of return and is not an exchange or transaction.
- Covering or removing commercial logos or branding on one's possessions.

6. Modifyre Principles

Modifyre's ethos is built on a series of eleven key concepts which act as guidelines for the worldwide Burning Man [Regional Network](#). As such, the event may be understood as a celebration of a way of life lived consistently with these principles.

The eleven principles are not intended to dictate how people should be and act, but as a reflection of the community's ethos and culture as it has organically developed since Burning Man's inception. The Principle of Decommodification often works hand-in-hand with the Principle of Gifting.

“Modifyre is devoted to acts of gift giving. The value of a gift is unconditional. Gifting does not contemplate a return or an exchange for something of equal value. In order to preserve the spirit of gifting, our community seeks to create social environments that are unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. We resist the substitution of consumption for participatory experience.”

Source: <http://www.modifyre.org/philosophy>

7. Modifyre

Modifyre is the largest BURN Arts Event, and strives to be completely Decommodified. Wherever possible, the Association will resist the Commodification of Modifyre.

The BURN Arts Management Committee should not acquire grants or funding for Modifyre which require the inclusion of a logo or acknowledgement on the Event Guide, Poster or Social Media.

8. Other BURN Arts Events

BURN Arts auspices a range of events dedicated to the promotion of participatory arts and culture in Brisbane and regional Queensland. Any Member or Participant may hold an event under the auspices of BURN Arts, with permission of the Management Committee.

The purpose of BURN Arts is to be an entity which is able to interact with the wider community or “default-world”; legally, professionally and socially. As part of our objective to foster the burner community in Brisbane and regional Queensland, we strive to create connections and collaborations with the wider community to engage them in burner culture, and to offer diverse experiences and education to our Members and Participants. Sometimes, this is by partnering with fellow community groups, collaborating on events, accessing grant monies and interacting with stakeholders, including Government, Educational Institutions and Arts Organisations.

Commercial Sponsorship

BURN Arts Events should not engage in or accept commercial sponsorship under any circumstances.

Non-Commercial Sponsorship

BURN Arts may make the decision to access grants or funding that necessitate the display of a logo or acknowledgement of a funding body. These entities are non-commercial and might include Local or National Government, Arts Funding Bodies and Educational Institutions.

In such cases, the Member interested in accessing that grant must first alert the BURN Arts Management Committee, who will vote on each opportunity on a case-by-case basis.

9. Procedure

BURN Arts recognises that each situation is different.

If someone has a query or complaint, they can either attend one of the monthly Committee Meetings, or they can email the Chair of the Association.

If someone wants to engage in a Non-Commercial Sponsorship Agreement for a BURN Arts Event, they must bring it to the Management Committee for discussion and approval, either by attending a monthly Committee Meeting, or by emailing the Chair of the Association.

10. Social Media

Please refer to Policy BA-P007 - Social Media for more information.

11. Related documents

- BA-P001 – Code of Conduct
- BA-P007 – Social Media

12. Contact

For further information, please contact:

Chair

BURN Arts, Inc.

Email: ang@modifyre.org

13. Version control

| Version | Date | Comments |
|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| V2.00 | 16 January 2019 | Version 2 |