





**TALKING GALLERIES** is the first international platform for gallerists and art professionals that instigates the debate and exchange of new trends and issues specific to the art gallery sector. Key industry professionals are brought together to discuss the subsequent impact of these changes, to share experiences and to re-think models. TALKING GALLERIES gathers and produces content on specific issues related to gallery practices through international symposiums and series of publications, staying abreast of the most recent developments in the sector. TALKING GALLERIES stages conferences and symposiums worldwide in which leading figures in the art world are invited to share and present their experiences, thus creating the ideal environment to investigate and share knowledge. This publication collects the contents and most prominent lessons following the third symposium held in Barcelona from 29 to 30 September 2014.



2024 Leadership Summit

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- 1. Enhance operational efficiency
- 2. Strengthen customer relationships
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- 3. Talent Development
- 4. Market Expansion
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- 1. Review progress
- 2. Update strategy
- 3. Implement changes
- 4. Monitor results
- 5. Report back

# TALKING GALLERIES

THE INTERNATIONAL  
PLATFORM FOR GALLERIES

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# TALKING GALLERIES

THE INTERNATIONAL  
PLATFORM FOR GALLERIES

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**Art Galleries, Artists and  
Audiences:  
Building Bridges**

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## INTRODUCTION

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### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

By Georgina Adam\*

I will try to highlight some takeaway points of what has happened over the TALKING GALLERIES symposium 2014. It has been a wonderful journey. I think we have had fantastic speakers and very interesting panels, many thought-provoking things have emerged. In a few paragraphs, I will remind you some of the things that were covered over the last two days, to give you some key points, and then a few overall conclusions at the end.

We started with Edward Winkleman who talked about the Leo Castelli model, about the history of art dealing, examining if it was still viable. Edward was very clear that this model is still valid. Dealers still are working with artists and developing their careers. But he pointed out that the market is much more competitive and much more complex. This theme will not go away: some of the challenges have to be faced and we need to adapt to them.

There are many other very interesting things that emerged from Edward's research. For instance, many people think that the mid-market is weak – which can in some cases be a perception rather than a fact. Nevertheless Edward noted that there is indeed the weakness that many buyers at this level have disappeared. He calls them the doctors and the lawyers, and though they were not necessarily oncologists and specialists in hedge fund takeovers, they were nevertheless buyers and their withdrawal has certainly impacted on the mid-level market.

Edward highlighted the issues of time and money, two factors that are significant particularly in New York, but also in London, with rising rents forcing galleries out of whole areas. Other key issues are the poaching of artists and the rise of Instagram and social media.

In facing these new challenges, Edward suggested that it is essential to keep the lines of communication open with collectors. He also recommended not going too fast, particularly with the problem of artists possibly being poached. We live in an accelerating world, but it's necessary to think and talk before making certain decisions.

In Edward's analysis, art fairs did not come out terribly well. He noted the "vicious art fair circus" – there are now at least 220 major events, and he and many of the other speakers recommended thinking carefully about doing too many.

Edward offered solutions, including collaborations, moving to the secondary market or moving to a second location. This can particularly help with art fairs that will perhaps be more interested if you come from a more unusual location, for example Wichita, rather than if you come from New York.

He did some interesting research about who is more loyal and, judging from the admittedly informal poll that he conducted, artists seemed to be more loyal than galleries, contrary to perceptions. He pointed out the importance of adapting to the current times and ended with an encouraging message that was reinforced by Sylvain Levy, who said that 80% of the works he buys are from mid-level galleries. There are great advantages to being a mid-level gallery: you do not have the pressure of being a major player and you do not have the strains of being an emerging gallery.

The next panel, 'Joint Events Versus Going Solo', was very interesting geographically because we had New York at one extreme and Warsaw at the other, hence very different models overall. It was actually quite difficult to generalise about what was going on. Obviously the situations are very different: the fee to participate in the Berlin Gallery Weekend is €7,000, while galleries in Austria are paid for by the government.

Here the key point was the importance for galleries of banding together and establishing an identity. Gallery events are very much a means for galleries to co-operate and be stronger, particularly in difficult times.

Dorsey gave us her three takeaway points: having a unique position; being open to collaboration; and the importance of quality in an event. It is important to produce something that people want to go to and that they leave with a positive impression. However this is more difficult, obviously, in a big city like New York. One interesting thing that came out was the comment made by Lukasz Gorczyca from Warsaw, who said that they cannot compete with New York but can go to places like Reykjavik or Tokyo – being creative and pragmatic is important.

Then we moved on to Thomas Galbraith's presentation about the online world. He outlined what happened during the dot-com boom, when there

were many attempts to move to sell art online. The attempts crashed and Sotheby's lost \$100 million. Since then, in only 14 years, the situation has changed enormously. What has changed is the quality of the images, the usability of the sites, etc. Fourteen years ago, people were not happy about giving their credit card details to make a purchase online, and that has evolved enormously, which is being reflected in the selling of art over the Internet.

Thomas argued that there is much more information available, which creates more transparency. I think this is a debatable issue because you also do not know how much something sells for online. It goes both ways, because you can look up how much a painting has sold for over recent years. You can compare artists and artists' works. So that is a very positive aspect. Of course the online world opens up access: you can be in Barcelona and showing something to someone in a different part of the world. He pointed out that it is much cheaper to sell lower-priced goods at auction online, compared to taking them to a 'bricks and mortar' auction house – and they do not have to be shipped anywhere.

Thomas pointed out the advantages of the Internet. Databases give art prices; for market analysis, there are a number of sites that can give you a chart about how an artist or even a particular area in a certain artist's oeuvre has performed. For example you can see how Warhol's flower paintings and silkscreens have performed. And of course there are the social media. Instagram has a worrying effect for dealers because it means that the artists can themselves create a community and the dealer can be bypassed.

Consigning works to auctions has advantages. As Thomas said, it informs you on what the price points are when you put something up for auction. In the Q&A, he brought up one of the problems galleries face: as they are no longer in control of the market, when something goes online the gallerist does not know who he is selling to.

Then we had a very amusing panel about what artists want from their galleries. Jordi Colomer told us he wants complicity and mutual understanding. Again the personal contact is extremely important. Artists want to get on and make their work, to leave the dealer to look after the practical details and selling. Rainer Ganahl made the very good point that an artist must define art for himself, and also came back to the whole discussion of what success is. Edward Winkleman pointed out that artists also have to decide what they want, as they cannot have everything. If you want a huge



Hans Knoll

amount of publicity for a show, for example, you might decide you only want to sell the whole show to one buyer; you might perhaps get more press comments but your sale will be more difficult. It is a question of balancing out, and artists have to decide themselves what they want to do.

Mark Coetzee talked about the art market in Africa, which is somewhere that we have very little knowledge of. He talked very interestingly about the particular situation of Africa, with its 54 countries. However he concentrated on South Africa because the situation there is quite applicable to other countries. Of course, the South-African post-colonialist situation was specific, but the evolution of the system within Apartheid gave South Africa a cultural independence. They had to work in this closed country, which meant that the whole cultural system worked outside and fed on itself. Mark pointed out that the institutional system is based on European models, but it seems there is a very interesting new generation of post-Apartheid artists who are coming through.

The commercial galleries have been the motor of this flowering of art today, as they are the ones who have really driven forward what is happening in Africa. They go to museums, they organise shows, they publish catalogues, etc. I think it is very encouraging for the commercial galleries to know that they can have such an influence in a country even today, with everything that is going on culturally. He also pointed out that some South African galleries have made a name for themselves because of art fairs, but there are other, huge galleries in the country that are not necessarily known elsewhere, and they are selling because there is tremendous wealth in the region.

He mentioned how they have collector groups coming in from the main museums of London and New York and hoovering up everything they can. So it is certainly an important new entrant to the art market. It certainly seems the only way to see what is happening there is to visit. He finished up by presenting the museum that will open in two years' time, an extraordinary project by the designer Thomas Heatherwick.

We moved on to more financial aspects with 'New Roles in the Art Market', a panel moderated by Dorsey Waxter. The panel consisted of Harald Falckenberg, Alistair Hicks from Deutsche Bank, who talked about his roles, and Guy Jennings, who runs the Fine Arts Fund in London and has a huge experience not only in funds but in many parts of the art market. There was a lot of discussion about funds, and Guy pointed out that the Fine Art Fund is the most successful fund at the moment, with the first part closing at the end of 2015.

They support artists and galleries by buying two or three artworks at a time. Their policy for selling back is to offer pieces on the primary market back to the gallery itself. One of the criticisms of funds is that they put things into storage and you never see them, which is not what an artist really wants to happen to his work. But some of their holdings do go back into museums. The fund has a small number of investors – Guy said 125 – but we don't know how many are big investors and how many are smaller ones.

Harald Falckenberg made very important points about galleries and about the situation today. Galleries do not react quickly enough to changes and it was very clear to him that today, with this extraordinary art fair and art gallery circus, there are too many parties and not enough personal contact. He also made a very nice point, which is that artists are the mirror of society and his role is to promote art through public shows. Therefore, Harald encourages galleries to step out of the art circus, to start slowing things down, and to give artists time to develop.

Alistair Hicks told us about Deutsche Bank (DB) and his two roles, working both as an art advisor for clients but also as a curator. I think it was encouraging to know that they are buying to collect, to keep, to share with the public, and the average price of works of art he has bought over the years is just about \$1,500 – although more recent purchases are above this sum. There is so much noise about high prices that it is easy to forget that there is a huge other market, and that collectors such as DB that have been very prominent in the market also support art fairs. For instance, DB supported Frieze from the beginning.

We also had a panel discussion on communications. The use of the word 'branding' stirred some controversy, with the word 'identity' preferred. This is an important notion according to our specialists: first of all you need to work out what your identity is, as you need to be clear about who you are. Identity is a question of making yourself memorable.

On the other hand, personal contact remains very important in this industry. But we should not forget the importance of the website, as it validates and continues on from that personal contact. So galleries really need to make their website work for them, to make it show who they are and to make that very clear. It must be consistent and regularly updated.

The panellists suggested that galleries should examine costs when considering doing art fairs and that they should perhaps devote some of the budget – perhaps 10% – to communications.



There was a lot of discussion about tools, and Twitter and Instagram are the two sites that were most talked about. Because we live in a very visual society, people need images and video to see. Let us not forget that galleries should use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram because they are free platforms. In addition, they should remember that they already have a precious resource, their database, which they can exploit more, connecting regularly with clients, using it to seek out new ones and so increase the number of contacts.

Last year we had someone from the institutional field who said humorously: “I’m fried with e-mails”. She meant she was overwhelmed. Therefore, use communications carefully, effectively and make them carefully targeted.

Coming to the conclusions, every speaker brought up the fact that the art trade, galleries, everyone that is a part of this industry is living in a changing world due to globalisation and the Internet. There is change and you have to accept it, galleries need to adapt. We have had a lot of ways of finding new approaches to doing things. For example, Edward pointed out that galleries are half empty for half of the year and perhaps by using something like online sales they could do something about those quieter periods or extend to other locations. Hence, there are solutions.

It is important in today’s world to professionalise, and it is very interesting that an organisation like Talking Galleries exists – something that did not exist before, although now there are more professional platforms for the art trade. Another issue in this field is that of contracts, and the trade should envisage moving towards formalising relationships with artists through contracts.

There is an expression in England that the most important thing in real estate is location, location, location. And I think one of the takeaways here is communication, communication, communication: between galleries, grouping together; between artists and galleries; and between galleries and their collectors. Be pragmatic, you are going to have to adapt. But the most important thing that came across over and over again is that this is still a personal business and that aspect is key. All the tools in the world will not replace the personal aspect of the art trade.

\*Georgina Adam, Art Market Editor-at-Large for ‘The Art Newspaper’ since 2008 and art market correspondent for the ‘Financial Times’. Adam has been writing about the art market and the arts in general for 25 years, and also lectures on the market and related subjects at Sotheby’s and Christie’s educational institutes. Now based in London, she has lived in France and Japan; in June 2014 she released the book ‘Big Bucks: The Explosion of the Art Market in the 21st Century’, which explores the transformation of the modern and contemporary art market in the 21st century.



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# SESSIONS

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## **Edward Winkleman**

Co-owner of Winkleman Gallery in New York. He began his art career with a series of guerrilla-style exhibitions called 'hit & run' that took place in empty warehouses in New York and London. In 2001, he co-founded the Plus Ultra Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, with artist Joshua Stern. When it moved into Chelsea in 2006, the space became the Winkleman Gallery. Murat Orozobekov joined co-owner of the gallery in 2007. Between them, they co-founded the Moving Image Art Fair in March 2011, focused on video and moving-image based sculptures and installation. Winkleman is the author of a blog that focuses on art (in particular, demystifying the gallery system) and politics. He has also been a contributing editor to Art World Salon and is the author of the books 'How to Start and Run a Commercial Art Gallery' and 'Selling Contemporary Art: How to Navigate the Evolving Market.'

# THE POSITION OF THE MID-MARKET GALLERY IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT

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## **SPEAKER**

Edward Winkleman

## **CONCEPTS**

Types of galleries, complexity and competition, loyalty, collaboration, factoring, relocating, poaching, speculation, art flippers, art fairs, online sales.



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# THE POSITION OF THE MID-MARKET GALLERY IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT

EDWARD WINKLEMAN

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This presentation focuses on the research done in my second book, which is in part a critique of the first one that I wrote back in 2008 called 'How to start and run a commercial art gallery'. The book can be understood as a deconstruction of the Leo Castelli model for an art gallery, which is based on discovering and nurturing young artists, supporting their development and building a commercial market for their work. In this longer-term perspective, the artist would be loyal to the gallery and the gallery to the artist, working together in good times and in bad to grow successfully.

The conclusion that I am coming to in my research for the book is that the model is not broken; the Leo Castelli model is still a viable way to run a commercial gallery. The difference now is that the entire market has become much more complex and competitive than when I wrote the first book. To begin the discussion about mid-level galleries in this context, I will first define the different types of galleries by dividing them into four levels: mega-galleries, top-level galleries, mid-level galleries and emerging galleries.

## GALLERY LEVELS AND DEFINITION

A mega-gallery is an influential gallery with a roster of at least 40 artists, a large international presence and a priority of expanding their empire. Top-level galleries, on the other hand, may not have 40 artists but do have international influence. The public perception is that they are not necessarily seeking to enlarge their empire. An emerging gallery is normally less than 10 years old and initially has little international influence and a random number of artists in their programme. An emerging gallery is mostly defined by the fact that it is a new gallery and it is the art dealer's first gallery. What would make a gallery mid-level? It is a gallery that might be on its way to becoming a top gallery, but it is older than 10 years, and there is perhaps a perception

that it will not gain much influence. This could be because of its situation or by choice. It is a curatorial preference: perhaps it simply enjoys operating in the mid-level market and enjoys fostering emerging artists or intentionally avoids the type of competition it takes to become a top level gallery.

**“WHAT WOULD MAKE A GALLERY MID-LEVEL? IT IS A GALLERY THAT MIGHT BE ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING A TOP GALLERY, BUT IT IS OLDER THAN 10 YEARS.”**

There are two other determining factors for mid-level galleries: they have less access to time and money; and secondly they are judged by art-world insiders according to the art fairs they participate in. Generally these galleries do not participate in many fairs but still remain in the business of selling art.

#### **WHAT IS WRONG WITH BEING A MID-LEVEL GALLERY?**

There is nothing wrong with being a mid-level gallery. They are an essential part of the gallery ecosystem in which artists who have passed their ‘emerging’ stage, but not yet reached their ‘blue chip’ stage, can continue to develop their work and experiment while having the support of a commercial space. Nevertheless, there are many indicators that currently the market is much tougher for mid-level galleries in comparison with other type of galleries because of the way the market now works. Why would we think that it is more difficult for mid-level galleries when there are so many of them?

In a lot of businesses, problems come when the world thinks you are struggling. This perception will make you struggle more. The current perception is that the top and lower ends of the market are back up to 2007 levels and growing, but sales for the middle market are actually decreasing.

**“THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING A MID-LEVEL GALLERY. THEY ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE GALLERY ECOSYSTEM IN WHICH ARTISTS WHO HAVE PASSED THEIR ‘EMERGING’ STAGE, BUT NOT YET REACHED THEIR ‘BLUE CHIP’ STAGE, CAN CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THEIR WORK AND EXPERIMENT.”**

Some published sales figures that came out in 2013 reinforce that notion. Focusing on the New York scene, there are many galleries that have closed

since 2008 and the vast majority of them were in the mid-level gallery range. In short, the middle market seems to be struggling still just as much as they have throughout the entire financial recession and recovery if not more so.

## **CHALLENGES AND CASH FLOW STRATEGIES FOR MID-LEVEL GALLERIES.**

In basic business terms, mid-level galleries have been experiencing relatively lower sales and the loss of a key consumer sector, often producing a cash-flow problem. In the United States, right through to the end of 2007, the market expanded very rapidly because a new group of people started to buy art. These were people in the upper-middle to upper-lower class (the ‘doctors and lawyers’), who invested in the stock market and had done well up to 2007. But with the economic crash of 2008, everyone stepped back and looked at their long-term financial prospects to decide whether to continue buying art or not. Unfortunately, the price points for these buyers were generally mid-level and they have not come back to purchasing art. This has had a big impact on the mid-level market.

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The inconsistent cash flow that results from the loss of this consumer base presents a real problem for relatively lower sales. If you have a healthy cash flow you can keep taking advantage of the opportunities that come your way. If you do not, there are often opportunities you will have to pass up, like an offer to participate in a high-profile art fair. This is really where the mid-level galleries are struggling.

One art fair strategy is **factoring**, which is when a company sells its accounts receivable (i.e. invoices) to a third party (called a ‘factor’) at a discount, but they will give you the cash immediately. Thus, if you have a collector that takes a long time to pay, factoring can be an option. One company in the art world doing factoring is FOUNDATION™ (foundationtm.net), which was started by an art dealer and an art fair organizer. Factoring seems like a viable action that is happening more and more, although it really depends on how the market goes.

An **art fair backer**, unlike an art backer for the gallery, can be a one-off agreement with the terms clearly agreed upon. These terms can include participating as part of the gallery team at a fair. Many mid-level galleries have used this strategy very successfully.

Another art fair strategy is **collaboration**. Many art fairs welcome proposals from two galleries that present a booth concept with an interesting curatorial perspective. The advantages are that they will have a better chance of getting in and they can split the costs between them.

Many primary market dealers have found that having a foot in the **secondary market** can be the best longterm strategy if you have a primary market programme that does not always remain solvent. However, because getting into the secondary market requires expertise and capital, it may not be the best option for everyone.

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Another cash-flow strategy for mid-level galleries in general is related to the many dealers who report that their selling season out of their physical space lasts only six months of the year, usually mid-September to mid-December and then March to May. The other six months, they are essentially losing money by having a physical space. Therefore, having a **complementary business** is something a lot of mid-level galleries are starting to talk about. Examples of past and present complementary businesses include a bookstore like the one at STAMP gallery in Basel; a bar business, like the one Gavin Brown’s Enterprise used to run in New York. A model that holds a good deal of promise in the current climate is the one used by Interstate in Brooklyn, who rented a very large space, part of which is used for the gallery while the rest is rented out as artists’ studio space.

Another reason for having complementary businesses is the rising rents in gallery districts, which is a growing issue for mid-level galleries who are nearing the end of their leases. This relates to the last strategy for cash-flow problems, which is to **relocate** the gallery to a different region. There are



two advantages to this: if you get out of the major art centres, you can work with major artists; if you are competing with other galleries in the centre for them, you can have your dream programme in the middle of nowhere. The other benefit is that many art fairs like geographical diversity and so if you are the only good gallery in Kansas, your options of getting into an art fair go up.

Another idea that has been much discussed is the 'post-brick-and-mortar gallery' concept, but in the end it tends to boil down to closing the physical space and becoming an art consultant but still doing art fairs. Most major art fairs are still very firm that you have to have a physical space to participate, but some of the satellite fairs are saying that they would be open to a post-brick-and-mortar gallery participating in their fair. I think we are going to see an evolution toward greater acceptance of these programmes moving forward.

## THE POACHING TENDENCY IN BETWEEN GALLERIES

One of the things that drove my interest in mid-level galleries was the issue of poaching. A couple of years ago, I started to see poaching as a threat to the existence of mid-level galleries. There were a high number of high-profile poaching's from mid-level galleries by top and even mega-galleries, often creating a huge hole in their curatorial programme. Mid-level galleries were seeing their artists go, the ones that they had discovered, nurtured and helped to build a successful career. Many galleries began to question why the artists were not as loyal as they seemed to have been in the past, loyalty being part of the Leo Castelli model deal.

I decided to research this loyalty question. First I posted an online survey, which 1,382 artists from 31 countries responded to. I asked if they had gallery representation or not; 40% said they did and 60% said they did not. These percentages are probably just a reflection of my particular circle. I asked the represented artists to indicate how important they felt loyalty to the gallery was in relationship with their dealer(s). The response was really encouraging. Close to 92% of the artists felt that loyalty was at least moderately important to them in this relationship. I turned the question around and asked how important loyalty to artists was to their dealers. The numbers dropped a little bit, suggesting that loyalty remains an important part of the relationship between artists and dealers.

On the other hand, I researched the movement of artists in and out of the 2008

rosters of 32 New York galleries (14 mid-level galleries, 14 top-level galleries and four mega-galleries) and compared them to their 2014 rosters. Among the mid-level galleries, an average of 66% of those artists who appeared on their 2008 rosters but not on their 2014 rosters did not have another New York gallery yet, suggesting they had been dropped by those galleries. That compares to another 34% who did have a NY gallery, which can include the percentage of the artists that had left to go to another, usually bigger gallery, including those who had been actively poached.

**“LOYALTY REMAINS AN  
IMPORTANT PART OF THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN ARTISTS AND DEALERS.”**

The really shocking thing for me was that these mid-level dealers were essentially dropping two artists to every one who moved on to another gallery. So in looking for answers as to why loyalty seemed less important to artists, it may be that artists are seeing dealers dropping artists, thinking they may be next and so not seeing any reason to be loyal to the gallery.

**STRATEGIES FOR MID-LEVEL GALLERIES ON HANDLING  
POACHING**

One of the things I suggest to handle poaching would be **discussing the issue with artists upfront**. One day a mega-gallery may knock on their door, but you can suggest productive ways to make such a transition together. If you talk about it, it will be less awkward if it actually happens. A second suggestion is to stay on friendly terms and maintain the possibility of having access to their work in the future.

In the past edition of Talking Galleries, Alain Servais discussed an idea that could be applied to the art world. The Federal International Football Association (FIFA) has a policy whereby if a minor team player is poached by a major team, the major team has to reimburse the minor team for the **training of that player**. Almost every dealer I have talked to said this is not workable in the gallery world; however, I think it can become workable by some dealers simply doing it. If a poaching gallery offers **access to the smaller gallery of the artist’s work** over the next three years, as an acknowledgement of what that smaller gallery did to build this artist’s market, such a transition could be a very good way of smoothing any animosity about the poaching. Another strategy for poaching that seems inevitable is extended use of

contracts, which many galleries have been hesitant to use, but that may be changing.

A collector from the audience suggested that there is a need to legally secure the relationships between collectors and galleries before he feels comfortable about making significant purchases. He assured me that the demand for clearer, more secure relationships will increase. This is another argument for contracts: increasingly collectors will not buy from you if you do not have that security in your relationship with your artists. In my opinion, the industry is becoming too big for it not to use contracts.

**“ IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR  
GALLERIES TO ENCOURAGE LOYALTY.  
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A final strategy for mid-level galleries worried about poaching is to buy their artists' work. If they are poached by a bigger gallery, the prices will just go up. The problem here, of course, is that a lot of mid-level galleries have cash-flow issues and buying the work does not occur to them as a strategy or is not feasible.

Concerning loyalty, I have come to the conclusion that mid-level galleries are partly responsible for the loss of loyalty in these relationships. It is really important for galleries to encourage loyalty. This requires more consideration in deciding to whom representation should be offered.

Concerning loyalty, I have come to the conclusion that mid-level galleries are partly responsible for the loss of loyalty in these relationships. It is really important for galleries to encourage loyalty. This requires more consideration in deciding to whom representation should be offered. The current practice of 'throwing artists against the wall to see which ones stick' is prompted by how quickly careers can develop and the bigger threat of losing an artist if he or she is not officially represented, but we need to step back and rethink this a little bit. Everything is moving too fast: artists are being represented by galleries before the gallery knows if they will build a viable book for their work.

Finally, perhaps it is time to consider that we must simply forget loyalty. Perhaps this part of the Leo Castelli model is no longer viable. Perhaps the

future is contracts and more business-like relationships.

## PROBLEMS THAT AFFECT MID-LEVEL GALLERIES

The art market has experienced a shift in the culture of collecting contemporary art. In New York, collectors have been buying the work of emerging artists and flipping it at auctions in alarming numbers. Some artists' work reached as high as a 1500% increase on their original purchase price in just a few years. Examples like this have attracted a new breed of people to purchasing art. Their method of buying art has not been based on connoisseurship, but rather purely on **speculation**. This shift poses a particular problem for mid-level galleries, more than it does for top-level or emerging galleries. The reason is that for the top-level galleries who represent blue-chip artists, the assumption is the work has already been extensively vetted; that is, connoisseurship is already built in, which makes their work a safer investment. For emerging artists, their price points are low enough that both speculators and connoisseurs can buy it without much worry. In the mid-level though, when the price points are higher than the emerging prices, but they are not yet viewed as blue chip (and therefore very safe investments), the only sales technique a dealer can use to sell their work is an appeal to connoisseurship. If the culture evolves away from connoisseurship, therefore, mid-level galleries struggle more than the others.

TALKING GALLERIES

In the beginning of 2014, there was a sprinkling of headlines about art flippers. Later in the year, 'The New York Times' was looking at this issue and commissioned two studies, which came to the conclusion that "contemporary works appearing at auction within three years of their creation are not coming to auction faster than in the past". In other words, flipping is not driving everything. But the horse, as we say, is already out of the barn for mid-level galleries because the perception has become that speculation is now an important component of collecting. The perception is driving the reality here. Maybe the reality that is flipping is not entirely out of control. Nevertheless, new people are coming into the market based on the notion that you can 'turn a fast buck' in the contemporary market and deciding mid-level artists are too risky.

**“IF THE CULTURE EVOLVES AWAY FROM  
CONNOISSEURSHIP, THEREFORE, MID-LEVEL  
GALLERIES STRUGGLE MORE THAN THE  
OTHERS.”**

Another alternative for mid-level galleries here is to get in on the game. A very good mid-level gallery in New York decided to represent some young painters to help with their cash flow. This seems to be working, as those artists are paying their rent now.

**“ANOTHER CHALLENGE FOR MID-LEVEL  
GALLERIES RELATES TO THE FACT THAT  
GALLERIES ARE SELLING MORE AND MORE  
AT ART FAIRS.”**

Another challenge for mid-level galleries relates to the fact that galleries are selling more and more at art fairs. Mid-level galleries that want to reach the top tier have to get into major art fairs. Many mid-level dealers are convinced that doing so will change their fortunes. There is an interesting set of paradoxes that goes hand in hand with this thinking. The core of this is the fact that major art fairs fees are high and midlevel galleries usually have cash-flow issues. Hence, how do they get more money to pay for a major art fair? What in many cases happens is that the gallery has to do a couple of additional minor fairs just to raise the money to get into the major fair.

Another issue here is that mid-level dealers very often cannot sell high-price-point works until they get into the major fairs, where collectors expect such prices. When mid-level galleries take expensive works to the additional minor fairs (which they are doing simply to raise the money for the major fair), they are often disappointed with sales. This is further complicated by how many mid-level galleries try to get the attention of the selection committees of the major fairs by proposing something that really stands out but is often unsellable. There is a vicious cycle that does not help these galleries to develop. It is time for mid-level galleries to slow down and think about how urgently they need to do a major fair, before they find themselves closing because of the way this works.

Mid-level galleries are also now affected by the additional pressure on the artists in their roster to create enough work to do the additional fairs. If you are a mid-level gallery with 12 to 20 artists, it is very likely that they are probably preparing for solo shows and have multiple galleries. To ask them for more work for fairs is putting pressure on them. That actually starts to change the art they make. This becomes a much bigger issue than the survival of a visual gallery and it starts to impact on the kind of art our generation is seeing.

Again, the main strategy here is to resist the pressure to do the major fairs until the gallery is ready. It is important for the gallery to choose fairs in accordance with its long-term goals.

**“IT IS TIME FOR MID-LEVEL GALLERIES TO SLOW DOWN AND THINK ABOUT HOW URGENTLY THEY NEED TO DO A MAJOR FAIR, BEFORE THEY FIND THEMSELVES CLOSING BECAUSE OF THE WAY THIS WORKS.”**

## INTERNET AND ONLINE SALES

The Internet is changing the authority that every dealer has. The art dealer used to have complete control over the information about what art was available and who got to buy the work. Nowadays, artists are intentionally (or inadvertently) publicising their work through social media such as Instagram, giving more control to the artist but also more potential control to buyers. If, for example, an artist that sells very well for a gallery starts to share images of his new work or even works in progress from his studio, the dealer will have to face people he does not know who want to buy the works. The problem is that dealers often have agreements with the artist's main collectors that they will get to see any new work before anyone else. The first strategy to help solve such issues is to talk upfront to the artists and make sure they know what the gallery expects in terms for sales and access to their work. It would also help to ask the artist to ‘hashtag’ the gallery, to include a link to the gallery's social media accounts or website in their social media posts.

## QUESTIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS (Q/C) FROM THE AUDIENCE

**Q.** I think as a gallery it is not enough to be hashtagged in Instagram because those people that are coming through Instagram are, in most cases, very different to our traditional clients. We can reach new people, a new type of client, through Instagram and simply hashtagged does not prepare me as a gallerist to deal with this new type of client. Gallerists will have to develop new strategies and approaches to such clients.

**E.W.** Do you have any ideas on that?

**C.** The gallery needs to be active on all these platforms in order to be competitive. And the artist should not do it alone; there should be a whole online strategy of working together. The attitude of the gallery towards these new people needs to change.

**E.W.** I totally agree.

**Q.** I was interested in knowing about artists using agents.

**E.W.** I think that is part of the future, especially with artists who have multiple galleries. In my experience, working with an artist who has a gallery manager is more or less like any other relationship: we just try to be nicer to that gallery manager to have better access. Maybe they are the solution.

**Q.** Do you have any information on the impact of selling at biennales? Many of us do not buy from art fairs because the work is way too commercial. We seek work because of its critical importance. I find artists push themselves too hard on those platforms, while the percentage of sales is not enough to be justifiable.

**E.W.** I have mixed feelings about sales at biennales, maybe because it is the least commercial of all the contexts. This is why artists work very hard on these pieces, because they love that context. But should we expose the fact that this is a selling context? This is when my hesitation comes in, because then we have taken advantage of artists that feel really good about their work in this context to make it commercial. The reality is that work is selling out of there.

**Q.** It is more the strategy of the gallerist to pursue curators who work on the biennale circuit because I think gallerists use fairs to make sales. There is a large percentage of collectors now that buy 99% of our work in biennales. So, is it valid for gallerists to pursue, to court curators for this final outcome?

**E.W.** I imagine you might see a little bit of a push-back from curators. They probably understand that it is the way things work. But if I call a curator to come and see an artist and he knows that I sell at every biennial, I think that may have some push-back eventually.

**Q.** As a collector who has been collecting for 30 years, I have two things to say. Firstly about loyalty, we should remember that if the art market is a market and a consuming market, it has a certain number of rules that

determine loyalty in the market. I do not know what loyalty is in other markets. Secondly, I would like to say that currently 80% of the work comes from mid-size galleries, not big galleries. The reason is because in art you need to be guided and you cannot be guided by an auction catalogue or an auction online. There is a great future for mid-level galleries if they do a good job, providing a kind of connoisseurship to people who can guide the others.

**E.W.** You are coming to the same conclusion I am coming to. It is not a matter of completely dismissing the importance of these relationships in connoisseurship. It is simply about understanding how these things are now kind of coming in from different angles and impacting on what it was said that dealers need to do, the need to strategize around the Internet. You cannot just be Leo Castelli as in the 1970s, when there was no Internet. Things are far more complex now.





## **Annamária Molnár**

Director and owner of Ani Molnár Gallery in Budapest. She received a Master's Degree in Economics from the Corvinus University of Budapest in 1996. In 1993 she studied international marketing at the University of Groningen. In the late 90s, she started her career as a curator in the Hungarian contemporary art scene, organising non-profit exhibitions and projects. She won the curatorial scholarship of the Institut für Kulturwissenschaft in Vienna in 1999. In 2008 she opened her contemporary art gallery focusing on emerging and mid-career Eastern-European artists. The gallery hosts non-profit public space exhibitions, which received the Summa Artium Award in 2009. She was the president of the Hungarian Contemporary Galleries Association (2011-2014) and launched the international visitors programme 'Budapest Contemporary' in 2012. In 2013 the gallery received the Innovation and Creativity Award from the FEAGA in Basel.

## **SPEAKERS**

### **Łukasz Gorczyca**

Art historian and co-founder, with Michał Kaczyński, of the Raster art magazine, published from 1995 to 2003. In 2001 they opened the Raster Gallery in Warsaw, one of the world's most recognisable galleries in Poland. He has curated various exhibitions, including Relax at the Arsenal Gallery in Białystok (2001) and De Ma Fenêtre at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris (2004). As an art writer, Gorczyca has published numerous articles and essays and has worked with many national and international art journals. His publications also include two books: 'The Best Polish Short Stories' (1999) and the novel 'Half Empty', cowritten with Łukasz Ronduda (2010). As co-director of the Raster Gallery, Gorczyca has been involved in the organisation of collaborative projects, among them Villa Warszawa (2006), Villa Reykjavik (2010), Villa Tokyo (2011) and the Warsaw Gallery Weekend (from 2011).

### **Jochen Meyer**

Based in Berlin, Meyer has a background in literature and history. In 1997, he founded the art gallery Meyer Riegger together with Thomas Riegger in Karlsruhe. In 2008, the gallery opened a second space in Berlin. Many of the represented artists had their first solo show in the gallery. Meyer Riegger represents young to mid-career artists, among them Franz Ackermann, Rosa Barba, Katinka Bock, Miriam Cahn, Eva Kotatkova, Helen Mirra, Jonathan Monk, John Miller, Melvin Moti and Paulo Nazareth. Meyer Riegger has regularly participated in the main international art fairs. Meyer has been a member of the Art Basel Committee in Basel since 2011. He is also one of the six members of the association of the Berlin Gallery Weekend, a leading art world gathering celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. In 2008, the same organization also launched the project art berlin contemporary, an annual event in which several galleries and artists participate.

### **Dorsey Waxter**

Dorsey Waxter is a Partner at Van Doren Waxter, located in New York City's Upper East Side. She is also the current President of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA). Her career began as gallery assistant at the Nancy Hoffman Gallery in 1974. After three years, she transitioned to the André Emmerich Gallery, contributing to the gallery's specialisation in New York colour-field and post-World-War-II abstraction. In 1991, she established Dorsey Waxter Fine Art, Inc., advising clients and representing prominent estates. Ms. Waxter then became Director of the Greenberg Van Doren Gallery in 1998, which became Van Doren Waxter in 2013. The gallery's roster of artists and estates includes some of the most influential artists of the 20th and 21st centuries.

# JOINT GALLERY EVENTS VERSUS GOING SOLO

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## **MODERATOR**

Annamária Molnár

## **SPEAKERS**

Łukasz Gorczyca, Jochen Meyer, Dorsey Waxter

## **CONCEPTS**

Gallery weekends, event fees, collaboration versus competition, communities, participation, permanent versus temporary, different business models, regional versus international.

## Joint Events versus Going Solo

### Joint events versus art fairs

convergence, cooperation or competition?

### Common traits with art fairs:

- Selection process, criteria for participating galleries
- Presentation of "crème de crème" of artists and artworks
- Thematic supplements/shows
- Associated museum events
- (Curatorial) guided tours, performances, professional discussions, media coverage

### Major differences:

- Permanent versus temporary, scattered versus centralised locations
- Different business models, costs and expenses
- Locality principle (local galleries) versus regional/international diversity



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# JOINT GALLERY EVENTS VERSUS GOING SOLO

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ANNAMÁRIA MOLNÁR (A.M.)

It is an honour to moderate such an exciting panel, especially because I feel attached to the theme being the former president of the Hungarian Galleries Association. To begin with I will introduce the topic with the underlying questions that may lead us to conclusions. Should galleries join forces from time to time, engage in friendly co-operation as well as friendly competition or should they struggle and compete alone? And secondly, should shared gallery events compete with art fairs and other galleries' events or should they complement them?

As this is a very broad topic, there are many issues we may touch upon in this panel. Therefore, I have tried to narrow down the subject a bit. Firstly, I have grouped joint gallery events based on two aspects: organisational forms (government-backed, association-led and bottom-up initiatives) and types of events (gallery weekends, late-night openings and projects). As you can see from the chart, the vast majority are bottom-up initiatives, but gallery associations also play an important role in organising events and in a few cases governments and municipalities support art projects as well. Among the many examples, it is important to highlight the pioneering Berlin Gallery Weekend, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary. There is an avalanche of gallery weekends all around the world, from New York, to Vienna, Madrid, Warsaw, Mexico City and two new ones, in Budapest and in Cluj (Romania). All this information and these examples may help us to structure our conversation.

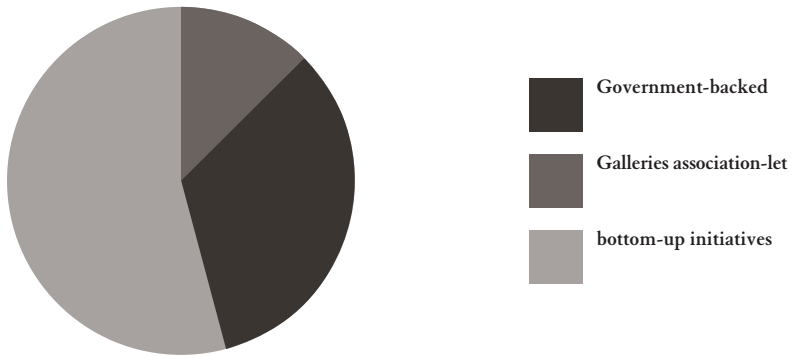
## Types of Events

Gallery weekends

Late night openings, events, talks linked to other major art events  
(such as art fairs, biennals)

Projects (e.g. visitors programs)

## Organization Forms



### Bottom-up initiatives

TALKING GALLERIES

Gallery weekend Berlin, from 2004  
Night of Museums and Galleries Plodiv, Bulgaria, from 2005  
White Night of the Galleries, Buscharest, from 2007  
Brussels Art Days, from 2008  
New York Gallery Weekend, 2010-2012  
Warsaw Gallery Weekend, from 2011  
Villa (carried out in Warsaw, Tokyo and Reykjavik)  
Gallery Weekend Chicago, from 2011, Chicago  
BCC Brussels Cologne Contemporaires, from 2012  
Poppositions, Brussels, from 2012, during Art Brussels  
Amsterdam Art Weekend, from 2012  
“KOPIOITU” Brussels from, 2013  
Gallery Weekend Mexico, Mexico City, from 2013  
Brown’s London Art Weekend, 2014  
Gallery Weekend Budapest, Hungary, from 2014  
Gallery Weekend Cluj, Romania, from 2014

### Government-backed

Latitude-Platform for Brazilian Art Galleries Abroad, Brazil, from 2007  
(ABACT and Apex-Basil (Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency)  
Curated by\_vienna, from 2009, organized by departure, the creative unit of Vienna Business Agency  
ARTBAT Fest (Kazakhstan, participants from Kazakhstan, Russia,

Israel) supported by the Eurasian cultural alliance, from 2010  
CHOICES Collectors Weekend, Paris, 2014, supported by the Ministry  
of Culture and Communication

#### Galleries association led

Vienna Gallery Weekend, from 2008  
Apertura, from 2012, organised by ARTE\_MADRID, Gallery Weekend  
Artnou, Barcelona, from 2012  
Budapest Contemporary, 2012-2013, international visitors programme  
Art in Motion, Singapore, gallery tour connected to Art Stage fair, 2014  
Paris Gallery Weekend, 2014 (cancelled)  
Barcelona Galley Weekend, from 2015

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Why is it important to organise joint art events and what are the expected  
outcomes?

#### **DORSEY WAXTER (D.W.)**

I think it is very important for galleries to band together and to find ways  
to strengthen us in our respective roles. The New York Gallery Week was  
established by Casey Kaplan just after the downturn in the market in 2008.  
I think one of the reasons that he thought about doing this was in order to  
refocus attention on galleries and what they do. Possibly Casey felt that the  
mission had been accomplished after two years. There are difficulties involved  
in organising this type of event – one is that it is basically a fulltime job – and  
someone who has a gallery already has the role of organising a whole roster of  
activities. It is very critical for galleries to find ways to do this.

#### **JOCHEN MEYER (J.M.)**

Collaboration is key to my understanding of how to run a gallery. On your  
own, you are almost nothing, whereas you are much stronger together with  
a group of peers who have a similar understanding of how to run a gallery.  
Especially when you are in a market in difficult situation, such as Berlin,  
when you are trying to attract an international crowd of critics, curators,  
but also bring in collectors. If you create a collaborative event, you are  
much stronger. An example of this is an event like Talking Galleries, which  
provides an opportunity to talk about our own understanding of building

galleries. We are much stronger if we come together to talk about what we are doing rather than if we are alone.

**HANS KNOLL (H.K.)**

I have seen galleries doing great jobs for our communities and societies. They are taking good care of young art and new tendencies in art, as well as providing many services for their environs and for society, in a faster and more detailed way than museums. It is important that we publicise this to create an image and build the reputation of our projects.

**“I HAVE SEEN GALLERIES DOING GREAT JOBS  
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I started Gallery Night Vienna with galleries that are not in the city centre. We were the outsiders, the newcomers, the powerless, the marginalised on the periphery of the city centre. One way to attract people and for them to notice that we were there was to put on joint events like Gallery Breakfast, which began back in the 1980s with some colleagues. It was a very good experience.

**ŁUKASZ GORCZYCA (Ł.G.)**

There was always an important point for us when starting a project: the idea or a better understanding of gallery work. One of the main reasons we started the Warsaw Gallery Weekend was the belief that this project would restore galleries' identity. We adopted the model from Berlin.

The main context of gallery work is art fairs. Besides supporting galleries, art fairs give exposure. Along these lines, we were considering developing a platform for a gallery meeting outside the architecture of the art fair.

The model of the Gallery Weekend invites people to a certain space, the homes of the artists and galleries. It was very tempting to organise an event that leads people back to the gallery in a particular local context.



**A.M.**

Dorsey, have the large number of galleries in New York led to an increased need for co-operation or provoked more competition?

**D.W.**

I have to say a bit of both because one of the difficulties when you organise something collectively is who is included and who is excluded. From my experience in the New York Gallery Week, it was a bit divisive, because you have to make choices and then people ask themselves why they were not included. I think there was an attempt to expand the event in the second year, not only in terms of numbers but by including different areas of the city. Therefore, the issue is how to devise an interesting programme over a week or a weekend in which people can participate and feel that it has been a successful accomplishment. I think this is a bit difficult with galleries in New York because people need a reason to come as they are bombarded with a tremendous number of choices of where they can go.

**“THE MODEL OF THE GALLERY WEEKEND INVITES PEOPLE TO A CERTAIN SPACE, THE HOMES OF THE ARTISTS AND GALLERIES. IT WAS VERY TEMPTING TO ORGANISE AN EVENT THAT LEADS PEOPLE BACK TO THE GALLERY IN A PARTICULAR LOCAL CONTEXT.”**

Thus, I think success for galleries includes having an overarching theme that explains why the galleries are open. Depending on the time of the year, the event could cover galleries within walking distance of each other in a particular area, or it could be based on a particular type of co-operation. For example, Master Drawings Week has been running in New York since 2010, though I have only participated in the last two years. There are about 30 galleries in the Upper East Side of Manhattan with works on paper covering everything from master drawings to contemporary pieces. The galleries host works from their own artists or from their inventory. It has attracted a tremendous audience and people from museums. In some instances, our gallery does a collaborative show with a gallery from Dusseldorf. In this way other galleries around the world are invited to participate in the event.

**A.M.**

Jochen, as a member of the committee of the Berlin Gallery Weekend, can you share with us what your selection criteria for galleries are and the

reactions of the galleries that are not included?

**J.M.**

This is a very difficult question because it always means inclusion or exclusion. Participation in Berlin Gallery Weekend is by invitation only for a good reason. Gallery Weekend was founded in 2005 by six galleries in Berlin. We had a bit of administrative support but we could not have handled an application process or have a selection committee to deal with the selection and properly deal with appeals. The decision was made to invite galleries with a similar understanding of how to run a gallery, sustainable galleries, for instance those that build up artists and have a proper programme. Over the years, the number of galleries has increased from around 20 to 50 galleries in 2011, the maximum number of galleries we can have to be able to handle the whole event. It is purely a matter of logistics because visitors can only visit so many galleries in one weekend and not even those 50. The weekend includes another big event, the Big Gala Dinner hosted by all the participating galleries together for more than a thousand guests, and that too is the maximum we can cope with. Over the past three years, there have not been many changes: the list is pretty stable.

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AND HAVE A PROPER PROGRAMME.”**

**A.M.**

Yes, you also include some young galleries. Why is it important to include them?

**J.M.**

The younger galleries are our future. Older established galleries are taking the young galleries by the hand to leading them into the art market. The problem for Gallery Weekend is the high participation fee, as it costs €7,000 to participate, which it can be a large sum for a lot of younger Berlin galleries. A few years ago, we decided to cut the participation fee for galleries that have been running for five years or less. They only pay 40% or 50% of the fee. But Berlin lives off its many young galleries that are home to many young international artists. If you want to represent the image of Berlin within Gallery Weekend, then it is only natural to include these galleries.

**A.M.**

Hans, I think you should talk a little bit about Vienna Gallery Weekend. You have quite a few events in Vienna. What is the importance of the weekend there?

**H.K.**

It is true that the Gallery Weekend in Vienna is not as important as the one in Berlin. I do not think that in Vienna we could copy the Berlin model, as it needs to be suited to the local situation. Moreover gallerists in Vienna are not willing to invest €7,000 in one weekend. This is a situation that is specific to Berlin, a city that needs collectors from outside, as it does not yet have many city-based collectors. Secondly, Berlin is supported by its specific history and geographical location and its attractiveness to the art scene. Vienna and other cities are in a different situation. We had a similar situation in Budapest after the fall of the Iron Curtain, at that time luckily or unluckily there were not a lot of galleries in Budapest, so we could attract a lot of attention to our gallery.

**A.M.**

Lukasz, despite of the strong presence of private collectors and the years of socialism, is the aim of the Warsaw Gallery Weekend to open to foreign collectors?

**L.G.**

It is different to Berlin, we do not have a strong gallery scene in Warsaw and we have no more than 20 galleries for the weekend event. For us it is more about integration than the selection, we are working together to shape the art scene. However, this is a young scene with first-generation collectors who do not even describe themselves as collectors. This is interesting for us as our galleries are also first-generation, so we are working together to build a cultural structure for contemporary art. This sounds very optimistic but the market is not very rich. Most of the buyers have budgets of up to €5,000 per piece. So if you are looking for higher prices or major works, it is much more complicated. There is the possibility of looking to the international market or of developing an institutional market. But then we will not have collectors building foundations or being active internationally. But these are early days and things are developing in a very organic way, which I like.

**A.M.**

What about the Villa project? How was it set up and how did it inspire you?

**L.G.**

A few years ago, when we started to participate in international fairs,

we thought it was important to focus on a local context and to introduce Warsaw to gallerists, to let them know that it is all about exchange and networking. The art scene was local, so one of the reasons was to invite international galleries who shared the same attitude to co-operation. But it was a very specific situation in Warsaw with an emerging scene, thus we considered looking to other nations with similar situations, a strong cultural identity and poorly developed art market centres. We decided to travel to Reykjavik, Iceland, with a group of international galleries and later to Tokyo. It was an amazing experience to work with the local galleries and to understand their position and the problems they face. Because in Warsaw, it is not about competing with Berlin or London: we will never be the same; we are not a metropolis on the same level. But we can still work on our identity and develop an important regional centre. It is exciting to see how other places in the world are developing their work with artists in a successful and natural way, that the local context is not being wasted and that they are part of the international circuit. The next destination for the Villa project will be Toronto.

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**A.M.**

How is it possible to finance joint events like these? Johan mentioned that the participation fee in Berlin is €7,000, which is a huge amount. But what about in New York or Vienna, are the galleries willing to pay that kind of sum?

**D.W.**

For Master Drawings Week, we pay a fee of \$5,000 and that includes some printed material, like a small catalogue and invitations for the galleries to distribute to their clients; it also covers the cost of a publicist who does the public relations; they also have a website; employees responsible for the organisation; etc. For \$5,000, I think they do a tremendous amount of work.

**A.M.**

What do galleries get for €7,000 in Berlin?

**J.M.**

What we do to our understanding is that we collect the money from our colleagues and then we spend it again. It is a kind of non-profit thing: we do not try to make money out of it. The procedure has been the same from the beginning. There is a welcome reception; we have the big gala dinner, which is very expensive; we have publications and advertisements; and a VIP car for each gallery that can be used for its clients and visitors. I think that is mainly what you get for that amount. I have to say that even this amount is not enough to cover the costs of the event, so we also need money from sponsors on top.

**A.M.**

Hans, what about the other events in Vienna?

**H.K.**

Other important project is curated by\_Vienna, which takes places during Vienna's art fair, in which 21 of the most active international galleries are invited to participate. The event is supported by an agency, mainly financed by the city of Vienna, whose aim is to showcase contemporary art. They provide the main structure for the organisation; they organise the communication and do a lot of advertising. Each of the galleries invited receive €9,000 to be spent on this international exhibition. The galleries invite collectors and journalists, as well as international curators to curate international exhibitions. It is about internationalising the already international art scene in Vienna.

**A.M.**

Łukasz, do you take money from the galleries or do you get sponsors?

**Ł.G.**

Businesswise, we are between the Berlin and Vienna models. Warsaw Gallery Weekend is mostly sponsored and fundraised. The fact is that these projects are important for cities' identity. In Warsaw we are considering approaching the city council to build this connection between the public and private sectors. We work very closely with the public institutions and there are three main public national art institutions that are involved in the programming. And our goal in working together is to build confidence in contemporary art. This is also a challenge for a society like Poland's, which is still recovering from a long period in the cultural desert. It is very important to introduce contemporary art as a valuable component in the life of the city.

**H.K.**

I think you have mentioned something important and interesting, because in the West, galleries work together, whereas there are other cities like Bratislava, where their Art Festival has joined forces with the public institutions, and the museums are collaborating with the private galleries. This is quite a difference.

**A.M.**

What problems or benefits arise when profit and non-profit-oriented organisations work together, as in New York for example?

**D.W.**

I do not think there are many museums collaborating with galleries in New York, although there is a sort of interaction regarding exhibitions and artists, but not in a completely organised fashion, as might occur in other parts of the world. Even within our association people are competitive and so it is a very tricky thing to think about how to be collaborative. There are I think 180 members of the Art Dealers Association of America spread around 30 cities. So, we have many members in New York and not as many from elsewhere. So how do we strengthen the galleries that we represent? We have been also talking about collaboration between galleries in the east and having them bring galleries in the association in other parts of the country to New York and arranging a kind of exchange, particularly between the East Coast and the West Coast, where most of our member galleries are distributed. But I do not think there is much collaboration in New York between non-profit and for-profit galleries.

**J.M.**

I would like to add that in Berlin we are possibly at rock bottom of collaborative situations because institutions in the city do not care. There is a certain kind of arrogance demonstrated by institutions towards galleries that will not allow them to collaborate with a so-called 'commercial event' like the Gallery Weekend, which ignores the fact that galleries are also cultural institutions. We have put in a lot of work to approach institutions, to agree on dates or common openings. The best example was how Gallery Weekend 2014 took place at the beginning of May and Berlin Biennale was happening three weeks later. It would have been wonderful to have both events at the same time.

**A.M.**

I have collected some examples of the common traits and major differences between big events and art fairs:

**Joint events versus art fairs. Convergence, co-operation or competition?**

**Common traits with art fairs:**

- Selection process, criteria for participating galleries
- Presentation of 'crème de la crème' of artists and artworks
- Thematic supplements/shows
- Associated museum events
- (Curatorial) guided tours, performances, professional discussions, media coverage

**Major differences:**

- Permanent versus temporary, scattered versus centralised locations
- Different business models, costs and expenses
- Locality principle (local galleries) versus regional/international diversity

I would like to have your opinions on that.

**H.K.**

With regard to the differences, an art fair is not a joint event like a gallery weekend. There are many participants with one aim, new audience, new collectors and sales, recognition, contacts, etc. But it is not a joint project in that sense. A gallery has to play with both and develop different strategies for each of them.

**A.M.**

Maybe you can talk about The Fair Gallery project.

**Ł.G.**

The Fair Gallery Project began with a late-night discussion on how to deal with the growing number of fairs and the pressure of the fair system on galleries. In 2006 and 2007 the fair system was growing very rapidly, there were more and more fairs approaching galleries and asking them to participate, and a lot of people were attending these fairs. So, we decided to form a group that would try to play with the idea of the presence of galleries

at art fairs. Participating in art fairs, especially for young galleries, is more about reputation and less about identification. The first idea we had is that three or four galleries would share a booth at the art fair and that they would mount a curated presentation. We asked independent curators to select the artists, to be present during the fair and to represent the whole team. Our first venture in London was a great success in terms of our reputation but a failure businesswise. The next step was to see how to fund the project. We divided the costs of the fair but even so it worked out at between €10,000 and €20,000 per gallery for the joint project. The project has now turned into a process of education, a special programme called ‘The Gallerist Programme’, which has been developed together with the Appel in Amsterdam. It is a one-year course aimed at people who want to develop their gallery in the near future and it opens a wider reflection on what the gallery system of the future could be.

**D.W.**

One of the things that is relevant to your question, has to do with infrastructure and how to organise a gallery week or weekend productively. We do not have financial support from the city or the state for the arts. Typically we raise it ourselves or it is private money. Another issue is how you time these events. New York, for example, has a very crowded calendar. As the president of the ADAA, I still think there is a need among our membership to be able to collaborate within New York. Fairs are seen as very exclusive events and understandably so. There has to be a critical discourse because we are bombarded with information about how we look at works of art. I would rather see them in person at an art fair or by visiting a gallery.

**“THE GALLERIES IN GENERAL ARE ‘LONE WOLVES’: THEY HAVE TO MAKE THEIR OWN PATH, THEIR OWN DECISIONS; YOU HAVE TO MAKE YOURSELF DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GALLERIES, JUST AS AN ARTIST HAS TO BE DIFFERENT FROM ANOTHER ARTIST; YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR OWN STRATEGY.”**

**A.M.**

Jochen, do you see any common traits with art fairs? What’s the difference in selecting galleries and what differences do you see compared to art fairs?

**J.M.**

The question is what can an art fair do for a gallery? There are a couple



of great initiatives at art fairs: they not only provide the sales platform but also curated sections, talks, lectures, performance programmes, etc. But an art fair is what it is: the identity is not going to be the same as if the person went to the gallery. The reaction after art fairs has been people not coming to galleries anymore and a lack of identity among galleries. Gallery weekends are on the rise again because there is a real need for this experience.

**A.M.**

Hans, what are the main differences in terms of co-operation between galleries in Vienna, Budapest, Central and Eastern European regions and cities in Western Europe?

**H.K.**

In general, there are no differences. It is mainly about infrastructure. The galleries in general are 'lone wolves': they have to make their own path, their own decisions; you have to make yourself different from other galleries, just as an artist has to be different from another artist; you have to find your own strategy. But maybe the infrastructure in some former socialist capitals is not that developed and the way they cooperate and even the opportunities for co-operating are very different in comparison with New York or Berlin. That is positive and negative at the same time. Positive in that public institutions are willing to collaborate with private galleries; and negative in that some common experience is still missing. There is not enough time and there are too few galleries in cities like Budapest, Bratislava or Bucharest for joint projects.

**A.M.**

To sum up, is it possible to go solo and work without any co-operation in the art environment or is it only the privilege of the mega-galleries?

**L.G.**

I think going it alone is about self confidence. It is not necessarily something only mega-galleries can do. This is why we started all these joint projects. On the other hand, we are discussing the question of the dealer's loyalty to the artist, but other crucial aspects are the relationship between the gallery and collectors, and the way we build the relationship between the gallery and clients. It is very important to work internationally and to be part of the international network and at the same time to have a very strong local base. As a result, collectors can feel confident about the gallery having international perspectives and a full understanding of the local context.

**D.W.**

Only a few galleries in New York do their own thing. These are galleries that once were part of the mainstream and have now decided to move outside because they have already developed a clientele or have a roster of artists that allows them a certain kind of freedom.

**J.M.**

I think it is very difficult to go solo. If you are a mega-gallery, yes; if you are a niche gallery also. But to really attract people to talk about the identity of gallery work, it is very important to collaborate.

**A.M.**

Hans, in your opinion, what are the three most important factors for a joint event to be successful?

**H.K.**

As a gallery, to have a unique position, to be one of the first and to be open to collaboration.

**L.G.**

It is often a matter of the integration of the scene. We should work together to be stronger, but also to push forward our professional cultural interest.

**J.M.**

I think the quality of the exhibitions also matters.

**D.W.**

I think that the three things that make a collaborative event successful are the timing of the event in the calendar year, the location of the event and then making sure people have a reason to come.

**“IT IS OFTEN A MATTER OF THE  
INTEGRATION OF THE SCENE. WE SHOULD  
WORK TOGETHER TO BE STRONGER,  
BUT ALSO TO PUSH FORWARD OUR  
PROFESSIONAL CULTURAL INTEREST.”**

**A.M.**

I believe we can all agree that there is a demand for co-operation. However, there are a wide range of possibilities to choose from and the consideration of local factors is essential in order to succeed.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE.

**Q.** As a curator I helped to put together the Wynwood Art District in Miami. One of the problems we found was that its success became its downfall. So how does one avoid that problem where they become entertainment for the masses or they become a public museum in building new audiences?

**D.W.** I think about that a lot. How do you promote this dialogue and keep it going? Maybe the Master Drawings Week is a reaction against the bigness of other places. Because there are not that many galleries and the galleries are not that large, you can do half the galleries in one night, with time to talk to the dealers, to learn something about what you have seen.

**Q.** Could it be that these types of event are also detrimental for certain galleries that do not fit into the model or identity of these weekends? And what about artists whose work is of type that does not do well during these weekends.

**D.W.** There will always be this issue of whether you belong or not. As a gallerist I have been on both sides of the divide. But being rejected makes you think how you fit into the real world. I think that going it alone is tough unless you can hit upon some way to be more inclusive in terms of your own programme and maybe for other galleries that might have a similar point of view.

**Q.** What is your goal when doing these gallery weekends? Is it a local event? The opening hours are frequently not planned with international visitors who come for the weekend in mind. For example, Apertura was open from Thursday to Saturday morning and there are galleries in Brussels that only open at noon. Sometimes I get the feeling that it is becoming more and more local and the events are less and less interested in an international audience.

**L.G.** It is important to be international. But we realised at the same time, that an event like this is also important as a tool to integrate the whole scene. Therefore we developed the Gallery Weekend as a hub for all the professionals around the country. My intuition is that if we get stronger locally, we could have a greater chance to attract an international audience.

**H.K.** Curated by\_Vienna, for instance, is focussed on an international audience. Hence, we have international curators, international exhibitions

and we are inviting international guests. In Berlin, the aim is more to build local collectors and to bring this new group of people into the galleries. It is the opposite problem.

**Q.** Do you think that these gallery weekend events bring about a change in the relationship with the authorities? And do they open the doors for gallerists and artists to international art fairs, to biennials, etc.?

**“A GALLERY WEEKEND LAUNCHES AN  
INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE, BUT WE  
SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE LOCAL SCENE.  
WE NEED TO HAVE A STABLE LOCAL  
CULTURE WHICH WILL SUPPORT NOT ONLY  
THE TOP FEW ARTISTS BUT ALSO THE MID-  
LEVEL ARTISTS.”**

**L.G.** They do to a certain extent. A gallery weekend launches an international discourse, but we should be aware of the local scene. We need to have a stable local culture which will support not only the top few artists but also the mid-level artists.

**A.M.** But I think that visitors’ programmes can be also very effective in positioning a particular art scene at an international level. These events are probably more effective than gallery weekends.

**H.K.** In terms of the authorities, it is much better to have joint projects like the Warsaw Gallery Weekend because in some cities the local authorities do not understand what is going on in the gallery field. You need joint projects like this to get them interested. Otherwise they see small galleries and do not get the point of what they are doing.

**Q.** Do you have any figures regarding the impact of gallery weekends? I ask because they are an investment for galleries, which have a reputation to defend or build and which operate along the lines of a business that needs to make a profit.

**J.M.** The 2014 Berlin Gallery Weekend had 20,000 visitors, which is an impressive number. According to the participants, the Gallery Weekend is the most important weekend for Berlin galleries in terms of sales. I would like to add that this event is not only a sales platform but a platform for bringing in the community, critics, curators, etc. I think is difficult to judge the success of an

event only by the sales. There are other factors that are as important as the sales.

**Q.** It is clear that all these events are necessary and mostly successful, but I wonder what happens afterwards. If we organise events all the time, will people go to see art if there is not an event associated with it?

**C.** The Gallery Weekend in Berlin was also set up as a reaction against the obvious dominance of art fairs in the market over the years. The galleries in Berlin that organised the event wanted to bring back the audience, the critics and, if possible, the museums to see their exhibitions. We had the feeling that everyone would go to the art fair but no one would come to our galleries. This was a crucial factor in the creation of the Berlin Gallery Weekend.

**J.M.** One could be sad about the fact of having to create events to bring people back to galleries, but I think it is the way the world operates today. I am also a romantic, but the fact is that we need this kind of event. I would rather have an event like Gallery Weekend that attracts people back to galleries than other events that are much more connected with popular culture.

**D.W.** In my opinion, if you think you have something good, people will come, whether it is for the artists or the event.

**H.K.** There is still a wall for professional visitors to enter the gallery. Gallery Weekend and such events are just an opener, and people do not feel as watched, and for sure that brings new visitors to the galleries.

**“THE GALLERIES IN BERLIN THAT ORGANISED THE EVENT WANTED TO BRING BACK THE AUDIENCE, THE CRITICS AND, IF POSSIBLE, THE MUSEUMS TO SEE THEIR EXHIBITIONS. WE HAD THE FEELING THAT EVERYONE WOULD GO TO THE ART FAIR BUT NO ONE WOULD COME TO OUR GALLERIES. THIS WAS A CRUCIAL FACTOR IN THE CREATION OF THE BERLIN GALLERY WEEKEND.”**

## **Thomas Galbraith**

Managing Director of Auctions at Paddle8. He is responsible for managing Paddle8's worldwide sales of art, design and collectibles and oversees teams of specialists based in New York, Los Angeles and London. Thomas has extensive experience in the online art environment, having previously worked at artnet AG, where he served as Director of Global Strategy. While at artnet, Galbraith managed the build and launch of an innovative artindexing product. He previously held positions at The Art Loss Register, AIG Private Client Group and AXA Art Insurance Corporation. Galbraith received his MA in Art History from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. He has participated in and led panels and has given speeches in the US, Europe and Asia. He has been featured in articles in the 'New York Times' and the 'Financial Times', among others, and formerly provided a quarterly art market update to Bloomberg Radio.

# ONLINE SALES IN GALLERIES: STRATEGIES

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**MODERATOR**

Thomas Galbraith

**CONCEPTS**

Online selling platforms, quality, usability, maturity, trust, transparency, online auctions, data and access, Instagram.





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# ONLINE SALES IN GALLERIES: STRATEGIES

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To begin with, I would like to look at the development of the online market, how it became what it is today and how online companies have changed the market as we know it. Then we will take a look at companies of interest to the galleries here and around the world, we will see how we can use them for your advantage with a few case studies.

If we first have a look at the development of the space, I have broken this down into successes and failures. It is important to draw attention to the fact that all of these endeavours are themselves a leap of faith. Sotheby's is a fantastic example of that. They very early on realised that there was a huge amount of potential in the online space, a potential they realised by partnering with Amazon in 1999. Unfortunately the timing was terrible because the crash that came about later on in 1999 resulted in a very rapid exit, and the two companies parted ways less than a year later. But the thought and the idea were in the right place. Amazon tried again with EBay but that partnership ended in 2003. That was in large part because the online buying community was not able to understand and appreciate how to buy art online at that time.

Amazon Art is an example of a situation where in theory you have a huge community open to purchasing online but the execution of the website was ambitious and not very well done. Looking now at successes, Artnet was one of the few companies to make it through the 1999 crash. They are best known for the data business, which is the core of the company and the product that continues to serve them best. Paddle8 has been one of the successes over the last three years and the rise of the company has been absolutely fantastic. A lot of that has to do with the way we interact with our users and the transaction process.

Lastly Christie's, which may seem surprising, I mention them because they are undergoing the biggest innovations among the major old-establishment companies. They have made it their mission to transform Christie's into a modern action house.

In order to give an overview of the things that have changed in the course of the development and that have been integral to the successes of these companies, I want to touch on four different points, the first of which is quality, by which I mean the way you present your data, details, information, images, etc. The information you have to provide not only has to be good, but it also has to be better than what a potential buyer may find in the physical landscape.

**“QUALITY, BY WHICH I MEAN THE WAY  
YOU PRESENT YOUR DATA, DETAILS,  
INFORMATION, IMAGES, ETC.”**

The other thing is **usability**, as I mentioned before, with ventures like Amazon Art. If a client or a visitor to a website does not feel engaged, that the system is easily navigated or easy to transact in, they will very quickly realise that the website transaction or the interaction is too frustrating and too difficult and they will move on to the next one. It is very important that the platforms are not clunky and that they are being elegantly portrayed.

**“THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE TO  
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LANDSCAPE.”**

The third point is the **maturity** of the online buying market. The downfall of Sotheby’s EBay and Art Amazon was that the online buying community was not in the position to be purchasing artworks at higher price points in the early 2000s. Yes, people were buying on line, but mostly trivial things and that does not mean they were ready to buy a €50,000 work on the same site.

The last thing is **trust**. Sotheby’s has a huge amount of trust, a long legacy and a fantastic record of doing wonderful business over the past couple of hundred years but they were partnered with companies that were less than five years old. They have both survived the crash of 1999 but the implicit trust required to sell artwork at that level was missing. If you do not have that, you will not have long-lasting buyers.

You have to bear in mind that Sotheby’s previous partnerships did not work out because the world was not yet ready, not because the idea was wrong.

A manifestation of this issue of trust is literally a screenshot of the Sotheby's Amazon website. First of all, there is the Sotheby's-Amazon name: one is an enterprise you trust, the other a website where you buy your kids' schoolbooks. The other thing you see is a lack of images. It is how websites used to look; they were not very engaging or exciting.

Let us look at what websites are like today. As an example, this is an auction house on the Paddle8 website,<sup>1</sup> in which you can see some of the things I have been talking about being realised. First of all, is it phenomenally engaging with a giant image, not only are the names associated with the sale enticing, but the images are exciting, it is very easy to navigate, your calls to action have reduced to a core few... it is night and day from what it was in 2000 in terms of people's willingness to purchase online from one version to the next.

## CHANGES IN THE MARKET

Is important to consider how these companies have changed the art market that we work in and how they are very different today from what they were 14 years ago. One of the most important changes is information. We now have information at our fingertips. Whether we are artists, dealers, collectors or museums, whether it is sales or pre-exhibitions that we have available to us on the Internet, the amount of information is enormous. It is game-changing for the entire art market.

**“WE NOW HAVE INFORMATION AT OUR FINGERTIPS. WHETHER WE ARE ARTISTS, DEALERS, COLLECTORS OR MUSEUMS, WHETHER IT IS SALES OR PRE-EXHIBITIONS THAT WE HAVE AVAILABLE TO US ON THE INTERNET, THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION IS ENORMOUS. IT IS GAME-CHANGING FOR THE ENTIRE ART MARKET.”**

There is a debate about whether transparency is good or bad for the art market. I believe that it is very good for the art market, in part because if you were to examine the corollary market of head funds, which traditionally were not well regulated and transparent, when regulation came in, everybody thought that it would be the end of them. The case is in fact the complete opposite, with hundreds of millions of dollars poured into head funds. Now I understand there is a difference between art, head funds, the art market

<sup>1</sup> URL: <http://paddle8.com/auction/deyrolle>

and the financial market, but I see it as an example of how transparency can help people to understand the importance of participating in a market and how a market is open and available for business.

Some of these companies are either directly related to the art market or are on the periphery of it and have had a huge impact on its access. What I mean by access is opening the entire globe to a global community of seven billion people, being able to see an exhibition online at a gallery in Berlin or being able to see online an auction in New York. This globalisation of the market is extremely important and it has ramifications for individual businesses in what otherwise would have been localised markets.

Galleries based in Kansas City in the US selling to clients on the opposite side of the world is an interaction and a relationship that would not have been possible were it not for the Internet.

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Economics is one of the areas that have changed significantly. One of the compelling arguments that a lot of the online companies make to clients (dealers, galleries, artists or collectors) is that there is an economic benefit, a reduced overhead and a reduced transaction cost to operating online. We have seen this in Paddle8 and in others such as Artnet. It is something you can very easily translate and pass on that benefit to your clients. This is one of the major reasons this disruption is taking place, especially if you look at the auction market, where you see Sotheby's and Christie's with very healthy commissions on artworks being typically sold below half a million dollars or euros. Those auction houses tend not to be as accommodating in amending or reducing commission structures; ours are already as low as they can get. Those benefits are being passed on to clients.

I mentioned interfacing usability earlier. It is something that is very important and opens up the industry to business everywhere, whatever language you may be speaking.

Lastly and very important is the inherent competition within the online markets. It is to the client's benefit, so there are a number of companies that

are doing a very similar task or service. The real goal here is the survival of the fittest, the one who offers you the best opportunity, the service that fits you in a way that is efficient and engaging. As an example, I highlight a few companies of interest and potentially of use:

**Paddle8** is a New York company, with offices in London and Los Angeles as well, that is regarded as emerging in the art world. It offers highly curated and successful monthly auctions, typically of contemporary art and currently expanding into modern design, jewellery and rare watches. It is developing out into a number of different regions outside the US: African contemporary art, Middle Eastern contemporary art and Latin and Asian art, which are coming up. The price points typically range between 500 and 200,000.

Another case, **Auctionata**, is a Germany based company that streams live auctions online. One would see works come up for bidding and a guy literally hammering things as an auctioneer in front of you. So it is a bit like what you would see Sotheby's and Christie's do online with a live feed of the actual auction. They have a variety of categories, predominantly 18th and 19th-century oil paintings, furniture, jewellery, watches and the decorative arts with a relatively broad band of price points.

**HiHey** is another very interesting model. It is Beijing-based and has no reserves. Almost all the works are directly consigned by artists, that being because many artists in China are not represented and so they manage their own careers and consign directly to auctions.

**Christie's** is an old establishment reinventing itself, unlike other online houses like Paddle8 or Auctionata and Artnet. One interesting point about them is that they are one of the longest running online. They were not the first to start back in 1999 but they did before 2006 and they are actually still running.

More relevant to galleries are the selling platforms which essentially work with galleries, take inventories and put it online. Obviously there is a fee associated with that. **Artsy** is one of those companies: they are a gallery listing service and they are probably best known for their Art Genome Project, which was an effort to associate artworks from different movements. They also work very closely with art fairs, so they would actually preview art fairs online to their community, which could be an added benefit if you are participating in that art fair. They take a commission on any introduction, so if a client clicks on an art piece and says I want to know more, I want to buy

that piece, then they make money by taking a commission on that.

**Artnet** has a similar service but they charge an annual subscription service paid upfront rather than for any leads they might offer. Artnet has been losing ground to Artsy, so again there is that whole idea of competition coming into play. **Exhibition A** and **Saatchi Online** are predominantly primary, though they have been known to work with galleries. They work with artists to offer prints available to purchase in the primary market online. Lastly **Artshare**, which is Hong Kong-based, is also a gallery listing service that groups together artworks into curated selling exhibitions, a little bit like an art fair but galleries are not represented.

Then come the peripheral companies, such as the databases. We are familiar with Artnet and **Artprice**, which sometimes has less detailed information but is significantly less expensive than the Artnet. **Artron** is a phenomenal resource if you have any interest in the Chinese art market. **Artinfo** is a free service and their data has improved to the extent that they are regarded as quite competitive. In market analysis there are some recognisable names: **Tutela Capital**, regarded as the leader; **ArtTactic**, which produces an important annual report with Hiscox; **Art Economics**, which produces one of the most widely-read annual art market reports in the world for TEFAF; and **Skates**, which provides detailed and important insight into the art market.

## CASE STUDIES

There are three companies I want to focus on: Artnet, which has brought about a data revolution; Paddle8, which has been leading the auction revolution; and Instagram, which has been leading the access revolution.

It is fascinating to see Artnet, a company that was founded in the mid-80s, still being cited as the gold standard in data and access to that data. They have done an incredible job of aggregating and improving the database product, cleaning it up and keeping it consistent and useful for what is a global community. The biggest factor is the sea change that took place when Artnet started to allow access to its data. Even if you are in a primary market, it is important to see if or when your artists come up at auction at another time. Artnet has other ancillary products. Moreover, it is a publicly-traded company and releases quarterly statements available online in their annual reports. The six-month report indicated a 20% decrease from Q1-Q2, which may not necessarily be good news, as typically the second quarter is when sales in the art market are strongest.

Another company I would like to focus on is Paddle8. I just want to explain what it are and how it can be useful. It is often mentioned in the same sentence with other companies as revolutionising the online art market, in this case specifically auctions, there are benefit auctions as well as for-profit auctions, highly curated with extensive partnerships. Going back to usability and the transactional process, we have made every effort to include all of those things in our business model, which is reflected in the results. In the first half of 2014, sales amounted to \$18 million dollars, a 400% increase over the same period in 2013. Sixty per cent of the net revenues came from the for-profit side of the company.

**“ INSTAGRAM REPRESENTS ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHANGES IN THE ART MARKET. IT IS VISUAL, WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT THE ART WORLD DEALS IN, SO WHETHER YOU ARE AN AUCTION HOUSE OR A GALLERY, IT IS IMMEDIATELY ENGAGING. AND IT IS NOT A SELLING PLATFORM, SO THERE IS NO AGENDA.”**

Instagram represents one of the biggest changes in the art market. It has a 200-million-strong community, recently bought by Facebook, so theoretically it could carry on growing. It is visual, which is exactly what the art world deals in, so whether you are an auction house or a gallery, it is immediately engaging. And it is not a selling platform, so there is no agenda. One of the reasons why it has fared so well is that it is interesting: you want to see what a collector that you like is collecting; you want to see what an artist you like is inspired by or is currently painting. So there are a number of reasons why Instagram is cited as one of the huge game changers within the art world.

How can you use these companies to your advantage and to achieve your business goals? What does it mean to you as a business? It is important to understand what these companies do and how they align with your business objectives. What I mean by that is that if you are selling at an average price point of €20,000, you will not get as much interest from using a platform like Christie's online sales because their average price points tend to be higher. Similarly, auctions may not be of interest either because you are working with primary artists and prefer highlighting an upcoming art fair you are going to be in. In this case maybe Artsy or Artshare might be the right platforms.

Perhaps you are interested in establishing a greater presence in Asia, in

which case Artron may be the right company for you strategically. You may have inventory in the warehouse or in the gallery and you may be interested in consigning these works to auction to recoup the best value out of them. In this case you may start looking at online auctions such as Paddle8 or Auctionata, depending on what it is that you are selling.

To see a few examples of companies, I will start with an anonymous gallery with a large budget with locations in New York, Los Angeles and London. They have a website that is constantly updated, they operate in the primary and secondary markets and participate in many art fairs around the world; their clients are international, though most are US-based, and price points vary from a low \$10,000 to \$1 million. They have very active social media accounts and engage their artists to be active as well, because the sum is greater than the individual parts.

They are listed on Artsy, regularly consign to Sotheby's and Christie's and they have occasionally consigned to Paddle8. Their online strategy is all-in: they want to let everybody to know what they do, how they do it and how to find them.

The next example is an incognito gallery, one that is completely different. This is a medium-budget gallery based in New York that primarily has emerging artists and is a primary-market dealer. They participate in art fairs in the US, have mostly US based clients and their price points vary between \$1,000 and \$500,000. This gallery updates their website every few months and uses Instagram and Twitter because it is where people interact with them. They consign and sell regularly with Paddle8 and also use Artshare and HiHey. The real point I want to make is that if you use these platforms, it enables you to sell during your down period of the year.

The last case study is a mystery gallery based in Pennsylvania that has a low budget and no website. They are exclusively secondary market and they participate in no fairs whatsoever. Their clients are almost all in East Coast US and they often sell to fellow individuals in the trade; and their price points vary between \$1,000 and \$100,000. Concerning their strategies, they have no social media and they consign and sell very actively through Paddle8. The price points with Paddle8 vary from \$1,000 to \$50,000.

The point is that there are a number of different online companies which you can use to help support your business and to help you achieve your goals whatever they may be, be they promoting an artist, gaining financial bridging to cover a period of poor sales or being a leader in the online space.



Along those, I wanted to talk about Rodi Gallery, a really cool example of what is possible with very little. Rodi Gallery has little to no budget; their location is pretty much anywhere; they have a simple website; they participate in no fairs; their clients are wherever the gallery is; and everything is consigned and sold out of a truck. They inform their community through their Twitter and Instagram accounts, telling people where they are going to be. Their strategy has been so successful and they have gained such notoriety and such a large following that they had a very extensive article in the ‘New York Times’. Meanwhile, their price points are low and it is simply because their social online strategy is so compelling and so interesting that they have created this fantastic following.

**“THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ONLINE COMPANIES WHICH YOU CAN USE TO HELP SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS AND TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS WHATEVER THEY MAY BE, BE THEY PROMOTING AN ARTIST, GAINING FINANCIAL BRIDGING TO COVER A PERIOD OF POOR SALES OR BEING A LEADER IN THE ONLINE SPACE.”**

So it is all about what you need in your business and which online companies fit what you want.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

**Q.** You realise you are saying galleries should consign works to an auction house. You do not realise how revolutionary what you are saying is. As a collector I wonder why anybody would buy something at auction when they can buy it directly at the same price in the gallery.

**T.G.** Often it is not the same price. Although galleries and dealers do consign to us extensively, I would say the split is typically 50/50 or less. But if we have a work consigned to us from a dealer and the expectation is that the starting bid price is the retail price, then we will not accept the piece. The real value of auctions is they have a totally different structure to galleries and dealerships. Inevitably the price points for bidding start well below what the retail price would be at in a gallery or with a dealer. The bidders work up to a price that they feel comfortable that the market is at. It is a slightly different structure.

**Q.** Can you tell us a bit more about how the galleries manage the auction? During the auction, do they advertise or not? And how do they manage the result of it, like having sold pieces below the price list or even much higher than that?

**T.G.** It depends on the gallery, in terms of how they advertise. Of course we ask all of our consignors to promote their sales. Some do, some do not. Some are active and they will link on Facebook and their Twitter feed. Others do not. We have no requirements that consignors must fulfil. In terms of our results, we operate like a private auction, so we do not publish our results. Nobody knows whether something has sold or not. One of the things our consignors love about our platform is that it operates as a private auction and if something does not sell, you have not burnt the work.

**Q.** Part of the work of a gallery is to place works of art and part of the career of the artist is to place them well in the right collections and institutions. One of the problems I see with online sales is that you have no control to whom you sell. So, what do you recommend to gallerists in order for them to have a choice or the possibility of a choice?

**T.G.** I do not think there is control, trying to control is wasted effort. You cannot stop people from buying pieces. If you represent an artist who is doing well and is being bought up then, then lucky you. You have to work it out because it is a balance. On the one hand, you are responsible for that artist's market, for placing his work in museums, making sure it is with the right people. In that case you have done your job very well. Your concern, if I am right, is that the market will burn out or all of a sudden that artist will take off and you lose control. What you have to do is to have that conversation with your artists in the first place and ask: if this happens how are we going to deal with it?

**Q.** It is very crucial where art pieces by an artist go. An artist can have success online but he or she will never enter the local museum via an auction.

**T.G.** You cannot know, it depends on how you do it.

**Q.** For us gallerists, this online auctioning and online sales from your platform, as you describe it, is really tough competition for our gallery. The galleries are working to establish a primary market and then following a secondary market. But what all auctions are doing, in many cases with young artists, is going directly from auction to the secondary market, so

there is no primary market. The primary market is important to establish and build up the career of an artist.

**T.G.** I think you are right: it is important for artists to make sure that the galleries they are working with represent them in the way they want to be represented. The artist, as much as the gallery, has to have a business head and make an internal business decision. Whether the artist wants to be famous in two years or famous and successful in ten years, it is about working with people that have a similar vision. I think the advantage comes from the gallery acknowledging what is in their control and work around that, to make sure they are protecting and representing the artists the best way they can.

## **Christian Viveros-Fauné (C.V.F.)**

New-York-based writer and curator. As a writer, he has written extensively about art and culture for hundreds of publications, among them 'Frieze, Art in America', 'The New Yorker', 'Departures', and 'Newsweek - The Daily Beast'. He currently writes the Free Lance column for 'ArtReview' magazine, art criticism for 'The Village Voice' and news and analysis for 'The Art Newspaper'. A collection of his criticism, 'Greatest Hits: Arte en Nueva York 2001-2011', was issued in 2012 by Metales Pesados, S.A. He is currently at work on a monograph about the Guatemalan photographer and artist Lissie Habie for Edizioni Charta, S.R.L., out in the autumn of 2014. In addition, he has curated hundreds of gallery, museum and biennial exhibitions around the world.

## **Jordi Colomer**

Visual artist based in Barcelona and Paris. His work spans many mediums, among them photography and video. In 1997, he showed his first video work at a site-specific projection room built in the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona. Since 2001, Colomer's staging investigation has extended to the urban space and an exploration of the different scenes of social life (neighbourhoods, streets, deserts, rooftops, etc.). This is what led to works such as 'Anarchitekton' (2002-2004), a travelling project involving four large global cities (Barcelona, Bucharest, Brasilia and Osaka), 'No? Future!' (Le Havre, 2006) and 'Arabian Stars' (Yemen, 2005). He has recently developed projects based on journey-works that explore the issue of movement, in which the isolated actions of a character condense reflections on the possibilities of poetic survival offered by the contemporary metropolis.

## **Rainer Ganahl**

Visual artist. Ganahl holds a Master's Degree in Philosophy, History and Fine Art, studying under Nam June Paik at the Arts Academy in Düsseldorf, and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. He has shown work in various biennials, including Venice (1999, 2007 and 2009), the 2010 Athens Biennial, the 2008 Shanghai Biennial and the 2007 Istanbul Biennial, and has participated on a number of occasions at Performa in New York. Recently, he has had solo exhibitions at Kai Matsumiya, New York; White Columns in New York; Alex Zachary Gallery, New York; Hacienda, Zurich; BCP, Shanghai; Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich; and The Vleeshal, Middleburg.

He has also recently published 'DADALENIN' (published by Studio Taube Berlin/Stuttgart) and 'El Mundo' (published by Mousse Publications, Milan). In May 2014, he orchestrated 'Strange Teaching—Monads with Windows' in an empty department store in Leipzig.

## **Edward Winkleman**

Co-owner of Winkleman Gallery in New York. He began his art career with a series of guerrilla-style exhibitions called 'hit & run' that took place in empty warehouses in New York and London. In 2001, he co-founded the Plus Ultra Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, with artist Joshua Stern. When it moved into Chelsea in 2006, the space became the Winkleman Gallery. Murat Orozobekov joined co-owner of the gallery in 2007. Between them, they co-founded the Moving Image Art Fair in March 2011, focused on video and moving-image based sculptures and installation. Winkleman is the author of a blog that focuses on art (in particular, demystifying the gallery system) and politics.

He has also been a contributing editor to Art World Salon and is the author of the books 'How to Start and Run a Commercial Art Gallery' and 'Selling Contemporary Art: How to Navigate the Evolving Market.'

# WHAT DO ARTISTS WANT FROM THEIR GALLERY?

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## **MODERATOR**

Christian Viveros-Fauné

## **SPEAKERS**

Jordi Colomer, Rainer Ganahl, Edward Winkleman

## **CONCEPTS**

Galleries, artists, auction houses, evolution and development,  
clusters, collaboration, art market, Internet.



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# WHAT DO ARTISTS WANT FROM THEIR GALLERY?

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CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNÉ (C.V.F.)

What do artists want from their galleries? This is a crucial question. We have heard in this symposium a lot from galleries, from collectors and from some critics, but we do not tend to ask artists about what they want from their galleries, from the market, or from contemporary production. We will address this question with Jordi Colomer and Rainer Ganahl, two very competitive, successful artists, and Edward Winkleman, our resident polymath, dealer, writer, blogger and art fair director. We want to broach this large subject by having an informal conversation between veterans. I would like to ask each of the panellists a number of questions. What do artists want from their dealers? Has that changed in recent decades and if so, how? Are art galleries in fact necessary to artists or to the business of selling art? Is there a taxonomy of dealers and if there is, what does it look like? Is it guerilla curator, artist dealer, commercial dealer, or is it something more like emerging curator, emerging dealer, mid-tier dealer and top-end dealer? Are these classifications even useful for artists and why or why not?

Jordi and Rainer, I would like you to speak specifically about the kind of dealers you have worked with. Also, I would like to know how they differ geographically in terms of the marketplace, bearing in mind that galleries might act slightly differently if they are located in Donostia, Valencia or Madrid. Certainly one in Chicago acts differently to one in New York City.

Is there an ideal type of dealer? Edward Winkleman, as a dealer and, as an art world conversationalist host, I would like you to speak about the plight of artists and of dealers that may not necessarily “get” artists. There is terrific communication between artists and dealers, but often one has the sense that there is a short circuit in those conversations. Also I would like to revisit some

of your conclusions, such as the advantages for an artist of working with the gallery and how a gallery can maximise those advantages.

Also I would like us to consider experiments in social practice, more specifically, the socially engaged art that is coming up now as response to the growing financialisation of the art world. Is there a place for those kinds of activities in gallery making?

To introduce this panel, I would like to discuss these questions: what kind of dealers do artists want and what is the ideal gallerist for an artist. I have a number of examples that we may or may not find useful. The first example is the legendary New York art dealer Colin de Land, who died young in 2003. I have selected a quotation<sup>1</sup> from his long obituary written by Roberta Smith published on the 'New York Times' website, in which she writes that De Land's "ambivalence about commercialism was reflected in an art gallery that sometimes resembled an anti-art gallery, if not a work of Conceptual Art. With little display of exertion or financial solvency, Mr. De Land oversaw galleries in different art neighbourhoods for nearly 20 years. He was known for his relaxed work habits and even more relaxed art installations, which did not all open on time, as well as an insistent sartorial style that presaged the 'white trash' look."

A second possible model is the art dealer Joe Amrhein – the quintessential Williamsburg gallery dealer – who fulfils a significant social mission with his gallery Pierogi and to the neighbourhood he is committed to. He does on average over 40 studio visits a week, while also running three spaces. He pioneered something called the 'flat files', which essentially gave gallery representation, in the way of drawings, photographs and small scale work, to a larger community of people than he could accommodate otherwise in his two brick -and-mortar spaces. His scene is very well defined by Harald Fricke as "The Center of the Periphery"<sup>2</sup>, which encapsulates what Joe's gallery mission is about. The name itself lacks a seriousness that is important: it was originally named Pierogi 2000 (the number left aside from 2001 onwards) because the gallery is located in an area where there are lots of Polish immigrants and pierogi is the name of a Polish ravioli. It is not then a double-barrelled surname gallery. Thirdly, Edward Winkleman, who has his own model, which he spoke about in his talk. Ed has created a

<sup>1</sup>SMITH, R. 2003. Colin de Land, 47, Art dealer who fostered experimentation. *The New York Times* [website]. New York. NYTimes.com. March, 6, 2003. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/06/arts/colin-de-land-47-art-dealer-who-fostered-experimentation.html>

<sup>2</sup>FRICKE, H. 2003. At the Center of the Periphery: The legendary flat files of Williamsburg's Pierogi Gallery. *db artmag* [website]. <http://www.db-artmag.com>. Available at: <http://www.db-artmag.com/archiv/2003/e/8/1/66.html>



community through his blog, art fair and gallery, but also through activities at the gallery that go beyond doing exhibitions.

**“ LARRY GAGOSIAN, CHARLES SAATCHI AND THE LATE LEO CASTELLI ARE TO THE ART WORLD WHAT WARREN BUFFETT, GEORGE SOROS AND T. ROWE PRICE HAVE LONG BEEN TO THE FINANCIAL MARKETS. EXPERTS AT PICKING ART STOCKS IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM, THEY HAVE SHAPED AN ART-MARKET COLOSSUS.”**

And then we have the ‘Troika’: Larry Gagosian, Charles Saatchi and Leo Castelli, who created a gallery model that is massively influential at this point. These are the three men whose overall influence is the same as that of legendary merchants such as Joseph Duveen, who sold America the European Renaissance, and Ambroise Vollard, one of the most important dealers in French modern art. Larry Gagosian, Charles Saatchi and the late Leo Castelli are to the art world what Warren Buffett, George Soros and T. Rowe Price have long been to the financial markets. Experts at picking art stocks in both the short and (as far as we know) long term, they have shaped an art-market colossus. The current drift of popular admiration proves one indicator of this trend. In our toadying, success-driven environment, Gagosian, Saatchi and Castelli (Castelli passed away in 1999, but his influence lingers like Roger & Gallet) are currently unalloyed art superstars.<sup>3</sup> These guys have it all. They are like the Jay-Zs of the art world.

WHAT DO ARTISTS WANT FROM THEIR GALLERY?

Having looked at these potential models, are any of these applicable or ideal? Rainer, what do you think?

### **RAINER GANAHL (R.G.)**

Yes they are, but I would try to explain this differently by simply showing you my biography, which actually shows what a failure I am. To start with I had three shows with Philomene Magers in Cologne, two shows with Blum & Poe in Los Angeles, and they both fired me.

### **C.V.F.**

So you were not the ideal artist for them.

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<sup>3</sup>VIVEROS-FAUNÉ, C. 2011. Gods and Monsters. *Art Review*; January 2011, Issue 47, p. 34.

**R.G.**

Right. But if you look at my history of showing, I have only worked with gallerists that are under 30 years old. I have showed in the Fruit and Flower Deli gallery, at Alex Zachary's gallery in New York and more recently in the Kai Matsumiya gallery.

**C.V.F.**

So you need an older gallerist?

**R.G.**

No, I do not, that is the question. All these new dealers do well, but by the time they move to an economic segment that they kind of exceed, they kick me out. This is the logic of this entire thing.

**C.V.F.**

Let us extrapolate from your personal experience: where is the short circuit happening?

**R.G.**

Well, you have to ask them why they kicked me out. Extrapolating from the repetition of these things, I think it is an economic issue. It means that I am a failure on that level. On the other hand, I had the choice to do what I did and I keep doing it.

**C.V.F.**

It sounds like Castelli would have been an ideal dealer for you because of the loyalty issues that came up before.

**R.G.**

Yes, I think so.

**C.V.F.**

Jordi, what is your experience? What is your ideal?

**JORDI COLOMER (J.C.)**

I think my case is the opposite of Rainer's. I am very faithful to my first gallerists and none of them are very old, except one that runs the oldest gallery in Spain.

**R.G.**

I was faithful, but they still kicked me out.

**J.C.**

To answer the main question, what do artists want from their gallerist, I would use the Spanish word ‘complicidad’ (in English, one would say ‘mutual understanding’, ‘accomplice’ or ‘complicity’). In the Spanish language, people use the word ‘complicidad’ with both illegal and playful connotations, with two individuals acting as partners in crime. In the art world context, complicity would describe the relationship between artists and gallerists.

**C.V.F.**

That is a great idea, there is a kind of complicity. On the other hand, a regime of mutual understanding would be the ideal for the relationship between artists and dealers. Edward, what are your first thoughts about all of this? Is it possible to have mutual understanding?

**“ IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE, PEOPLE USE THE WORD ‘COMPLICIDAD’ WITH BOTH ILLEGAL AND PLAYFUL CONNOTATIONS, WITH TWO INDIVIDUALS ACTING AS PARTNERS IN CRIME. IN THE ART WORLD CONTEXT, COMPLICITY WOULD DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARTISTS AND GALLERISTS.”**

**EDWARD WINKLEMAN (E.W.)**

The idea of complicity and mutual understanding only transcends when everything is good. There is a need for trust on both sides. I love the complicity side of it, one of my favourite moments as a dealer is when I and one of the artists think that it is us against the world. We are completely complicit in what we are trying to do. I think there is a fun and adventurous thing that goes alongside. There is a dialogue that makes the rest of the market disappear.

**C.V.F.**

Does it though? Where does that take us in terms of the artist and dealer relationship? As much as I want to talk about trust, complicity and mutual understanding, I want to talk about percentages. Should dealers get 50% of artists’ earnings?

**R.G.**

Often they get much more because the dealers do not pay. You know yourself how hard it is to pay artists.

**C.V.F.**

You mean that sometimes dealers get 100%. One ideal thing that artists want from a dealer is to be paid.

**“ONE OF MY FAVOURITE MOMENTS AS  
A DEALER IS WHEN I AND ONE OF THE  
ARTISTS THINK THAT IT IS US AGAINST THE  
WORLD. WE ARE COMPLETELY COMPLICIT IN  
WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO.”**

**J.C.**

Another thing that artists want from galleries is to receive support to produce art, either by selling artworks or by producing artworks. What happens is that dealers are trying to sell products that have been produced by the artist, a production process that the gallery has not been involved in; or they are trying to get involved in the production of works, not only by paying for the production but maybe also by involving collectors and other people to buy and to produce things. In my case, I work mainly with video and photography which can easily be expensive to produce. I am quite lucky to be often invited by public institutions to produce work. But sometimes you feel alone when looking for production support. So, I think that the gallery should be more involved in production funding.

**R.G.**

I think selling is almost secondary, it should come as a by-product, but it is a very complex world of relationships. We are not talking about short selling. This support is important. For example, I never expected to sell, but the fact that I was with those galleries helped. Showing in those galleries improved my status, I was taken more seriously and curators become interested in my work. In retrospect, however, my experience is that I did not get paid by many galleries who did sell my work.

**C.V.F.**

Talking about the sales perspective, where do art fairs fit into this? Obviously that is where a gallery is increasingly going to sell. Recently a gallery told me they were going to 20 fairs in a year.

**R.G.**

Because they make more money at art fairs and that affects the artist's relationship with galleries. They ask you for more, you feel more under pressure and that affects that balance of producing artworks somehow.

**E.W.**

Following up on what Jordi said, what I hear from every artist is that they want the ability to be in a studio and to make their work. Whether that is a question of time or money, that is what they want from everybody in the art world. But the other thing that they want is the opportunity for other people to see the work in a context. That does not mean it has to be a commercial art gallery, it can be a museum or any other space.

**“ANOTHER THING THAT ARTISTS WANT  
FROM GALLERIES IS TO RECEIVE SUPPORT TO  
PRODUCE ART, EITHER BY SELLING ARTWORKS  
OR BY PRODUCING ARTWORKS.”**

**J.C.**

If we still believe in the exhibition in a physical space, it has a meaning. Physical galleries are meaningful too. They have an audience, and it is this audience that the artist also wants from the gallery. The problem with fairs is that very often the quality of the exhibition is lost because of the commercial obsession. In Spain, for example, the obsession still persists that the art fair has to be everything and this is because the ARCO art fair in Madrid arrived before museums started at the beginning of the 1980s.

**C.V.F.**

Curiously enough, ARCO back in the day almost worked as a biennial and it had a huge public presence, much more than I have ever seen in any other art fair anywhere around the globe.

**J.C.**

I personally do not like fairs and I do not go to them very often. It is not the way I want to see work. But I understand that in Europe galleries sell most artworks at art fairs.

**C.V.F.**

And it enables you to do what you want, that is to work in your studio or go out in the world, right?

**J.C.**

Well, I want to produce and to show.

**C.V.F.**

If we accept the proliferation of art fairs as a necessary evil, as a tool, is there a magic number that is unhealthy or healthier?

**J.C.**

I think there are some Spanish galleries who survive thanks to art fairs and sales in other countries.

**C.V.F.**

Does it affect the quality of your work?

**“PHYSICAL GALLERIES ARE MEANINGFUL TOO. THEY HAVE AN AUDIENCE, AND IT IS THIS AUDIENCE THAT THE ARTIST ALSO WANTS FROM THE GALLERY.”**

**J.C.**

I have found the way to produce video works and to be paid enough to survive without selling. But I am trying not to depend 100% on the commercial system.

**R.G.**

In my case, I do like art fairs, as many as possible. But on the other hand, I also fear them to an extent because it is very obvious whether you sell or not at an art fair, and if a gallery has not sold your work after three art fairs, you are not going to see an art fair with them again. The love relationship ends when nothing moves. I do not feel any pressure whatsoever to make artworks for art fairs, but if you are an artist who sells everything and who takes three weeks to make a piece, then you will have a problem and a waiting list. To go back to the first question, I consider a certain degree of failure is important for the artist. I think failure is the medium of success and not the other way around.

**C.V.F.**

So is there room to fail?

**R.G.**

Moderate failure is the best thing that could happen to an artist. The most important thing for any artist is to define what is successful for yourself by yourself, not by whether you sell, whether people love you or not, whether they show you or not. You need to find yourself.

**E.W.**

I think for a conceptual artist, in particular, the question “what do you want from your gallery?” is much more complicated and interesting. Going by your experience, Rainer, do you want a gallery to be effective past the age of 30 for you?

**R.G.**

No, with the age thing there have been exceptions. It is interesting that what happens with young gallerists who are really in it for the art is that at some point, they move forward. It is a generational thing as well; there is a passing of power.

**C.V.F.**

My question, then, is: does Rainer Ganahl need a gallery?

**R.G.**

Of course I do, any medium is good. But for example, I made my work ‘El Mundo’ without the support of a single institution and it was very successful and shown everywhere. In this case I did not need the gallery, as I used an old opera house, and I did it all by myself.

**C.V.F.**

In the last 20 years, there have been a number of artists who have dispensed with the gallery, becoming agents themselves and looking for money when they need to do a large-scale production. On other occasions, they decide to work with galleries the same way they would work with other institutions on a project-by-project basis. So why not that model?

**R.G.**

I work with anybody who asks me. I have no problem. But the people who work with me understand my work. I do projects with artists who have no name or anything if it is of interest to me.

**C.V.F.**

Some people might think of that as promiscuity. But there is another side to it. Robert Storr especially likes artists who are “foxy within their own aesthetic”, those artists who figure out how to surf all these stresses that we are talking about. It seems to me that if that happens, the gallery does not exist.

**R.G.**

You talk about money and I think money does not matter. What is crucial for the artist is that the work needs to make sense at least to him and of course to the audience he speaks to. I think every young artist has to learn how to survive without any expectation of making a penny off their art. You can become a Wall Street trader, a real estate agent or whatever, you can be a pimp if you want, but just do not expect money from your art because then you have a problem.

**C.V.F.**

You mentioned something earlier that could be a third takeaway: what galleries can do to help an artist is find an audience, which is a tough thing to do.

**R.G.**

The critical reception means much more to me. A 'New York Times' review is more than somebody giving me \$20,000.

**“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR ANY  
ARTIST IS TO DEFINE WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL  
FOR YOURSELF BY YOURSELF, NOT BY  
WHETHER YOU SELL, WHETHER PEOPLE  
LOVE YOU OR NOT, WHETHER THEY SHOW  
YOU OR NOT. YOU NEED TO FIND YOURSELF.”**

**J.C.**

To get back to the idea of the perfect model, I've just returned from Norway, invited by RAKE, a very young collective of artists and architects, to do a show with my work. But I did not want to show old work and since it was my first time in Norway, I preferred to produce new work and they agreed to that. But they suggested I put on the show in a different space to the one they run and recommended a car park dating from the 1960s. To make it possible they asked the owner of the building for permission to use the space for the show and they asked the municipality for funding. And because the municipality supported it, RAKE got some money from the state as well. In the end, we received money for the production and we mounted a great show. It is good to be flexible and have the possibility of changing the space.

**C.V.F.**

You got to produce a large scale work, which is fantastic.



**E.W.**

I wonder if I can pick up the idea of the perfect gallerist. When a gallery asks their artist what they want out of a show, normally the artist does not necessarily realise that some of the choices they make actually lead towards one situation or the other. An example of this is an artist that makes 20 paintings and then decides that those 20 paintings are a single installation. The only way you can sell that is as a single installation. That artist has made a choice: the press is more important to them than sales even though they would like to sell. They have chosen press over sales because they are more likely to get it written about as a single installation in the ‘New York Times’ and to sell it that way.

**C.V.F.**

I know an artist that it is like that, who has been very successful with paintings about the Holocaust, but he does not need money and he does not want to sell them piecemeal. For obvious reasons, it is not the kind of thing you want to visualise over a collector’s couch on the Upper East Side.

**“IN THE LAST 20 YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF ARTISTS WHO HAVE DISPENSED WITH THE GALLERY, BECOMING AGENTS THEMSELVES AND LOOKING FOR MONEY WHEN THEY NEED TO DO A LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION.”**

**E.W.**

The idea of the perfect situation, I am sure we all know it is not exactly reality, but you make choices.

**J.C.**

These people are very young and maybe it is one of the reasons why they risk things like that. But why should the gallerist not be as flexible as the artist with the spaces and come up with different ideas to make projects?

**C.V.F.**

That is a good idea. Because there is a crisis in the middle market, exactly like in the middle class within the larger economy. And what happens with the middle class today, apart from disappearing, is innovation. I think innovation happens in the middle market as well. How can we begin to conceive of the space in more innovative ways from the artist’s standpoint?

How can middle-market galleries expand and move? We also have to talk about the possible imbalance between galleries and artists. It seems to me to be self-evident that artists are not the most powerful player out there today.

**R.G.**

I think art is very powerful. The question is when you say “art is just a market”. I can guarantee you that the majority of decisions made by dealers are consistent with the opinion of their artists. They ask their artists. Obviously not every artist is the same. But almost every famous collector in New York asks around what artists think about other artists. Artists who are listened to have influence.

**C.V.F.**

I totally agree with you in terms of how to set up a stable. Smart galleries basically listen to their artists; they actively go out and ask their artists. But I am not so sure they ask the artists about the rest of the day to day things, like which art fair to go to. What do you think Ed?

**E.W.**

I ask some of the artists I trust about their opinion, but there also the ones who do not pay enough attention to have an opinion. I think that dealers are there to serve the artists and the collectors. Serving both at the same time is a challenge.

**C.V.F.**

Collectors are increasingly buyers who are more and more influential as well.

**“I THINK MONEY DOES NOT MATTER. WHAT IS CRUCIAL FOR THE ARTIST IS THAT THE WORK NEEDS TO MAKE SENSE AT LEAST TO HIM AND OF COURSE TO THE AUDIENCE HE SPEAKS TO.”**

**E.W.**

Yeah, I tend to think of collectors as the people I work for, not buyers. But you were saying, even if we look at new models, dealers need the artists to tell us what they need from us.

**R.G.**

If you are a dealer, it is stupid to take completely disparate artists; you want to have a group of people with something in common.

**E.W.**

Let me tell you something. I know many artists who do not care about the other artists in the gallery. It is all about their relationship with their dealer and whether they like the context.

**R.G.**

They often do not like each other but, I think it is important to have a connection. Because it is all a social network, in the sense that when you present yourself together with an array of other artists, critics or curators, it becomes a very powerful and successful model.

**“HOW CAN WE BEGIN TO CONCEIVE OF THE SPACE IN MORE INNOVATIVE WAYS FROM THE ARTIST’S STANDPOINT? HOW CAN MIDDLE-MARKET GALLERIES EXPAND AND MOVE?”**

**C.V.F.**

But only when you look at the most successful ones. That happens a lot at younger galleries.

**R.G.**

But even with Castelli, it was said how one artist would lead to another artist, and it does not stop happening.

**C.V.F.**

When you look at the roster, you identify what the gallery is doing. Therefore, I know where these artists stand in the pecking order.

**R.G.**

People like Gagosian listen out and if not them, then their advisers do it. I know people from blue chip galleries in New York who get paid to just hang out in small galleries to figure out what goes on.

**C.V.F.**

I hope you are right, that they are really listening to artists, although I have my doubts.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE.

**Q.** I have a question for Jordi. You said galleries should support the production costs of an artist. In your case, you have received support for the production of your work in addition to their investment in you. So what would happen if your work does not sell but you are expected to put on a second show in two years? Would the gallery have to pay once again for the production costs? Have you thought about maybe giving the gallery the first edition of your work because they are investing in you? Maybe one day you might decide to drop the gallery, keeping all the works and leaving the gallery with nothing. What is your point of view on that?

**J.C.** Well of course, if we are talking about galleries, we are talking about the market, and if you are not selling anything you are not on the market. Why does a gallery have to support the production of the work if it is not about the relationship between two individuals who share a passion and believe that this work has to be produced? All the galleries are different, the collectors are different, some of the gallerists are also collectors and some collectors become gallerists. So why do you decide to invest in something, and not just with your money? Some galleries with a lot of money just decide to give money to their artists. But is it possible to convince the collectors or producers to make works possible? This model exists already: many institutions and not just museums but clubs of collectors who have money and want artists to produce some work, they pay for it and have rights on these works. They could either have the rights to show the work or the first work in a limited edition. This is flexible, it is the market, therefore you should agree with the terms.

**“IF YOU ARE A DEALER, IT IS STUPID TO  
TAKE COMPLETELY DISPARATE ARTISTS; YOU  
WANT TO HAVE A GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH  
SOMETHING IN COMMON.”**

**R.G.** I think it is terrible to get funded for the production costs. When galleries pay for the production and you do not sell, 80% of them end up in a big fight. I would advise to pay as much as you can, so at least you have some kind of control of the work, otherwise you will never see your work back. These problems happen really often. I remember a very famous artist that showed at the Galerie Roger Pailhas in the early 90s. Many of his expenses and the production of his work got covered by the gallery. But in the end, he never got the work back and it destroyed the relationship between them.

It is dangerous for the dealer to pay the production costs and it is not really healthy for the artist either. Afterwards, there is a kind of limbo, so at the very least it is important to define what happens after.

**Q.** I have a question for the two artists. Imagine a world without galleries. Would it be easy for good quality artists to show their works all over the world and to promote themselves? My second question is: are all the best artists on the market or not, and what happens?

**J.C.** I have been invited here and feel like the local artist. I think every context is different. In Barcelona, for example, on the one hand you have the good galleries of the city that have been withstanding the various waves of the crisis. As an artist you can not live off a gallery in Barcelona and just selling to the people in Barcelona. That is why they go to art fairs and try to globalise their work. You are not exposed as an artist in New York, so you are not on the same level. The way the art system is right now, I think that artists have to be in a gallery because it is difficult to be in the art world without one. You do not have to sell, but you should be in an art gallery.

**Q.** This is a question to the artists. Let us say there are three types of galleries in the primary market: the emerging gallery; the mid-career gallery, that it is fairly established; and the big galleries. Where would you like to be as an artist? Do you want to be the established artist that is part of the emerging gallery, do you want to be part of a mid-career gallery, or do you want to be sort of the freak in the big gallery? If you look at the landscape of galleries, where do you think you would grow best as an artist?

**R.G.** It is almost like asking do you want to be rich, healthy and young or do you want to be old, sick and poor. I mean, it is self-explanatory. Obviously, I think I could do a good job in the best gallery.

**E.W.** Why would you grow best in the big gallery?

**C.V.F.** Before Jordi answers that, I know at least about a couple of instances where artists have basically got a call from Gagosian offering a cheque with lots and lots of zeros and they have said no. So there is a lot of decision-making that does not always go to the highest bidder.

**R.G.** But what happens is this: I imagine that if I had that show at David Zwirner, in addition to the 'New York Times' review, I would have been

able to place the piece. Now it is just in talks with museums. Obviously, once you have these opportunities you can do more things.

**J.C.** I think it is not something that you can manage, like the film 'All About Eve', when the young actress is the old and well-known one when a younger one comes around. These are the categories that we have to try to live with.

**C.** As an artist and a gallerist, I can understand both sides and, I think there should not be an idyllic relationship. I like to look at the relationship with an artist as a business, and any kind of business needs a lot of marketing. The moment we stop looking at it in a romantic way, it will be much better. Then we will look at it with respect, not waiting for an idyllic situation, which is so difficult to make happen.



## **Mark Coetzee**

Director and Chief Curator of Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town (South Africa); Curator, Zeitz Collection (Switzerland); Cultural Specialist, Zeitz Foundation (Kenya); Visiting Professor, New World School of the Arts, University of Florida (Miami, USA); and Adjunct Curator at the Laumeier Sculpture Park (St. Louis, USA). He is a recognised artist in his own right, as well as an art historian and writer. Coetzee has published extensively on art, writing for journals that include the 'Huffington Post', 'Mail & Guardian', 'Revue Noire' and 'The Sunday Independent', and has authored over 30 monograph catalogues on various artists. His latest publications include monographs on Hernan Bas, Keith Haring, Eberhard Havekost and John Stezaker. Coetzee studied at the Stellenbosch University, the University of Cape Town, and the University of Paris-Sorbonne.



# AFRICA, THE NEWEST ENTRANT TO THE MARKET

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## **SPEAKER**

Mark Coetzee

## **CONCEPTS**

South Africa, cultural inheritances, colonisation, born frees, Western value systems, Eurocentric practices, art community, commitment, rigor, content - driven, responsibility, commercial galleries, Pan - African galleries, development, industry, new phenomenon.



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# AFRICA, THE NEWEST ENTRANT TO THE MARKET

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I had prepared a presentation for you but after our discussions yesterday, I realised that down-to-earth, practical information would be more useful than me presenting a theoretical overview of the ideological problematics of practice in Africa, how the market may be influencing that and how the established market in the Northern Hemisphere can, or cannot, engage with what is happening in Africa. So I thought what I need to do is create a context of what we see happening in the market in Africa because it cannot be separated from Africa's colonial history and the way that visual and fine arts practices originally happened on the continent. Then I will move on to a more straightforward discussion of the market and how it operates. We have 54 countries in Africa, and unlike Sarah Palin I do understand Africa is not a country, but I am going to use South Africa as a case study as the project I am working on happens to be there. The information I am going to give you could be applied to many other African states, including Nigeria, Kenya, etc.

Africa consists of 54 states that have absolutely no relationship to the languages or the cultural inheritances of the people within these states. The borders were drawn up by Europeans at various stages in colonisation and during the independence movements in Africa. What we see is completely arbitrary borders, borders that mutate through war and through cultural groups that move from one side of these weird, manmade lines to the other. If you look at the systems of museum practice, for example on a label we always have where the artist was born and where they work—but in Africa where they were born may be completely arbitrary and even their cultural position is not decided upon by themselves. So where do we begin?

**“IT IS THE IMPOSITION OF WESTERN VALUE SYSTEMS ONTO TO AFRICA. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE OPPOSITE WERE TRUE, IF AFRICA’S AESTHETICS OR SYSTEMS WERE IMPOSED ON US, AS WHITE WESTERNERS.”**

Though this is not going to be an art history lesson I am going to show you four images. I’ll begin by showing you a piece by Andrew Putter. He is an artist who was born during the Apartheid period. I refer to that specifically because the most exciting work we now see coming out of South Africa is from what we call the ‘born frees’, the younger black artists who were born post-Apartheid. Remember Mandela was freed and we had our first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, so I am talking about artists who are born very close to or after the end of the Apartheid. Putter was born slightly earlier, during the Apartheid period, and his recent investigations looks at perceptions that the West has of Africa, and perceptions that Africa has of the West. Perhaps a lot of us are not aware of what is happening in Africa, both in the work that is being produced and the extraordinary market that is developing, which I’ll talk about a little later.

TALKING GALLERIES



I frequently ask my students to look at Andrew Putter’s ‘Native Lives’ from 2010, and ask them to determine which of the two images they are most comfortable with. Which image is more natural to them. Is it the one on the left, a young, handsome white man dressed in what would be seen as traditional Southern

African garments? Or is it the rather stoic-looking black man on the right, dressed in a 1970s Wall Street suit? I do not know about you, but my response is that the one on the right seems more plausible. That is perhaps indicative of the problematics of any engagement that any European will have with Africa, whether it is with the market or the content of the work. It is the imposition of Western value systems onto to Africa. What would happen if the opposite were true, if Africa's aesthetics or systems were imposed on us, as white Westerners?

## **HISTORY OF PRACTICE OF MUSEUMS IN AFRICA**

The first major museum in Africa, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, was built in 1892 and to a large extent it determined the anthropological presentation of archaeological objects. Objects were taken out of their context and shown within a Western idiom. In other words, objects were presented on a plinth with a label, protected by glass and visitors were expected to adopt a certain kind of system of engagement. To a large extent that is the practice that still exists in museums in Africa and the natural impetus for all of us would be to continue with this practice. Indeed you see that the museums and commercial galleries—and I do use that word specifically, although yesterday somebody suggested it is a dirty division, but I think it is still a division—continue to use this Western viewing system in how they present work and how they value objects. We have not had any major museum built in Africa for the visual arts since then. There were attempts at the turn of the last century in South Africa by what we call 'Randlords', individuals like Max Michaelis, Cecil John Rhodes and others, to establish visual arts museums, but these museums were made in the context of "Let us bring white, mainly Anglo-British culture to Africa to educate the 'natives'". So they landed up being irrelevant institutions, which were not accessed and used by a broad spectrum of society and to a large extent they have now completely failed in their practice. You see this across the whole of Africa.

So it seems like this is all 'doom and gloom' and there are even more complex issues at play. If we start with South Africa as a case study, in 1948 the National Party, which was the Afrikaans party, came to power, and instituted official or legalised segregation under a policy called Apartheid, a system that remained in place until 1994. This was the system that removed 3.5 million people from their homes, forcing them to live in areas with people of a similar racial background. So there was a conscious separation of culture and segregation of how people practiced culture. When I am speaking about culture, I'm referring to visual art, music as well as human interaction, food, religion, marriage and everything that defines a people. This system of racial segregation was put in place in most of the

British colonies in Africa after the abolition of slavery. There was an attempt to broadly dismantle it but unfortunately that did not happen in South Africa and we landed up, as you all know, with one of the most corrupt regimes in modern history. We had a whole series of museums, commercial galleries, not-for-profits, art associations and community-run organisations which to a large extent stuck with the status quo and produced what the world expected them to produce. At the same time, towards the end of Apartheid we had a cultural boycott, which excluded any academic or artist from South Africa participating in the West and excluded any academic or artist coming to South Africa to practice their work. So there was a complete isolation of the country.

**“WHEN I AM SPEAKING ABOUT CULTURE, I’M REFERRING TO VISUAL ART, MUSIC AS WELL AS HUMAN INTERACTION, FOOD, RELIGION, MARRIAGE AND EVERYTHING THAT DEFINES A PEOPLE.”**

It reminds me of America after the bombings of 9/11 when George Bush said, “If you’re not with us you’re against us”. There was no possibility to have your own opinion, to have a complex process to decide how you fit into this world. The natural response, people thought at the time, was that South Africa should become completely independent. We began producing our own fuel, we established our own cultural organisations, as well as social infrastructure, including hospitals and universities. We fundamentally closed ourselves off from the world. How does that isolation impact on how the world sees us today or how the world sees Africa? You might say: “Well, he keeps on talking about South Africa”. I will ask you to bear with me for the moment because I am going to explain how the market in South Africa is to a large extent the gateway to the majority of the trade of fine art on the continent. It is a phenomenon that is happening due to the infrastructure that exists in the country but I’ll get on to that later.

**“SOUTH AFRICA IS TO A LARGE EXTENT THE GATEWAY TO THE MAJORITY OF THE TRADE OF FINE ART ON THE CONTINENT. IT IS A PHENOMENON THAT IS HAPPENING DUE TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT EXISTS IN THE COUNTRY.”**

So, you have a country that prided itself on its self-sufficiency, its cultural independence and its ability to survive. We now live in a time quite different to

that. For example, last night I had fun meeting people from different geographical regions, with different viewpoints, different practices. Art functions much more globally. Yet you have a territory, South Africa, which does not have the skills or experience of practising in that way. Does this enhance the practice there or does it discredit it? My opinion is that the separation has done extraordinary things. It has created a context for work being produced in Africa and specifically South Africa, which has a rigor that I find in few places in the world.

When I did the Leipzig show many years ago it was one of the few times that I observed the same phenomenon of this unbelievable commitment to craft regardless of whether there was a market, prestige or value linked to it—or even a livelihood possible with this type of practice. Similar to East Germany, you have an art community and industry that has gone on doing this and to a large extent has subsidised it out of love. So we have a system that in the past required curators to also be dealers and art critics, you basically did everything you needed to and were paid nothing for it. The way many artists survived was that you would buy from one another's shows and you would have agreements to help each other to produce the work. So again it's a kind of self-sufficiency.

**“THAT THE SEPARATION HAS DONE  
EXTRAORDINARY THINGS. IT HAS CREATED  
A CONTEXT FOR WORK BEING PRODUCED IN  
AFRICA AND SPECIFICALLY SOUTH AFRICA,  
WHICH HAS A RIGOR THAT I FIND IN FEW  
PLACES IN THE WORLD.”**

Now that the world has opened up and the cultural boycott has lifted, the whole world is interested in us. I did a study a while back, where I looked at 10 years of major biennales and I counted the artists from Africa that were included, which was hardly any. Then I counted the number of South African artists included, and in some of the major biennales over 10% of the participants were from South Africa. Clearly there has been a real focus academically and curatorially on the practices coming out of South Africa. The market was not initially there to back it up, so it was a very content-driven phenomenon and that meant that a lot of education was happening. All the major curators and serious collectors were seeing work by South African artists. For example Marlene Dumas is a highly traded artist, her market is not as volatile as it was, but I remember a few years ago there were court cases between collectors and gallerists to get access to Dumas' work. She is a little Afrikaans girl from Cape Town. And I do not think one can question William Kentridge's institutional success either. Similarly, El Anatsui has achieved extraordinary institutional success. Indeed we have

been trying to get one for the Zeitz Collection for many years but the prices are astronomical and it is very difficult to get museum quality pieces. There are other artists such as Wangetchi Mutu and Kader Attia as well. Strangely we have forgotten that some of the major artists from Africa are actually from the continent.

What happens next? The institutional system in South Africa was and to a large extent still is based on a European model, so that means that the state supports art institutions. At the end of the Apartheid, the democratic government removed all incentives for individuals and corporates to donate to the arts because they discovered that institutions continued supporting Eurocentric practices. Banks would sponsor ballet and other corporates would sponsor opera or choirs and there is no support for institutions engaging with the joy of living in Africa or the issues of being a human in Africa. Therefore the government said, this is not working, we will take the taxes and reallocate the funds. But as we know from across the world, the state, because of financial crises, eventually withdraws funding and most museums as well as university galleries, art schools, not-for-profits in Africa collapse. They are still open but no one visits and there is no programming and so there is very little impact.

**“WITHOUT THE COMMERCIAL GALLERIES IN SOUTH AFRICA MANY OF CURATORS WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON IN THE COUNTRY.”**

I personally was gone for 25 years and only visited my family during that time, so I did not engage with visual art practices or the industry in South Africa as much as I should have. Seven months ago I returned to South Africa to do a major project, which I will talk about at the very end because I must share how excited we are for the next major museum in Africa, but more on that later. When I arrived back in South Africa I was put in the situation of being an outsider. What I found is that this ‘outsiderness’ helped me see things more clearly because I was not involved in the politics and power games of the local art world. I was able to get a good overview of what is happening and what I see is that the art market itself, and particularly the commercial galleries, have taken responsibility for the art making, art production, supporting museums. They have taken responsibility for literally everything that is segmented in other industries or art worlds. For example, the oldest surviving contemporary art gallery is called the Goodman Gallery, which was founded by Linda Goodman and purchased in 2008 by Liza Essers. If you go to the South African National Gallery the majority of the donations to the museum over the last twenty years



were done by the Goodman Gallery. Likewise, for many years if you went to any major biennale and looked at the label of a South African artist on display, the Goodman Gallery often supported production costs. What happened as a result of isolation was that commercial galleries became not only the place where art was traded but also the patron of artists' exhibitions, touring exhibitions globally and accompanying exhibition catalogues, including the commissioning of essays. There has been a whole transfer of responsibility from public museums to commercial galleries that took place over the last twenty years in South Africa.

We can go into great depth to discuss if this is a good or bad thing but the reality is that it happened and there has been a flowering of commercial galleries in the last decade that are practising on the same level as any major international gallery. The ambitions of these galleries are enormous: 3,000 square metres of exhibition space, 35 or 40 staff members and unique divisions for publishing and education. Some of the galleries you should look at are the Goodman Gallery, which I've mentioned, STEVENSON, which is an extraordinary gallery that has come about in the last few years, and WHAT IF THE WORLD. There is also Brundyn+, Blank Projects and Gallery MOMO. I would say these are the six main galleries in South Africa. Of course there are problems with this system as there is only one gallery in the entire country that is owned and operated by a black gallerist, meaning that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. It is working so well that when I come to Barcelona I find that there is a photography exhibition of South African Pieter Hugo arranged by STEVENSON in one of your local institutions. The inability of international museums to talk with their colleagues in public institutions in South Africa has caused these museums to begin talking with commercial galleries directly. This means that the power relationships between public and private institutions have changed greatly. Traditionally museums do not like to admit they are influenced by the commercial sector, though of course they are. Without the commercial galleries in South Africa many of curators would not know what the hell is going on in the country. So you see extraordinary relationships being developed between major collectors and curators at the world's top museums who are engaging and following the advice and guidance of commercial galleries. This is quite extraordinary.

Then what happens, which is even more interesting, is that alongside the financial power that these commercial galleries have acquired they understand that they need to take responsibility for engaging not just South African artists but an entire continent. What you see is South African galleries transforming themselves into Pan-African galleries that do not only represent artists from their country or region but from the entire continent. Their programs have

become very diverse. This means that more power is held in the hands of these commercial galleries because they are now the go-to institutions for everything related to contemporary practice on the continent. I think many people would get quite nervous with this situation and question whether it is good that commercial galleries have so much influence and power. Personally I think it is because in a system where public institutions have been dysfunctional and corrupt for decades and as a result has not managed to find a voice for themselves, the market has become much more democratic, open.

**“PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN  
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So where is the money coming from? As you know there is enormous mineral wealth in Southern Africa, including in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and South Africa, so individuals who own mines and have enormous funds are putting collections together. When Art Basel Miami Beach first started, there was a frenzy, everyone was collecting, everyone was buying and opening their own museums. The same thing is currently happening in Cape Town. There are a couple of museums that have opened that to a large extent are both museums and yet are not: they are private spaces open to the public, with staff, publishing programmes and they use their permanent collections as a resource to create exhibitions. They are so respected now that the public museums are loaning to private collections for their own exhibitions. Traditionally galleries and artists loaned to museums but now it is happening the other way around. What we also see is that commercial galleries are curating exhibitions in public museums. Recently Goodman Gallery curated an exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, which is a municipal institution with a national reputation. There are many models that are not used in Europe or North America that are currently being used in South Africa in response to a different economic reality.

Indeed, there is such trust in the experience and ability of the commercial sector within this context that public institutions actually relinquish responsibility to the commercial sector. What is particularly fascinating for me is that it is not being abused. There is this real commitment and love for the subject by the commercial sector such that this influence is not merely used to promote the commercial sector's own agendas or line their pockets. Yes a lot of people are getting extremely wealthy through this process, including some artists and

gallerists, but at the same time there is a commitment to the development of art itself by the sector. It is pretty extraordinary. I have not seen anything like this anywhere else in the world except perhaps in South America, where there are private collectors who step in when public museums cannot deal with the financial and social demands placed on their institutions.

The South African galleries are now in a kind of race to see who will represent the continent the best and as a result who will corner the market. There are three or four players, who have staff that are constantly travelling and negotiating with artists from across the continent. For example, when the Angolan Pavilion won the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2013, before anybody could sneeze, a commercial gallery in South Africa had already signed the artist. We acquired the whole pavilion for the museum, which I will talk about in a moment, but what is extraordinary is the speed and ability of these galleries. I believe it has to do with the fact that the global art market has not woken up to what is happening in Africa quite yet. It is an unknown territory for a lot of European and North American curators and gallerists, so it is very easy for the people who are there and understand what is going on to take responsibility.

**“THE GLOBAL ART MARKET HAS NOT WOKEN UP TO WHAT IS HAPPENING IN AFRICA QUITE YET. IT IS AN UNKNOWN TERRITORY FOR A LOT OF EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN CURATORS AND GALLERISTS.”**

If you search online for the six galleries that I mentioned and look at their programme, you will see that they represent artists from Southern African as well as West, East and North Africa. They represent artists from across the entire continent, which is pretty extraordinary. Now what happens? Since I have been back I have noticed museum groups visiting Cape Town. Zeitz MOCAA recently hosted a major group of about 60 visitors from the Tate Modern (London), as well as the Guggenheim (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Seattle Art Museum and the Newark Museum. Major museums from around the world are all coming, which is not something I am used to in a place that does not have an Art Basel fair, an Armory Show or a Whitney Biennial. So clearly curators are somehow connecting to what is happening in Africa and have formed special-interest groups within their museums, which they bring out to South Africa. When they hit town these group are like vacuum cleaners. They go to every gallery and Hoover up whatever they can find. They buy nearly everything and ship it back to their private collections

as well as their institutions in Europe or America.

A number of people have asked me: who is buying everything? We have the local South African collectors with huge mineral wealth. Remember that South Africa has become a regional power, like many of the other BRICS nations. But besides the mineral wealth, there is also oil in certain areas of Africa but also digital technology, cell-phone and communication networks and technologies across the continent, which are often owned or operated by companies in South Africa. The retail sectors—in other words, your Walgreens for the United States, Sainsbury’s in the UK or Zara in Spain—in Africa are largely operated and owned by South African companies. The banks have also created huge wealth for collectors in South Africa. For example Standard Bank operates not only within South Africa but also across Africa as Stanbic Bank, so you have enormous wealth that is being built by the financial sector.

What we saw after the end of Apartheid was that a number of corporations took their assets offshore and private individuals moved their wealth outside the country. Now that our society has stabilised what has happened is that you have a renewed commitment to that place—it is after all where you love and where your soul is—so what has happened is that these same corporations and people have returned. They haven’t returned with all of their assets, they still leave some of their investments in safe places abroad, but they bring a significant portion of their assets with them and they are driving the acquisition of work produced within South Africa. So it is both collectors from abroad and collectors from within the country and they become little diplomats for the country and the continent.

**“MOST PUBLIC MUSEUMS AROUND THE  
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PUBLIC MUSEUMS INTERNATIONALLY  
HAVE FOCUSED ON COLLECTING  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL OBJECTS SUCH  
AS MASKS, DRUMS, ETC.”**

There is another phenomenon that is driving this consolidation of the trade of art produced in Africa by the commercial sector. Most public museums around the world have neglected contemporary African practice. We see that public museums internationally have focused on collecting anthropological objects such as masks, drums, etc. For example institutions like the Smithsonian or the Menil Collection both have large African collections but have begun saying “I wonder

what is happening now? Let us check it out.” And for every one Smithsonian there are another 10,000 museums around the world that have some kind of focus or interest in Africa.

So there is this whole industry that has developed around institutions buying works to redress this imbalance. You see that institutions globally are constantly acquiring what is currently happening in Africa. It is unfortunate but because of a very developed gallery system, South African artists or artists represented by South African galleries are getting the majority of the attention. This is because the South African galleries have the marketing and information platforms in place to be able to promote their stables. Thus, it is not unsurprising to see Pieter Hugo in Barcelona because he has a gallery that is exceptionally good at promoting its stable. STEVENSON makes a catalogue for every single exhibition they produce. I am not sure how many galleries in the world create a unique catalogue for every single exhibition. The disadvantage of being isolated for so long and being so far away from the main centres of the art world, has taught South African galleries to bridge that gap through communication. Therefore you constantly see catalogues being produced by the major galleries who then send them to every curator and collector they know.

**“BECAUSE OF A VERY DEVELOPED GALLERY SYSTEM, SOUTH AFRICAN ARTISTS OR ARTISTS REPRESENTED BY SOUTH AFRICAN GALLERIES ARE GETTING THE MAJORITY OF THE ATTENTION.”**

Now the international commercial galleries are arriving and it is extraordinary for me to see who is arriving first. It reminds me why they are such top galleries. Major galleries from London and New York come by the dozens every week with their staff. They often do not take artists immediately: they do a couple of studio visits and then they include them in a summer show or a group show to see how they sell. Yet everything is moving very quickly you’re beginning to have the Victoria Miros and Marianne Boeskie doing solo exhibitions of these artists. It would be unethical for me to talk about it publically but the level of gallerists who are coming from New York are extraordinary. If I gave you the names, you would be shocked. What I am seeing is that everyone in the know has realised that something is happening about Africa and more specifically about South Africa.

We of course have a fashion in the art world where we follow trends: first it is

India that is hot, then Leipzig, then China, etc. Now I am hearing, especially in the practices of artists and gallerists in the UK, that that there will be a focus on Africa, which will reach some kind of peak in the next three to four years. The ‘aggressive gallerists’ who come in first, they are already there and they have begun signing some amazing artists. Why are they doing this? They are quite honest with me: they know that there is a market developing and they want an artist in their stable to be able to capitalise on this market. It is a purely financially driven decision. They understand the trade of art is no longer a Eurocentric or Northern Hemisphere practice. Collectors from the BRICS nations often do not want to buy only art from their own regions but from other emerging regions. When I was living in Miami, I remember Fred Snitzer would say to me he could not understand why he would show Hernan Bas in Miami and no Miamians would buy his work, and then he would take Bas’ work to Art Basel or The Armory Show and all the collectors from Miami would fight to purchase a work. At first I did not understand this but a couple years ago I was at Art Basel at STEVENSON’s booth looking at a solo presentation of Zanele Muholi and I bought the work. I had seen similar or even the same works over fifty times in Cape Town or Johannesburg but seeing the work outside of South Africa, in a context with so many other artists helps one to understand it more clearly. You understand where it fits in, including its relevance, whether it is evocative, whether your relationship to the work back home is sentimental or if it is real. Sometimes to take it out of its original context is really helpful. A number of the international commercial gallerists are now signing artists from Africa because they understand there is a huge collector base that no one is aware of and that needs to be serviced. If a gallery is going to make the sales, then they are happy to do it. It is an extraordinary thing that the commercial sector has driven. It is a new flowering of contemporary practice and one that they have taken complete responsibility for the promotion of the artists, production of the art, the funding of the system and everything that is entailed in getting an artist’s work in biennales and into collections globally.

**“COLLECTORS FROM THE BRICS NATIONS  
OFTEN DO NOT WANT TO BUY ONLY ART  
FROM THEIR OWN REGIONS BUT FROM  
OTHER EMERGING REGIONS.”**

What does that mean for all of us? I think that it is unlike China. I still have not figured out how to negotiate the Chinese art market, and I have worked with many big collectors in many regions, but I find it very tough. I remember when I was at the Rubell Family Collection we bought Zhang Huan’s work and the editions of this work ran out. Then there were other editions appearing by

artists that had collaborated with Zhang Huan. They felt that they were also responsible for the work so they made their own versions. In contrast what you see in the gallery system in South Africa is a very ethical, controlled structure that would feel very familiar. You would be very comfortable with the process: you go to the openings, you would meet the collectors, have a fancy dinner and then you would ‘schmooze’ and make a sale. It is quite simple.

The global art world is not so familiar or up-to-date with what is actually happening in Africa and South Africa. The question is whether I should share this information or if I should leave it alone because something extraordinary is happening? Perhaps we should let it rest for a while but I don’t think that is what is going to happen. It is all happening so quickly. Seeing the level of people coming to South Africa already indicates that everything is in motion. When certain people are there, everything snowballs after them. So I suppose it is up to each of us to figure out how we engage with this new phenomenon.

**“THE GLOBAL ART WORLD IS NOT SO FAMILIAR OR UP-TO-DATE WITH WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA.”**

I do think it is going to last a while and I will tell you why: Georgina Adam and I were recently talking about how many times we can revisit abstraction in Western painting. I think it was eight years ago that painting was dead and now it is alive again yet we have not even begun to investigate what is happening in Africa and South Africa. There is a whole territory that is very exciting and artists that have filtered up through the system and they have done so because they wanted to. They felt that they needed to do it and not because it was financially lucrative. Only now is there a younger generation of artists that see huge income opportunities. They are certainly coming up but what we see in the generation before them is an ‘authentic’ practice.

**“ONLY NOW IS THERE A YOUNGER GENERATION OF ARTISTS THAT SEE HUGE INCOME OPPORTUNITIES. THEY ARE CERTAINLY COMING UP BUT WHAT WE SEE IN THE GENERATION BEFORE THEM IS AN ‘AUTHENTIC’ PRACTICE.”**

**WHAT MAKES A CULTURAL CAPITAL?**

I was thinking last night about what makes Barcelona important and I have to see this from my point of view. Carlos Durán and Emilio Álvarez do LOOP

Barcelona and they are extraordinarily kind to me. They always make me feel like a million dollars and that is why I come to be honest, for their friendliness and kindness. But if relationships are not in place because the global art world is not connected with African continent, no matter how wonderful the people are, no one is going to go.

So what makes cultural capital? You need good university art schools. There are around sixteen in South Africa alone and they go up to Masters or PhD level. There is also a whole network of national institutions and while they don't work they do have permanent collections with staff with extraordinary skills. You also need art fairs. South Africa has two young boutique fairs, which are the Joburg Art Fair and the Cape Town Art Fair. You also need a good secondary market. The auction house Strauss & Co has cornered the market for secondary sales in Africa. Up until recently Bonhams was the leader for contemporary art from Africa but Strauss & Co in both lot numbers and total sales have taken over. In fact, they will announce the first contemporary art auction in Africa shortly. You need collectors, which South Africa has many of. You finally need gallerists and journalists. I remember reading last year that the Los Angeles Times had taken away the only fulltime job for an art critic in Los Angeles. South Africa has approximately 16 fulltime art critics. So there is an extraordinary infrastructure already in place but there still has not been an iconic 'something' to grab the imagination of the world and say, "shit, maybe that place matters".

**“SOUTH AFRICA HAS APPROXIMATELY  
16 FULLTIME ART CRITICS. SO THERE IS  
AN EXTRAORDINARY INFRASTRUCTURE  
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THE IMAGINATION OF THE WORLD.”**

Mr. Jochen Zeitz, the former CEO of Puma, which is currently owned by the Kering, collects contemporary artwork from Africa. I met Mr. Zeitz when I was about to leave the Rubell Family Collection in Miami. We had a conversation at a pizza house and he asked me what my next steps were. I said my great dream was to build a major museum in Africa because it needs an iconic space for the practice of art and a place for the practice of art to be written by Africans. The history of art from Africa has largely been written by outsiders, who have taken control of the narrative. He said he loved Africa, the idea was fantastic and then asked me what I needed. I said, no budget, because I want you to give the funds with no end. There cannot be a limited budget to buy the collection for the museum and then to build the museum. So he said, "fine, let's do it".



Over the last five and a half years I have been travelling the entire continent looking at different cities. We short-listed four cities: Bamako, Nairobi, Johannesburg and Cape Town. We did some very difficult decision-making, and although it would have made such an amazing statement to build this museum in Soweto in Johannesburg and it would have fulfilled a very important role for a local community, it would not have engaged with the international community because of where it was located. The transport routes and positioning made it impossible. With Nairobi, the pollution levels were just too high for the preservation of the objects. We simply could not find a way to protect the objects. In Bamako, there were issues of social unrest. So Cape Town ended up being chosen. Zeitz MOCAA is a private-public partnership with the V&A Waterfront representing an investment of about R1.2 billion Rand or about \$120 million U.S. Dollars. We put these funds together in about six weeks, which gives you an idea of the ambition of this community. Some could say, well a \$120 million that is just the budget of mid-size museum in the US but \$120 million dollars in South Africa is a fortune for culture beyond anybody's wildest dreams. You are talking about the entire visual arts cultural budget for South Africa for decades. What I see is a country that is becoming ambitious, a country where people say, "we want to matter" academically, commercially, industrially but also culturally. They are counting on this institution to position Cape Town and South Africa internationally.

**“THE HISTORY OF ART FROM AFRICA HAS  
LARGELY BEEN WRITTEN BY OUTSIDERS,  
WHO HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF THE  
NARRATIVE.”**

I think it is very dangerous to found a museum for the purposes of gentrification because a lot of corporates are hearing of the Guggenheim Bilbao phenomenon, which we all know is not true. That was part of a regional and city planning initiative and the Guggenheim Bilbao was only a small part of it. I think the Guggenheim foundation has sold the Guggenheim Bilbao solution very effectively and often times, as we know, it simply does not work. Museums first open, get into problems, and then they close but that is beside the point. I'll instead be positive.

The grain silos in Cape Town was the tallest building in Africa until 1972. It is situated at the V&A Waterfront, which has 24 million visitors annually and is the most visited tourist site in Africa. This was one of the things that pushed us over the edge in choosing the site. We realised the museum could be in a position to communicate with the world. To a certain extent, the institution

itself has changed the entire market of contemporary art in the region, because we are buying between 80 and 150 pieces some months to build the permanent collection. The public are also committing their private collections, they are making huge cash donations to the endowment and to endow curators, educational programmes, etc. So there is a real confidence in Zeitz MOCAA before it is even built and all the artistic practices around it are suddenly doing better as well. It is driving confidence in the market.

We have commissioned Thomas Heatherwick, who is the British architect, to come up with the design for Zeitz MOCAA. We were worried that we would be criticised for not choosing a local architect but we wanted the museum to be a bridge to the world and to talk to our friends globally. Heatherwick was the best choice and he has come up with an extraordinary solution to cut an atrium out of the grain silo in the shape of a piece of grain. To give you an idea of scale, the atrium is twice the height of the Louvre Pyramid atrium and is closer to the height of the Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern in London. It will give us the possibility of commissioning large-scale, monumental interventions by artists.

This is what the museum will look like in the interior. There are 80 galleries, most of them monumental in scale; 16 education centres, distributed throughout the 80 galleries; there are four independent centres, including a Centre for Curatorial Excellence, a Centre for the Moving Image with five cinemas, the Centre for Performative Practice with four stages and the Costume Institute. There are 3,500 parking spaces underground, so we can allow people to have direct access into the museum, and there is a sculpture garden roof as well as restaurants and coffee shops. All the normal nonsense that you need.

We have been working on Zeitz MOCAA for five and a half years and we have two years to go. The structure is pretty far along and we will open in February 2017. We hope that the institution will become a symbol of all the excellent work that has been happening in Africa. In every talk and every presentation that I give, I try to emphasise that this is not us doing it. This is not Mr. Zeitz and myself saying we are going to build the biggest museum in Africa. Instead it is recognising the extraordinary work that has already happened across the continent, which has been driven by the market. Now we can come in and contribute another layer, creating a public space for this dialogue. We can take the extraordinary work that we see and share it with the world, creating a platform for the exhibition of this work.

Zeitz MOCAA's building, we believe, will be the most iconic architectural

structure in South Africa for the last hundred years. The last iconic buildings that were built in the country were designed by the British architect Sir Herbert Baker, which is a very long time ago. Unfortunately we inherited the death of Modernism, of really ugly, cheaply built high-rise buildings. There is a lot counting on this building from an architectural point of view: it will export African culture, including design and craft, as well as affirm the capabilities and creativity in Africa, and also project a successful, confident, and professional art market to the rest of the world.



AFRICA: THE NEWEST ENTRANT TO THE MARKET

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

**Q.** I would like to know about the role of the artist prior to the commercial gallery system developing. In the 1990s artist initiatives were what was going on in South Africa. The Bag Factory and Triangle Network were the real powerhouses of what was happening. What is their role now in terms of the grassroots activity of the city beyond this commercial gallery system?

**M.C.** I agree with you that for a very long time everything was artist-driven but it was sort of a catch-22 because the Triangle Network across South Africa was very important, including the Bag Factory and Greatmore Studios, but they were run on a very short time period by resident artists. Artists came in for a few months and then left shortly after. We were left as before. I think that

those initiatives were really important during a moment but my opinion is that they are past their sell-by date. It is like the ICA in London: it was so important at a time but I am not sure what its role is anymore and I do not think it has figured it out. And because of a very powerful market you do not necessarily need these charitable support structures to take artists from university through a difficult period before they find a way to produce their work and be successful at it. That time is becoming very compressed. I think that these institutions not being needed anymore is actually great because they did not have the capability to give enough and it was never a long term investment into an artist's career. The engagement was not sustained. Artists who are working now and who are ambitious want studio visits, production budgets, they want to travel and go to the biennales as well as access magazines and publishing. They are no longer happy to be given only a studio.

Those organisations were also unfortunately supported by a kind of outfall of colonialism, via the Goethe Institute, the British Council, the Institut Français and Pro Helvetia. Except for the British Council, these organisations were all part of the department of foreign affairs of European countries. They all have specific agendas. When I worked for PUMAVision, Puma's foundation, before this project, we sponsored the Bamako Encounters, Biennale of African Photography and Bamako Danse, and the artists would complain bitterly about the sponsors constructing African practice according to a specific European agenda. These organisations were of course not only funding but also managing these programmes. I think the artists are a lot more comfortable being slaves to the market than being slaves to the end of European colonialism. I do not know which is the worse master.

**Q.** I find what you are doing very interesting, because you are building an ecosystem from nothing, and you are building an art ecosystem in the 21st century, especially in a very important country in Africa. What I would like to know, when you build an ecosystem like this in South Africa, who are the main leaders, the engine of that ecosystem: is it the artists, is it one collector who decides to become a leader, is it the government? What makes an ecosystem in the beginning work, especially in a country like South Africa?

**M.C.** I can't answer universally your question and I can only answer from my experience. I was in Miami just before Art Basel Miami Beach. One of the reasons why I was asked to go to Miami was because of the idea that Art Basel Miami Beach potentially might happen. Now when you talk to people from Miami everybody would claim that they were the ones who made Art Basel

Miami Beach happen and they were the ones who brought it to Miami. It is amazing how many people take credit for something when it is successful. I remember when it happened it was only a couple of collectors, Samuel Keller and a few people from Art Basel. The first Art Basel Miami Beach was of course cancelled and at the second Art Basel Miami Beach some galleries did not sell well, especially the German galleries, because they brought very ambitious installations. The artwork was conceptual and difficult. It was made out of Styrofoam and sticks. People thought “I’m not going to buy that”. I remember Rosa de la Cruz met with Samuel Keller and she and her children each made a commitment of one million dollars. They walked around with Keller and said “take us to the galleries that have not sold”. They knew that if Art Basel Miami Beach did not work the impact for the city would be enormous. The de la Cruz family walked around and Keller said this gallery had not covered their booth costs, so they asked how much and bought a piece for that amount. So many of the collectors extended themselves in purchases but also in taking on spaces, doing great exhibitions and hiring staff as well as organising parties. The de la Cruz and Rubell families spent millions of dollars to make sure that the art fair worked in Miami. Now of course the community benefit from it greatly: a place that was, somebody used this word yesterday, a ‘cultural desert’ has now become a place that everyone thinks about when we think about visual art practice in America.

Africa has always been a contested territory. Contested by European powers, which as we all know got together on a regular basis to divide up the continent. South Africa was initially a Dutch colony, then we were English, then Dutch, then French for a short period, before the English invaded. Indeed the English had a war with the French because they thought it was too important a landmass to let the French have. The reason I am there is that my family arrived in the 1700s in South Africa. More recently there was a new kind of control and that had to do with academic practices. There were certain curators who took intellectual ownership of the conversations about the continent, who felt that they were the authorities on art in Africa. It was a very complex, identity-driven, intellectualised, post-colonial and theoretical way of approaching the subject. To a large extent it excluded a lot of people from that discourse and reserved it for an academic realm. That was then usurped by the commercial sector. Who is driving it right now? I don’t think anybody, to be honest. It is the same thing that happened in Miami: collectors that would not talk to each other got together to plan and figure out how to make Art Basel Miami Beach a successful.

What we are doing with the institution and with Mr. Zeitz is very exciting

because it has been very co-operative. It is a very co-operative system where the collectors, the gallerists, the curators and everyone else involved are working together to make it happen. Everyone is saying to me that Zeitz MOCAA might be the final driver that focuses people's attention on South Africa and Africa's visual art cultural wealth. This is of course a very dangerous position for Mr. Zeitz and I to be in because it means that we might mess up very publically, but it is what it is. I would rather try to do it and make mistakes, rather than not try at all. Initially a lot was happening under the radar but now we have positioned Zeitz MOCAA very publically, so how it is realised and who the drivers are will be seen and can be critiqued. We are of course still in a honeymoon phase, where everybody is excited about what is happening. The journalists have been very responsible considering that academic writing about art in Africa can be very critical. If you recall Robert Storr curated the 52nd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 2007 and worked with a private collector from Angola. The mudslinging and attacks that erupted between Okwui Enwezor and Robert Storr and a whole bevy of others as a result of this was beyond extreme. I mean it was one bloody pavilion! Thankfully, that has not started to happen with this project unless it is happening behind my back and nobody wants to tell me. Important journalists understand the process that is involved. They first discuss and understand the project before tearing it apart as opposed to the academic art world where there is the threat of invading a scholar's territory. If you are moving into an area of discourse controlled by a scholar what does it say about their position? They then attack you. It is a honeymoon right now and in a honeymoon everyone is happy.

**Q.** Maybe it has to do with the honeymoon but I had the opportunity to be living in St. Petersburg, Russia when it was still Leningrad. I was living with these artists when all the international museum people came parading with a lot of money and bought a lot of work. I have seen artists who were film stars and people who did something completely different become artists. They catered for the guy from the Guggenheim or the Pompidou. They were preoccupied precisely with the money. Every time people came, there was a huge party and they made the work the evening before. Some of the artists exhibited became quite successful but nowadays you do not hear anything about them. I am not saying this is happening in South Africa but...

**M.C.** You will not get this phenomenon in South Africa and Africa and let me tell you why. I actually mentioned it earlier. It is because there is an incredibly rigorous system in place that prevents shit from getting through. Before the end of Apartheid, artwork did not get through because there was no financial

viability in being an artist. There was no prestige and you got no power or any parties. You simply didn't get anything for being an artist, gallerist or curator. So for a long time there was a practice that was rigorous, very 'authentic' and 'hard-core' in a way. The art world still has the rigour that was developed during this time through the academic system, the gallery system, all these layers that filter artists and artwork. In fact I lectured in St. Petersburg for many years at Smolny College and what is happening in South Africa is unlike what we have seen in China or in Russia, where it is a free-for-all and all hell broke loose. Somehow because of our separation from the rest of the world we have developed a very rigorous system. I think the danger is that the system is too rigorous. It might actually not allow artists and artwork to filter up. One of the things I am realising is that the scene in South Africa is also very self-referential, looking too much inside and not outwards enough. I do not think there is a fear of what happened in Russia happening in South Africa. Indeed it is exactly the opposite. Perhaps the international art world that comes might be thrown by how 'hard-core' the artists are. They simply do not take shit and do not put up with being 'kissy kissy' to make a sale. It is not a part of their psyche though it might happen as we go forward as the market becomes stronger. I am impressed with the artists who have stayed. For example, William Kentridge could have made fortunes anywhere in the world but he made a commitment to South Africa. As the art market develops, I am sure we are going to see the Art Basel Miami Beach phenomenon where the parties become so out of control that the real artists, if there is such a thing, become lost in the fray. I made a comment yesterday about the art weekends in Miami becoming so successful that nobody who really loved art would go because you were lost in the craziness of the parties. Also these brands came in and started doing pop-up exhibitions that were not even art. In South Africa we have not seen this yet.

**Q.** I am intrigued that you have not talked about Lagos. Is that because you see it as a sort of enemy centre? You have been talking about money here and there is certainly a lot of that in Lagos as well as a lot of energy. You mentioned considering four different centres but you did not choose Lagos as one of them.

**M.C.** Bisi Silva is my hero and what is happening in Lagos and Nigeria and their relationship with the Tate Modern is extraordinary. What Elvira is doing is extraordinary. We wanted to do something that could have as much impact as possible. Why do we need to replicate something that is already happening? I recall asking Mr. Zeitz about why he was interested in building a museum and he said to me: "Mark, I want to do something that matters". He is German,

lives in Switzerland and has homes all over the world. He says “if I do this in Germany it would not matter.” I have the utmost respect for what is happening in Lagos and to a large extent the group connected to Nigeria are going to be my teachers. I will have to listen to the guidance of people like Bisi Silva, Okwui Enwezor and Simon Njami. There is no competition at all. If anything, it is what they have achieved that gave us the confidence to believe that we could also contribute something.





## **Dorsey Waxter**

Dorsey Waxter is a Partner at Van Doren Waxter, located in New York City's Upper East Side. She is also the current President of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA). Her career began as a gallery assistant at the Nancy Hoffman Gallery in 1974. After three years, she transitioned to the André Emmerich Gallery, contributing to the gallery's specialisation in New York colour - field and post - World War II abstraction. In 1991, she established Dorsey Waxter Fine Art, Inc., advising clients and representing prominent estates. Ms. Waxter then became Director of Greenberg Van Doren Gallery in 1998, which became Van Doren Waxter in 2013. The gallery's roster of artists and estates includes some of the most influential artists of the 20th and 21st centuries.

## **Harald Falckenberg**

President of the Kunstverein in Hamburg since 1998. He studied law in Freiburg, Berlin and Hamburg and has worked since 1979 as the General Manager of a company in the petrol business. Since 1987, he has been an honorary judge at the Hamburg Constitutional Court. In 2008, Falckenberg was appointed Professor of Art Theory at the Academy of Art in Hamburg. The Falckenberg Collection of contemporary art, consisting of over 2,000 works, is shown at the Deichtorhallen Hamburg exhibition centre, a 62,000 square feet former factory building in Hamburg. Falckenberg has written numerous essays on art and artists, which are collected in the anthologies 'Ziviler Ungehorsam' (Civil Disobedience), 2002, and 'Aus dem Maschinenraum der Kunst' (From the Engine Room of Art), 2007. He was honoured with the Art Cologne Preis (2009) and the Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award (2011).

## **Alistair Hicks**

Curator and art historian. He is currently Senior Curator and Art Advisor to the Deutsche Bank Collection, the largest corporate art collection in the world, with 55,000 works, and sponsors of the Frieze Art Fair. He has been an art critic for diverse publications such as 'The Spectator', 'The Times and Vogue'. He has written several books: 'Art Works: British and German Contemporary Art 1960-2000' (2001), 'The School of London: the resurgence of contemporary painting' (1989) and 'New British Art in the Saatchi Collection', (1989). His 21st survey, 'Global Art Compass', was published by Thames and Hudson in 2014.

## **Guy Jennings**

In 1980, he joined Christie's in London after studying Modern History and History of Art at The Trinity College, Oxford. In 1986, he published the book 'Impressionist Painters' and in 1988 a monograph on Renoir. He has been Senior Director of Christie's and Head of Impressionist and Modern Art in France and Deputy Chairman of Christie's Switzerland, responsible for European Impressionist and Modern Art. In 1999, Guy left Christie's to become Deputy Chairman of Sotheby's Europe. In 2012 he returned to Christie's, working in New York as Deputy Chairman of Impressionist and Modern Paintings. He has also worked as a private dealer in London, running his own business. He has wide ranging experience of the international art market in both Europe and America from the perspective of auction sales, as well as private treaty sales. He is currently Managing Director of The Fine Art Fund Group, which specialises in art advisory and art investment services.

# **NEW ROLES IN THE ART MARKET: HOW CURATORS, ART ADVISORS, INVESTORS AND ART FUNDS HAVE IMPACTED THE MARKETPLACE**

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## **MODERATOR**

Dorsey Waxter

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Harald Falckenberg, Alistair Hicks, Guy Jennings

## **CONCEPTS**

Art funds, art value, prices, quality, time, collectors, investors, galleries, personal contact, art circuit, art fairs, art as an asset.



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# NEW ROLES IN THE ART MARKET: HOW CURATORS, ART ADVISORS, INVESTORS AND ART FUNDS HAVE IMPACTED THE MARKETPLACE.

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## DORSEY WAXTER (D.W.)

The topic of this panel is the 'new roles in the art market', which we will analyse from the gallery perspective and look at how curators, art advisors, investors and art funds have impacted the marketplace. The panellists in this session have had a long professional life whether as curators, collectors, advisors or investors, and all offer a different perspective in their interactions with galleries in the marketplace. Guy, from your experience, what does a fund accomplish? Is it solely a mechanism for making money?

## GUY JENNINGS (G.J.)

To answer to your first question, I think we have accomplished an awful lot by being the only art fund that is still going after 14 years of existence. We have made people understand that art is really a viable and *bona fide* asset class. While that might seem quite narrow, I think the broader aspect of that is extremely important to all collectors, curators, museums and institutions around the world.

To answer your second question, no, it is not a solid mechanism for making money, it is more complicated than that, but our investors clearly are looking to make money in the longer term. A lot of them also use the art fund as a diversification, as a way of placing money as a hedge against other markets. The art fund serves as a residual repository of value as well as a means of making money. Although this is not the sole perspective of the art fund.

## D.W.

There is an old saying that art is easy to buy and hard to sell. Is that true in your experience?

**“THE ART FUND SERVES AS A RESIDUAL REPOSITORY OF VALUE AS WELL AS A MEANS OF MAKING MONEY. ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT THE SOLE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ART FUND.”**

**G.J.**

It is very easy to spend a great deal of money on art very quickly. But value resides essentially in three elements: price, quality and time. If the price is right in the proper market, the quality is good and you are not in a hurry, that is what value resides in.

**D.W.**

Are you looking for new works or works that are undervalued either in the primary market or in the secondary market? Where do you think there is value but it is untapped?

**“VALUE RESIDES ESSENTIALLY IN THREE ELEMENTS: PRICE, QUALITY AND TIME. IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT IN THE PROPER MARKET, THE QUALITY IS GOOD AND YOU ARE NOT IN A HURRY, THAT IS WHAT VALUE RESIDES IN.”**

**G.J.**

We deal on both the primary and secondary market. On the secondary market, we are looking for artworks that are available for a little less than the current market value. Maybe supporting an artist that we feel is not fully appreciated at the moment but thinking this could give dividends in the future. In the primary market we are looking at young artists, we are trying to figure out who the really good ones are.

**D.W.**

Then, are you buying artists in depth or are you diversifying and trying to buy many artists from different periods?

**G.J.**

We are doing both. Some of our funds have masters from the 19th century and we have other funds that concentrate on the last 10 or 15 years. In those areas we have built holdings in one or two painters, so yes we are buying in depth.

**D.W.**

I read a little bit about art funds and it appears that your fund in particular

has longevity and has had tremendous success. How do you think that has happened? Do you take lessons from funds that did not succeed?

**G.J.**

We have learned our own lessons along the way, made our own mistakes and watched other people make mistakes. For instance, the Fernwood Fund did not succeed: it collapsed after a great sum of money was raised and its founder spent all the money to travel the world. Nevertheless, we have made mistakes, but we can say that of the 80 objects that we have bought for the fund, only four of the 60 that we sold were purchased for less than what we paid for them.

**D.W.**

Alistair, would you describe your role as a curator for the bank as well as an advisor to Deutsche Bank clients? How do you manage these two profiles that are quite different?

**ALISTAIR HICKS (A.H.)**

They are very different roles. My job as one of the eight curators of the Deutsche Bank collection is very much showing that the bank is more than about money. We are trying to buy right across the board at a very relatively low level of under \$1,500 dollars per item on average. under \$1,500 dollars per item. The vast majority of contemporary art does not have a secondary value and what the press looks at and what most people perceive is the art. Our world is just a tiny percentage of what is going on. Concerning my role as an advisor, I should say there is a misconception that genuine art advisory is on the financial side, whereas this does not happen unless we have a contract with the clients. Hence, 99% of the times I am giving advice as a senior curator giving them the background information of what is happening. They are very astute, all they want is the gossip, the background information and someone to bounce ideas off.

**D.W.**

Do you make a conscious decision about where to seek out art for the collection or is it more a matter of convenience according to the art calendar? After reading your book 'The Global Art Compass' it appears that you are on the plane more than you are on the ground.

**“THERE IS A MISCONCEPTION THAT GENUINE ART ADVISORY IS ON THE FINANCIAL SIDE, WHEREAS THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN UNLESS WE HAVE A CONTRACT WITH THE CLIENTS.”**

**A.H.**

I think that the Internet is a very useful tool for looking at works online. But my feeling, as a curator and an advisor, is that we should not get in the way of the process of art. It is all about change and if you are into that role model, you have to keep on looking.

**D.W.**

Deutsche Bank has been the lead partner of Frieze since 2004. Have the galleries relinquished their identity to the art fair organisers?

**A.H.**

I see a lot of art fairs and they play an important role but, I do not like to look at art in art fairs. Mainly I use art fairs as centres. For example, while travelling to cities like Istanbul and Moscow, I get to visit many artists studios through friends that are collectors and gallerists. This does not mean I will see works of art that I am interested in, but it is very useful for us.

**D.W.**

Guy and Alistair, how big is the role that galleries play in the acquisition of works for the collection and for the clients of the bank? If you acquire a work from the primary market, do you go back to that gallery when you are in the process of selling?

**G.J.**

We work closely with one or two galleries in London. When they present a painter or an artist they have had for some time, we make an arrangement and underwrite that sale. This serves two purposes: one, it means the artist is confident of some sales very early on; and two, the gallery is probably covering the costs of the exhibition. The *quid pro quo* is that when we deem our holding period to have matured, we go back to the gallery. So the deal is that we would not sell on to the secondary market through an auction or sell it directly to private collectors or through another gallery. We would go back to that same gallery. So we actually develop long term relationships with galleries that we think there is a future with and which have long term value.



**“THE QUID PRO QUO IS THAT WHEN WE DEEM OUR HOLDING PERIOD TO HAVE MATURED, WE GO BACK TO THE GALLERY. SO THE DEAL IS THAT WE WOULD NOT SELL ON TO THE SECONDARY MARKET THROUGH AN AUCTION OR SELL IT DIRECTLY TO PRIVATE COLLECTORS OR THROUGH ANOTHER GALLERY. WE WOULD GO BACK TO THAT SAME GALLERY.”**

**A.H.**

In our case, we hardly sell at all. Until about eight years ago, we had a policy of not selling. Thus, we are not buying with the thought of selling. We do have a policy to buy from primary sources rather than secondary ones. And the idea is that we support the artists. Galleries are incredibly important to us and they are our main source of works.

**D.W.**

Harald, you have a really different role to play in the art world. From your experience as an entrepreneur and businessman, are there any lessons that you can give to galleries?

**HARALD FALCKENBERG (H.F.)**

The point here would be how to deal with the market, bearing in mind that the market is most important for galleries. It is clear that since 2012 we have had a market with extremely high prices, as well as a very good market for low-priced art. But my impression is that gallerists do not react quickly enough to the art market.

The market has become cruel for the gallerists and cruel for the artists. Many gallerists seem to look forward only to the next art fair to sell the best works. So there is an enormous pressure and they do not have enough time for their original job.

I started to collect art when the market was really down in 1994. Artists got together to help each other, there was a good relationship between the galleries, and gallerists came to the collections. In the last seven years hardly any gallerists has come to my museum. This is a shock and it reflects the art system of today. My advice would be to reduce the number of fairs. Do not go to Hong Kong and the like but try to go to regional ones where you can make good relationships with young collectors and the people there.

**D.W.**

This is very pertinent with the recent announcement of your collaboration with the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg. Does that have to do with recentring your art in a more public fashion, where people can access it in a place that you care about?

**H.F.**

I felt a responsibility to make the art I collect open to the public. I do not see art according to the criteria of beauty and aesthetics; I see art as the mirror of society. So if I collect art that is near to society, that decries certain situations in society, I have to make it public and look further to see what to do with the collection. Thus, I searched for a public solution in my hometown, Hamburg, and I now collaborate with an exhibition house. I am very happy that there are shows not only featuring my collection, but shows in the museum or the exhibition rooms that contain my collection. I am very happy that my collection is living in this way. If this continues this way until 2023, then I could make a decision.

**“THE MARKET HAS BECOME CRUEL FOR THE GALLERISTS AND CRUEL FOR THE ARTISTS. MANY GALLERISTS SEEM TO LOOK FORWARD ONLY TO THE NEXT ART FAIR TO SELL THE BEST WORKS. SO THERE IS AN ENORMOUS PRESSURE AND THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME FOR THEIR ORIGINAL JOB.”**

**D.W.**

I would like to open a discussion about the future of galleries in the sense of the traditional model of the bricks-and-mortar space that is run by a dealer. In this time of hyper-competitiveness, what can galleries do better, especially the medium to small-size dealers?

**G.J.**

I think the model that grew in the 1970s, 80s and 90s is no longer appropriate. Galleries nowadays have to be faster on their feet and more receptive to their local communities. Perhaps I am not the one to answer this, but a whole range of communication must be the future. The electronic media, e-mailing, Facebook and Twitter are the future.

**“I DO NOT SEE ART ACCORDING TO THE  
CRITERIA OF BEAUTY AND AESTHETICS; I  
SEE ART AS THE MIRROR OF SOCIETY. SO IF  
I COLLECT ART THAT IS NEAR TO SOCIETY,  
THAT DECRIES CERTAIN SITUATIONS IN  
SOCIETY, I HAVE TO MAKE IT PUBLIC AND  
LOOK FURTHER TO SEE WHAT TO DO WITH  
THE COLLECTION.”**

**A.H.**

Interestingly, we have been discussing a similar problem within the Deutsche Bank concepts: where and which parts, which offices have been responding to art, etc. We have lots of systems, everything is online, we have different art stations, etc. Our art concept is about making a more stimulating working environment and engaging with the community, and this only works when we get support from the staff in those areas. We are most successful when we as curators and the artists engage and collaborate together. So my advice to gallerists is they have got to talk more to people.

**“WE ARE MOST SUCCESSFUL WE AS  
CURATORS AND THE ARTISTS ENGAGE AND  
COLLABORATE TOGETHER.. SO MY ADVICE  
TO GALLERISTS IS THEY HAVE GOT TO TALK  
MORE TO PEOPLE.”**

**H.F.**

I would like to add that if we look at the development of art fairs since Art Cologne in 1967 and Art Basel in 1969, at that time fairs were exclusively for galleries and they excluded dealers, but nowadays, all dealers are in the fairs. I do not know if the difference is clear.

**D.W.**

Can you elaborate on the difference you are talking about?

**H.F.**

Galleries are a rather recent product after World War II. They have supported artists in building their careers and have controlled the prices. This would be the ideal, but the traditional model for the art dealer is to try to get the highest price for the work. Therefore, I advise small galleries to be in the secondary market: as the global market cannot produce enough primary works, the secondary market has become more and more important.

**G.J.**

I think it is not a post-WWII phenomenon, as this idea has been around for some time. On the other hand, I think there is a valid distinction between those who support young artists, emerging artists or even mature artists and those in the secondary market who are churning and moving things for the sake of moving them. It is all about the action, there is no concern for the development of the artist and the painter as an individual and as something valuable to society. They are missing the point that the artist has a function within society. That function is multifaceted and it can and should be about aesthetics and about beauty, but it is also about reflecting their society and about being critic – positive or negative – of that society.

**A.H.**

I disagree with Harald that there is not enough art to fill the primary art market. It is a matter of perspective: if you look globally you can see there is so much primary art out there. But when it comes to younger gallerists and the way they are overworked, they should focus on how they are going to nurture their artists, how they can get them into the right places, and they should be visiting collectors like yourself, etc. That is a very valid bond.

**“I ADVISE SMALL GALLERIES TO BE IN THE SECONDARY MARKET: AS THE GLOBAL MARKET CANNOT PRODUCE ENOUGH PRIMARY WORKS, THE SECONDARY MARKET HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT.”**

**H.F.**

What I meant was that there is not enough good art or acknowledged art. Globalisation forces you to work fast, and no gallerist knows if an artist will be forgotten in a few years. So that is the problem. The art market also implies that you have to develop a name and a style. You must not underestimate the name as a factor in the market.

**G.J.**

The issue here is the increased commercialisation and the great pressure artists are under to be successful quickly. I mean, Matisse did not have anything that was worth looking at until he reached the age of 40. Nowadays, artists are taught to commercialise themselves and if they are not successful by the age of 25, they feel they have failed. What an artist needs is a gallerist with a sense of perspective who can allow that artist to mature and to develop.

**D.W.**

From the point of view of the smaller and midsize galleries as opposed to the top-tier or the mega-galleries, how do galleries connect? We have the Internet, art fairs and all kinds of things that take us to different places. But what about the galleries? This is a really hard thing to manage these days. I would be interested to hear how often you go to galleries. When do you go to gallery you have never been to before?

**A.H.**

Not often enough in my case, although it is my job to look at galleries, to sit down and decide what galleries to go to. The galleries are usually the best place to see the work apart from the studios.

**“WHEN IT COMES TO THE YOUNGER  
GALLERISTS AND THE WAY THEY ARE  
OVERWORKED, THEY SHOULD FOCUS  
ON HOW THEY ARE GOING TO NURTURE  
THEIR ARTISTS, HOW THEY CAN GET THEM  
IN INTO THE RIGHT PLACES, AND THEY  
SHOULD BE VISITING COLLECTORS”**

**D.W.**

So you go to the Internet to look for a list of some sort.

**A.H.**

Yes, a list of what is going on, and that slightly depresses me.

**D.W.**

But it is interesting to know how you source information.

**G.J.**

I source it rather differently. I like the underground and word of mouth, so I do not spend much time on the Internet or looking at magazines and other print media. I think it is word of mouth where the best opportunities can be found.

**H.F.**

I go to the openings in Hamburg and in Berlin, but I would rather talk to gallerists than being disturbed by the openings. I like to go to art fairs, such as Art Basel, because you can move more freely. Naturally my purchases take place mainly in galleries and art fairs. I avoid buying from Christie's or Sotheby's for many reasons.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE.

**Q.** Apart from the pressure on young artists, artists themselves also put extreme pressure on galleries to participate in all the fairs. If they do not, these artists might consider going to a bigger gallery in order to maximise exposure and opportunities. Is this going to spin out of control or is it slowing down the solution? Is there still a way to find quality in this?

**G.J.** I think one can look at this in parallel to record labels, how they would sign up pop stars and promote them. This is actually being superseded now in the music market: record labels are actually dead and artists are going straight to the market. It is possible that what we have seen in the music publishing business will be repeated in the art world.

**H.F.** Are artists victims or predators? I do not see them as victim and I think that nowadays they do what they want. There are more and more artists who see that the quality of their work will be better if they do not follow that path. I know artists who prefer to do two shows a year so they can take longer to make their artworks and offer more.

**“RECORD LABELS ARE ACTUALLY DEAD  
AND ARTISTS ARE GOING STRAIGHT TO THE  
MARKET. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WHAT WE HAVE  
SEEN IN THE MUSIC PUBLISHING BUSINESS  
WILL BE REPEATED IN THE ART WORLD.”**

**G.J.** That is a privilege usually born of success: once they have achieved a certain status, then they can afford to do that.

**H.F.** If one artist is not strong enough, he should work with others in a group. And that also refers to galleries: why do they not look for collaborations in other towns and exchange programmes? It is logical. In the early 90s there were so many collaborations with artists, and when success returned, these collaborations just disappeared. The artists fought for themselves and their own success.

**Q.** It was interesting to hear Guy describe art as a *bona fide* asset class. But as you are the last man standing, I would like to know how that can be true. Is art not a bit more complicated than that?

**“IF ONE ARTIST IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH, HE SHOULD WORK WITH OTHERS IN A GROUP. AND THAT ALSO REFERS TO GALLERIES: WHY DO THEY NOT LOOK FOR COLLABORATIONS IN OTHER TOWNS AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES? IT IS LOGICAL.”**

**G.J.** It certainly is more complicated than that. An asset class is a financial description rather than an artistic description, so it is something born of the City rather than of the West End, speaking in London terms. The increase in money, trading, volumes and liquidity is what has rendered art an asset class, as well as the increased awareness amongst people who want to collect art and decide to own art. So it is actually two phenomena working from different sides and meeting in the middle.

**Q.** Georgina mentioned a point about funds and how they store their art. But we did not mention the responsibility of collectors and funds to promote these artists by loaning their works and making them available. Galleries have been loaning works that are not for sale to group exhibitions, thereby playing the part of museums. How do you see the collaboration between your collections and private galleries to promote the artists and help with their careers?

**A.H.** Our policy since 1970 is not to endorse artists. Instead, we are trying to give them a platform across the board. But our policy is to try to collaborate more and more with other institutions, including galleries. Now the debate amongst us curators is to find inventive ways of working with other people in the market to support artists that we have bought.

**H.F.** For me it is naturally part of my system to assist the artists that are likely to be shown in public. The question is really not only for the artworks but for the whole art system.

**G.J.** When we buy works of art as a long-term investment for our funds, we think about whether museums would be interested in borrowing these works. During the holding time of the fund, we try to place our pictures in museums so they can also be available to the public.

**Q.** You have been talking about purchases for the art fund. Can you tell us about selling? When do you decide to sell?

**G.J.** We monitor the market regularly to observe its changes, evolutions and developments. We sell through a variety of different outlets, often in partnership with the galleries that we have already worked with, who can offer us recommendation of when to sell. We also sell through secondary galleries, at auctions and privately. As holders of assets, we have to try to maximise the sale on each object.

**Q.** Harald said that the same problem that you see in terms of artists you now see replicated even in art fairs and galleries. This is a phenomenon where everybody wants everything at the same time and people have nowhere to look. My question is how can that be changed?

**H.F.** Collaborate more and talk to people, not only to collectors but to directors, institutions and so on.

**G.J.** I think it is about communication. I still feel convinced – in my ignorance – that it is the new media, the electronic media and the digital age that will make a radical change to the bricks-and-mortar galleries of the next 10 or 15 years.

**Q.** Guy, how many persons are interested in the art fund and how many persons have invested in it? Do you not think that it is a kind of mirror illusion of today to consider the art market as a real market? The art market is very small. Do you think you can expand the number of people and financial funds in the art market?

**G.J.** We have \$350 million under management in various different funds that represent 125 investors. These numbers are very small in comparison with what the head fund might have under management, approximately over \$3 billion. We are tiny in the grand scheme of things, just as the art market is small in the grand scheme of things. The art market moves \$65 billion, which is quite small in comparison to the oil market, the securities market, etc. We are kind of looking at a microcosm of the whole world economy when we are looking at the art market. Nevertheless, it is the world we are in and it is the world we are here to debate.





## **Sylvain Levy**

Contemporary Chinese art collector and visiting professor at Shanghai University in charge of the Art and Management Master. The Dslcollection, founded by Sylvain and Dominique Levy, is an art collection that embraces the discovery, study and promotion of Chinese contemporary artistic and cultural production, be it paintings, sculpture, video art, installations or new media art. The key factors that differentiate the Dslcollection are its unique acquisition policy and its use of the latest technology. Through technology, the collection is able to achieve greater visibility upon which to build a strong personality of its own. The ultimate goal is to create a sustainable identity for the collection within the international art world that is truly distinctive and not tied to its founding members.

## **Maria Marques**

Communications specialist and Director at Brunswick Arts, a leading international communications consultancy specialising in the arts and culture. Marques graduated from Oxford University with a firstclass degree in Modern Languages. Since joining Brunswick Arts in 2008, she has worked with major cultural institutions, including the British Museum, the Louvre and the Qatar Museums, and has overseen highprofile PR campaigns for international art events such as the Armory Show in New York, the Sharjah Biennial and several national pavilions at the Venice Biennale. She has also advised corporate and financial organisations on developing strategic partnerships with the art sector. Prior to joining Brunswick, Marques worked in the outreach and publications departments of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice.

## **Calum Sutton**

Calum Sutton is one of the world's leading arts communication specialists and has helped build some of the most prestigious global art brands, including Art Basel and Frieze Art Fair. He opened Sutton PR in 2006. Since 2012, he has been President and CEO of Sutton PR in London and New York and of Sutton PR Asia, based in Hong Kong. Clients include many of the world's leading art fairs, biennales, commercial galleries, festivals, institutions, museums, nonprofit organisations and corporate supporters of the arts. Prior to setting up the agency, he was Head of Communications for Charles Saatchi and the Saatchi Gallery and was previously the Press Officer at Tate Modern. Calum has a background in Art History, with a degree from University College London followed by an MA at the Courtauld Institute of Art. He is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

# HOW TO MAKE COMMUNICATIONS MORE EFFECTIVE AND YOUR MESSAGE HEARD IN THE CROWD

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## **MODERATOR**

Sylvain Levy

## **SPEAKERS**

Maria Marques, Calum Sutton

## **CONCEPTS**

Offline communication, Internet, target audience, social media, identity, branding, budgets personal contact, updated communication channels, gallery database.

PANEL DISCUSSION

TALKING  
GALLERIES

HOW TO MAKE COMMUNICATIONS MORE EFFECTIVE  
AND YOUR MESSAGE HEARD IN THE CROWD

Importance of arriving to your audience, learning strategies to filter information and cutting across the noise.

Moderator:

**Sylvain Levy**, Professor at Shanghai Univ. art collector specialist in Chinese Contemporary Art, DSLcollection, Paris.

Speakers:

**Maria Marques**, communications specialist, Director Brunswick Arts, London.

**Calum Sutton**, communications specialist, founder and CEO at Sutton PR, London.



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# HOW TO MAKE COMMUNICATIONS MORE EFFECTIVE AND YOUR MESSAGE HEARD IN THE CROWD

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## **SYLVAIN LEVY (S.L.)**

We have come to the conclusion that we live in a changing world because of the market and the digital environment. Because of globalisation, many of us ask ourselves how we can survive, how we can adapt to this new changing world or reinvent ourselves. I think that one of the ways to do it is communication. It is becoming more and more important to build our own identity and the way we want others to see us. But how can midsize and small galleries have a voice in such a noisy world?

I have chosen several topics to discuss on this panel to show that communication is very important. Let us start with branding. Artists are becoming brands, collectors are becoming brands, etc. I would like to know a bit more about this idea and how it can be useful and applied to small galleries. Maria, what is a brand?

## **MARIA MARQUES (M.M.)**

Very simply, a brand is a clearly articulated identity. Any brand has a core set of values and these come across time and again in the content you communicate. Eventually you create what we call brand recognition. Although in the art world we tend to shy away from the word brand because we like to think of our experiences as more unique and bespoke, it really is just a way of saying something has a clearly-defined identity.

## **CALUM SUTTON (C.S.)**

I would agree with Maria: the most visual part of a brand is identity. The name, the logo and the form lead to what the brand stands for, clearly defined key messages or values. When you look at that name or that symbol, you immediately think of those four or five things that the brand stands for.

**S.L.**

Do you think that small galleries and small entities need to have a brand?

**C.S.**

Yes, but I do not see brands as a bad thing, personally. The idea that it is possible to operate a business without a brand is very difficult. No brand is a brand position these days. Home galleries can have success with that.

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ARTICULATED IDENTITY. ANY BRAND HAS  
A CORE SET OF VALUES AND THESE COME  
ACROSS TIME AND AGAIN IN THE CONTENT  
YOU COMMUNICATE.”**

**M.M.**

I agree and in addition I would say that if we accept that a brand is essentially another word for identity, anyone who is communicating with external audiences – whether that is a wider public or just collector groups and museum professionals – needs to have a clearly defined identity because there is no way people can recognise and remember you otherwise.

**C.S.**

I could not agree more. It is about being memorable. Thinking about the case of Edward Winkleman, he has a brand, he has got a blog, he has published a book, he stands out from the crowd, he is fantastic. To me it means that he has built an intellectual brand that separates him from the crowd.

**S.L.**

If we look back in history to see where the word ‘brand’ comes from, it was firstly used to identify the hot branding iron employed to distinguish cattle ownership in the past. We have not invented the word. But today it is perhaps used in a different way. What should the core of the identification of a small gallery be in terms of branding? Should it be any different to one used by a big institution?

**C.S.**

You work with what you have and who you are, your individual history, the building that you operate from, the people you work with, your intellectual background, etc. It is no different to what museums or major institutions do, you are just working on a smaller scale.

**M.M.**

I think very limited resources are a reality, but I do not think a gallery is necessarily competing with institutions: they have distinct yet complementary roles. People come to a gallery for different experiences and insight than they would go to a museum for.

**S.L.**

With regard to the brand, what in your view is the content of a brand other than the visual aspect? Apart from the logo, what content should be added to the brand for midsize and small galleries?

**C.L.**

From my experience of growing my own business, I started with a business card, by using colours and letters I turned my name into a brand, my own brand. The website is considered the primary tool, the gateway to the world for every art gallery. It is where you will place your values and messages to put forward your approach to the world: why you are different and interesting, what you believe in, etc. That should be coming across from your website even visually. Ultimately, it is the main platform that allows you to make clear statements about the causes/things you stand for: your intellectual approach, your approach to putting on exhibitions, your approach to art fairs, to working with collectors and building collections, etc.

**“THE WEBSITE IS CONSIDERED THE PRIMARY TOOL, THE GATEWAY TO THE WORLD FOR EVERY ART GALLERY. IT IS WHERE YOU WILL PLACE YOUR VALUES AND MESSAGES TO PUT FORWARD YOUR APPROACH TO THE WORLD.”**

**M.M.**

The point of the website is interesting, because to an extent we could argue that nothing is a substitute for building personal relationships, particularly when you are looking at the world of a gallerist. However people will still look at your website as a form of validation. Even if you have made a positive first impression, people will still look you up and check if what they see online matches that first impression. The key it is not to neglect that, even if we feel that much of what we do is about personal relationships and building trust.

**S.L.**

Do you think that most of the websites today are adapted to the way people

connect to art? Today people connect to art with smartphones and social networks. Do websites need to be adjusted to this new tendency as well as their content? Today is very important not only to put together a website, but also to think about how you are going to use it.

**M.M.**

This is a key point, knowing your audiences and who you are trying to address, be it through your website or any other channel of communication. I think you need to be as knowledgeable as you can about the people you are trying to address and how they consume information because this will really inform your approach.

If you are going to have a sophisticated website, it needs to be perfectly executed. You need to have the resources to build and maintain it, which may not always be realistic for a small gallery. In fact it is a challenge for most galleries.

**“THE INFORMATION NEEDS TO BE  
CONSISTENT BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT  
CHANNELS THAT YOU ARE USING. THERE IS  
NO POINT IN HAVING THESE CHANNELS IF  
YOU ARE NOT KEEPING THEM REGULARLY  
UPDATED WITH INTERESTING CONTENTS.”**

**C.S.**

It is extraordinary how nowadays we have free tools such as the social media channels to build our online presence. Alongside the website, they are a very cost effective way to get your message across. But the information needs to be consistent between the different channels that you are using. There is no point in having these channels if you are not keeping them regularly updated with interesting contents. If you do not have activity it would suggest that you have no interest in the audience. Ideally, the gallery should communicate daily or at least on a weekly basis. This requires a commitment to be involved and to set a communication plan.

**S.L.**

The last question on branding. When somebody comes to you, is there any kind of key performance indicators that you can establish about branding?

**M.M.**

It is very difficult to measure brand recognition in numbers. But if someone



comes to us saying: “I feel I am not getting my message across”, we usually carry out what we call a perception audit. It is not scientific, but it really helps understand the perception of a particular organisation by asking a cross section of their target audiences. We analyse the feedback and compare it to how that organisation thinks about itself and what it stands for. Sometimes there is a big disparity and there is a lot of work to be done.

**C.S.**

That is industry best practice, I agree.

**S.L.**

Now that we have talked about the message, I would like to move on to the tools we should use. For a long time we relied on offline traditional tools, such as advertising, events and printed material; today new digital tools are used to communicate. What is the importance of online and offline communication? Which tools are more effective?

**C.S.**

Both are very important, they need to be consistent and work together. It is not enough to see it in print; it is about maximising its presence online. The online platform can have links to your website or your social media profiles, increasing the impact of the information. It is wonderful to have things in the real world, but it all needs to stay very closely in line with the Internet, which gives a global audience 24/7, allowing you to present your own story largely through this self-publishing channel.

**M.M.**

Social networks provide a huge opportunity to get your message across and reach your audiences. The beauty of these networks is that you can gauge the response to programming, exhibitions, initiatives or whatever you choose to share online pretty much instantly. Although you cannot measure it precisely, you can get direct feedback and see the impact that you are having.

But you should not just think of these channels as a way to promote your activity. There are a lot of conversations taking place on these channels; people are talking about things they care about. From your vantage point, as a gallerist who has a close relationship with artists, you may have something interesting to contribute to these discussions. It is not just about informing people you have an opening, but also about joining the conversation.

**S.L.**

Do you think all of this can be done in-house or do people need peer companies to help them establish the model?

**M.M.**

I think much of this can be done in-house. You can train your staff to manage your channels and it can be a cost-effective way of doing it when you have limited resources. Where I think it makes sense to work with an external agency is when you are struggling to find a clear identity and need to understand where you sit within a noisy environment. I think it helps having someone who is external and who is familiar with your context because it is quite difficult for you to know how others see you. But if you have someone who helps you craft your core story and develop a strategy, maybe you are then in a position to implement it yourself. It may be more realistic and cost effective than having an agency manage your social media channels, for example.

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SELF-PUBLISHING CHANNEL.”**

**C.S.**

I am quite keen on the personality-driven social media: they tell you about their interests, where in the world they are, what is going on with them. If there is a way for gallery owners to carve out some time in their travels, in their visits to artists' studios and in their preparations for exhibitions, then I think that is fantastic content I would want to see. It would help to build that personal story that people can relate to, follow and get excited about. I think that there should be someone in the gallery whose job is focused half of the time on communications. One of the things that the gallery does best for its artists is to communicate them to the world. In my opinion, it should be in-house as much as possible, but as Maria said, it can certainly be done bigger and better with an agency.

**S.L.**

I think it could be done in-house, but it is much quicker and effective if a professional helps you by showing you how to do it. In terms of budget, people are devoting a lot of money to fairs and a very small amount to communication.

What do you think is the appropriate communication budget for a small or midsize gallery?

**“I THINK THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOMEONE IN THE GALLERY WHOSE JOB IS FOCUSED HALF OF THE TIME ON COMMUNICATIONS. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT THE GALLERY DOES BEST FOR ITS ARTISTS IS TO COMMUNICATE THEM TO THE WORLD.”**

**C.L.**

I would tell any potential client that if you are working on a project, you should be looking to spend at least 10% of your investment in the growth of the business on communications. I guess that can be quite a big commitment, but I do think it is essential to be thinking about everything you are doing and communicating it.

**S.L.**

Then 10% for online and offline communications, thereafter you have to search for the balance of both.

**C.S.**

Or you can put all that in advertising or put it all into PR or media... that would be my starting point.

**M.M.**

I think that is accurate. If you are spending money on programming and taking part in art fairs, you should think about making the most of that investment, and part of that is to communicate that you are organising or taking part in something. People are not just going to find out about it by chance.

**S.L.**

Now we are going to move to a very inexpensive tool: word of mouth and the functionality of social networks. If it is important to build a tool-like identity, how should you use it when you are a small or medium-size gallery?

**C.S.**

I think it is absolutely crucial. Sharing on your profiles what you are up to, your daily work, the images of works coming out of the studio, previewing what you are going to be seeing at an upcoming art fair or exhibition. It is a wonderful free tool to communicate with your audience regularly.

**M.M.**

Word of mouth is still very important in our sector. These days word of mouth is a combination of both: it is as much about what happens in the digital sphere as what a trusted contact tells you.

**S.L.**

Are there any secrets to get people to follow you? What type of message and contents do you need to initiate word-of-mouth comments?

**“WORD OF MOUTH IS STILL VERY  
IMPORTANT IN OUR SECTOR. THESE DAYS  
WORD OF MOUTH IS A COMBINATION  
OF BOTH: IT IS AS MUCH ABOUT WHAT  
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A TRUSTED CONTACT TELLS YOU.”**

**C.S.**

I would recommend you use Instagram and Twitter to communicate regularly. We are in an imagebased industry, so you have to have Instagram, which is all about images. But also you should be thinking about video, because mobile communications are moving towards to video content. Videos constitute a great means to show a short story about a studio visit or an art fair booth and they provide very interesting content that people can share. Thus, I would recommend buying a good smartphone to use as a tool to take photographs and record films. It is an investment of time and a way of developing a presence online.

**M.M.**

That is an important point, you can be more playful and personable on these networks, they can be quite humanising in a way. It is a good way to show people that you are approachable, because the nature of social media is quite informal. I think it can be quite powerful for making people feel closer to your organisation.

**S.L.**

If you want to be efficient and increase your business, you have to build a community, i.e. the people you want to receive the message. What is the importance today of building a relationship with a community?

**C.S.**

I guess galleries are sitting on one the best community resources already, which is their database of clients.

**S.L.**

But they want to expand it.

**C.S.**

But are you engaging properly with all those people that said they are interested in what you do, in your artists and in buying your work? Are we communicating effectively with them? We have to plan how to reach out to them in a regular way. By having their email addresses, you can ask them to join your social networks, something that will help you to have eventually a big community. I suggest you look at all the resources in house, mainly your database.

**“I DO NOT THINK NUMBERS TELL  
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THE RIGHT PEOPLE. YOU NEED TO HAVE  
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WANT TO TARGET USING THE TOOLS IN  
THE RIGHT WAY.”**

**M.M.**

There is a slight risk of getting distracted by numbers. I do not think numbers tell the whole story, as they do not necessarily mean you are reaching the right people. You need to have a clear understanding of who you want to target using the tools in the right way.

**S.L.**

Do they really want to share some of the data with the audience that could become potential customers? What is the best way to go about it?

**S.L.**

Do they really want to share some of the data with the audience that could become potential customers? What is the best way to go about it?

**C.S.**

I work with art fairs, and in art fairs meeting people is definitely the fundamental. What galleries are best at is personal communication, building trust and sharing their expertise. At an art fair, you are meeting all those potential clients personally and then you do so digitally. I think it is a very good way to build that network.

**S.L.**

You spoke about something really interesting which is trust. Do you not think that in terms of having a voice, a gallery should focus on what people want? In art people want to be guided. Do you not think that voice for galleries comes before everything else?

**C.S.**

It is a bit contradictory to use technology to tell a personal story, but it is true that social media and online channels make it possible to do so. In this case, I suggest you be consistent and not create an online avatar that is a complete different person, unless that is your brand strategy.

**“WHAT GALLERIES ARE BEST AT IS  
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THEN YOU DO SO DIGITALLY.”**

**M.M.**

Nothing is really a substitute for personal relationships. People will always see the value of guidance and good advice. This is where the value of the gallerist lies. I think that people always come back for that. Even if you use social media to enhance or amplify your message, nothing replaces personal relationships and trust.

**C.S.**

I think going to galleries is about access and experience. It is something you can obviously do in person, but it is something you can do through your Instagram feed as well. You can give access to your studio or a dinner with an artist, etc.

**S.L.**

The Internet is just the tool box and sometimes we are confusing it with the message. What is more important: the message or using the right tool? What is the difference between them? Can the person be the message or the tool?

**C.S.**

Well, there are times that in galleries the message becomes the tool, because they are personal businesses and inevitably the person has personality, interests and relationships. So the person can be both the message and the tool sometimes.

**M.M.**

I think you have brought us back to the beginning of the discussion. The process of arriving at an identity and core story is the fundamental part. Then there are all sorts of channels you can use to broadcast it, but the story itself needs to be really robust to begin with. Also we are speaking about a crowded market, but competition is not always a bad thing. It sometimes helps the process and makes you think about what makes you different from the rest.

**S.L.**

To sum up, firstly, do you think that the voice even of a small gallery can be heard?

**“IN GALLERIES THE MESSAGE BECOMES THE TOOL, BECAUSE THEY ARE PERSONAL BUSINESSES AND INEVITABLY THE PERSON HAS PERSONALITY, INTERESTS AND RELATIONSHIPS. SO THE PERSON CAN BE BOTH THE MESSAGE AND THE TOOL.”**

**C.S. / M.M.**

Absolutely.

**S.L.**

Then, small galleries can do it, not just big institutions. It is a matter of using the right tool in a very persistent way to build a reputation and awareness. With regard to the target audience, should we send the message to everyone or target the people that would like to hear the message?

**M.M.**

There is no point wasting energy trying to reach everyone, if only some of those audiences are key for you. So I think a focused effort is always better.

**CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE.**

**Q.** In my gallery we use Facebook and have both a fan page and a gallery page, with 15,000 friends and 400 followers. We wondered how many of our clients were really following us, so we decided to change our communication strategy by posting information more related to the collection, such as legal aspects. But the numbers have not changed. Is changing the content the right strategy?

**C.S.** I think we should go back to the point of your database. Have you emailed your contacts saying you are on Facebook? Tell them what you are going to be doing, about the preview of your next exhibition, about a studio visit, a performance or a talk during which you will be doing live tweeting, etc. It does not matter what it is, but let them know you are doing things, because otherwise how are they going to know to follow you? That is what I would suggest: work on how you are going to engage your audience on a day-to-day basis.

**M.M.** Firstly I would congratulate you for recognising that something it is not working and trying to adapt your strategy. If it is important for you that collectors are engaging with you on Facebook, you should ask what kind of content they might find enticing. Maybe you could look at other sites for inspiration, maybe you could explore other platforms such as Twitter and see if this allows you to engage with your audiences in different ways.

**Q.** You have talked about the importance of the branding of the gallery itself. But what about the gallery's responsibility in relation to the branding of their artists: where does that begin and where does it end?

**C.S.** Damien Hirst is showing us that artists are probably the best PR pros and communicators in the world. He has created a brand of enormous proportions based on himself. So I think artists have a huge potential to show, promote and brand themselves. But I think galleries have a huge responsibility to communicate about their artists. They can help their artists by giving them feedback about what is successful, on how they can present themselves and tell their own story, as well as being a sounding board. The gallery has to work together with the artist making sure that their website and all the social media profiles tell a coherent story, because there is a huge potential and communication is key to it.

**Q.** All the conversations circled around the issue of whether a small gallery can make a voice for itself in a larger ocean of voices. Calum, I was wondering if ever in your consultancy to galleries, you broached the question of brand association amongst galleries. In a way I think that improving a brand and making a brand stronger is often about associating yourself with artists, with the collectors that collect with you, with the art fairs you participate in, etc. Could there be a potential in associations between galleries?

**C.S.** I talked about taking a gallery off to another country and doing a pop-up show. Working together with a local gallery would be a very effective solution. In art fairs we see a number of galleries come together, for instance Victoria



Miro gallery and Yayoi Kusama who had a very successful presentation at Art Basel Hong Kong in 2014. Thus, I definitely agree that it is an interesting way of working together, telling a story about how the brand relates to other places.

**M.M.** That is definitely true and perhaps the spectrum is wider. You can think of maybe partnering up with public institutions or public galleries. If you are an emerging gallery, you can benefit from the credibility of a well-established brand. However, there is also the risk of being overshadowed, particularly if you do not already have a strong identity. It can work in your favour, but you need to have a very clearly articulated story or brand to begin with.

**Q.** When a gallery has bad news, such as losing a major artist, how can they avoid this information reaching the headlines in the media?

**C.S.** There is an answer to that, which is a recognised formula consisting of three parts: concern, action and perspective. If you work through the problem, you need to give some sort of message, you have to show your concern and put your face to the problem: what you are doing about it; what action you are taking in response; and keeping things in perspective.

**M.M.**

The worst possible response is “no comment”. You would be surprised by the number of people who opt for that.

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YOUR FACE TO THE.”**

**Q.** Must your brand express the vision of your gallery? Does it need a slogan as other businesses do? Such as a feeling, for example.

**M.M.** What I would say is that you need to focus on four or five key things. You want people to remember the really important things, so it is dangerous to try to pack in too much. The other thing to bear in mind is that brand recognition is not going to happen overnight, so you are going to have to keep doing things, which will have to be consistent with your brand for a long time, to create that recognition.

**Q.** Is it important to have a separate identity for the gallery and the gallerist himself? Is it a different approach?

**M.M.**

I would say that it depends on the strategy adopted by the gallery. It is slightly risky if the identity is too closely linked to that of the gallerist, because if the gallerist changes, the gallery itself will lose its identity somehow. I think that if you have a long-term vision for your gallery, it is good to create a distinct identity for it, even if it is closely associated with your own.

**Q.** Most of us receive quite a lot of information through email, and I agree that when I receive something impersonal, it goes. So, where is the balance between bombarding people and sending things they are actually going to read?

**C.S.** It is a difficult balance to strike, as Maria was saying earlier, ask your audience what they like. In our office there are mainly journalists and we do not want them to feel bombarded. So keep it at a right pace in order not to receive emails saying “please take us off your database”. In addition, you can ask them if you are bombarding them too much.

**S.L.** How can you avoid generating junk mail and therefore produce content that is more likely to be read? Do you have any advice?

**C.S.** I always try to put myself in the shoes of the receiver and think whether I would like to get this email or not. Then I proofread it to see if everything is covered in the subject line, if it says where an event is going on (London, Prague, etc.). Then each person, depending on their location, can choose whether to continue reading or not. It is basic communication: how can I very effectively and clearly get across that message.

**M.M.** I think it is about knowing your audience, knowing what they are interested in and being relevant. Only communicate when you have something relevant to say, but do it consistently enough so that they do not forget about you.

**Q.** We have not talked about blogs associated with galleries. How can blogs be included in websites to create more content for the gallery?

**C.S.** I think a blog is a great tool, but again your website should be flagging

up your social media feeds, your news, what is going on, etc. And a blog is potentially a great way to tell your news in a chatty, journalistic way. But it is very important to keep it updated: if months go by without a post it will not work.

**Q.** I think blogs are extremely important. It is essential for us to work with you as professionals to develop a strategy and to learn how to mount them because we have to do these things in-house, as we are the ones having the conversations with our artists and audience. Blogs are essential and a great channel for artists and curators to reach people. When it comes to social media I think that the young people will become the real players in a few years. Thus, I think blogs are very important. We probably do not need to integrate them into our website but see them as having a role to play in their own right.

**C.S.** Blogs are crucial even for big institutions. I find it very interesting that Charles Sumner Smith, the CEO of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, has discovered the blogosphere at the age of 60. He is doing a fantastic job and I get his posts in my inbox every two or three days. I read them because he has a fascinating life and I am more aware of the artists he is looking at, the institutions he is visiting, the talks he is giving, etc. He is using technology to tell the personal story again.

**S.L.**

In conclusion, you can have a voice, you can have your voice heard, but it needs to be persistent, it needs to be personal, and you do not need to be a great institution to succeed. Just try to use the tool in the right way and I think you will be surprised by the results!

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