

Support expression of ideas in the arts

Sir, Art plays more important roles in human life than Antonia Senior allows ("The fat lady must learn to be a little thinner", Opinion, April 2). Art can express forms of thinking and understanding in ways that are beyond the scope of ordinary language. In all aspects of life there are ideas that are more or less difficult to grasp; it is the same with art, which is why different forms enjoy greater or lesser amounts of attention.

Nonetheless, whether the artists be Banksy or Vaughan Williams, their art contributes to the life of a culture and allows us to express opinions from a vantage point nourished by our grasp of an idea and the artist's treatment of it. If we allow some forms of art to "go to the wall" then we estrange ourselves from forms of thought and understanding expressed by that art. A culture in which, for instance, classical music has dropped away will have lost its ability to make of joy, death, tragedy and love what it does in a way that only classical music can. Other forms of music can treat joy, death and love but they cannot make of it what classical music does, simply because they are not classical music.

So it is an obligation of a progressive culture to ensure that all forms of thinking and understanding are kept alive. That obligation should extend to funding minority dimensions of our culture to ensure high standards are maintained. Allowing such dimensions to "go to the wall" is tantamount to saying that we should not be unduly concerned about deepening our understanding in ways that do not immediately have financial impact.

ADRIAN BROCKLESS
London W8