BARCELONA SYMPOSIUM 2015

TALKING
GALLERIES

THE INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM FOR GALLERISTS

Talking Galleries is the first international platform for gallery professionals to instigate the debate and the exchange of new trends specific to gallerism and the art market. It gathers and produces content on relevant issues related to gallery practices through international symposiums, a publication series and an online video channel, keeping updated to the most recent developments on the sector.

After four editions and about to launch its fifth edition in January 2017, the Barcelona Symposium aims to be the definite meeting point for galleries where to reflect on their own profession. To that end, leading art world figures are brought together to discuss and rethink models for the art business sector.

This book collects the talks given at the fourth Barcelona Symposium held from 2 to 3 November 2015, at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), in which distinguished guests shared their insights into different aspects of gallerism at the moment. Their invaluable experience and the lively yet thought-provoking sessions are inspiring and enlightening to all those who are involved in the art gallery practice today.

Llucià Homs
Director

TALKING GALLERIES

THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR GALLERISTS

Georgina Adam

Marek Claassen

Silvia Dauder

Elizabeth Dee

Gigiotto Del Vecchio

Touria El Glaoui

Dora García

Annamária Molnár

Anders Petterson

Lisa Ruyter

Annette Schönholzer

Alain Servais

Adam Sheffer

Marc Spiegler

Carlos Urroz

Matthias von Stenglin

Jocelyn Wolff

IV Barcelona Symposium
Artists and Gallerists: Sharing a Vision

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 9
Georgina Adam

SESSIONS

10 Questions Every Gallerist Should Be Asking Themselves Now 17
Marc Spiegler

Fairs under Review 49
Elizabeth Dee, Touria El Glaoui, and Carlos Urroz, with Annette Schönholzer (moderator)

Important Considerations of the Artist/Gallerist Relationship 77
Dora García and Lisa Ruyter, with Elizabeth Dee (moderator)

How to Choose the Right Fair for You? 97
Annamária Molnár

Artist Agencies 121
Alain Servais, with Adam Sheffer (respondent)

How to Build a Consistent Gallery Programme 145
Silvia Dauder, Gigiotto Del Vecchio, and Matthias von Stenglin, with Jocelyn Wolff (moderator)

Art Market. The Big Detachment 169
Marek Claassen

The New Online Art Consumers 183
Anders Petterson

Introduction

By Georgina Adam*

Welcome to the fourth Talking Galleries Notebook!

This publication gives a comprehensive overview of the 2015 symposium, with summaries of the panels, discussions and presentations. For those who were there, it is a reminder of what was debated; for those not able to attend, it is an important resource.

The theme of the 2015 symposium was “Artists and Gallerists; Sharing a Vision”, held in Barcelona 2-3 November.

The symposium started with an extraordinary presentation by Art Basel Global Director Marc Spiegler, entitled **“10 Questions Every Gallerist Should Be Asking Themselves Now.”** Using the style of a Barbara Kruger artwork for the visuals, Spiegler explored the challenges and transformations facing galleries today. Among the issues he addressed were changes in the profile of collectors, concluding “To be a successful gallerist 20 years from now, you must throw out the old ways of playing upon social hierarchies.” Among the other questions were “Can my gallery grow with my artists?”, the problem posed by the “disruptor” Stefan Simchowitz, and “Will the auction houses leave any gallery terrain untouched?”

Tackling the linked questions of the impact of social media, notably Instagram, and whether galleries should continue to have a bricks-and-mortar presence, Spiegler was clear: “I think most artists prefer to create art rather than spend all day direct-messaging random potential patrons… and I believe that the best way to sell art is to stand in front of the work with the collector.” As for gallery spaces, Spiegler believes that artists want to make work “not just for fair booths or iPads.” And he concluded; “No matter what else changes in the world and in the art world, the ever-deepening dialogue when you buy from a gallery will remain the essential part of what it means to be a great gallerist.”

Following on from Spiegler, the **“Fairs under Review”** panel looked at the phenomenon of art fair fatigue—“fairtigue”—with a huge proliferation of these events with some 220 worldwide today. The panelists came from

different horizons—Touria El Glaoui of the African art fair 1:54, Elizabeth Dee of Independent and Carlos Urroz of Arco—but each had a different take on their roles. El Glaoui had certainly succeeded in bringing African art to a much wider audience through two fairs, while Dee had redefined the notion of an event, notably by operating on an invitation-only basis and seeking projects as opposed to just providing a booth. Urroz noted that with so many fairs, there is a move towards solo shows, which enables the galleries to better present their programmes and artists' practices. And with an enormous number of visitors, Arco is certainly contributing to increasing the number of potential collectors.

"Important Considerations of the Artist/Gallerist Relationship" featured artists Dora García and Lisa Ruyter in conversation with Elizabeth Dee. Both discussed the importance of loyalties, to the projects above all, particularly because of a fraying of the links with galleries. "It is a partnership rather than a marriage," noted García; both speakers emphasised the importance of the balance of power between artists and their gallery. Looking forward, they also discussed the challenges posed by new forms of art which might be non-physical—performances, for instance, and how the gallery can help artists in these fields. One of the most important points, said García, is working with the gallery when it is building the gallery programme.

"How to Choose the Right Fair for You" was an admirably researched presentation by the Hungarian gallerist Annamária Molnár. She pointed out the importance of focus for galleries, emphasising the need to research well and be strategic before deciding which fairs to target. She also outlined the personal and financial cost of attending fairs, and the risk of rejection, all in the interests of the artists. She had analysed the acceptance rate for the young and emerging sections in various fairs, with, interestingly, Liste—which only shows emerging artists—being far more difficult to get into (with a 3-7% acceptance rate) than, for example, Artissima (27%).

"Artist Agencies" was a conversation between collector/entrepreneur Alain Servais with Adam Sheffer. Servais' proposition was that an agency could take over most of the administrative aspects of gallery practice, for example PR, legal advice, overseeing production and finding financing. All of this could be of great interest to the mid-sized galleries, leaving them to concentrate on their relationship with artists, creating their programmes and maintaining contact with their collectors. "It would be a platform of knowledge and expertise," said Servais, "And would achieve economies of

scale." But Sheffer noted that many of the suggestions made by Servais describe what his job consists of, and there were other issues highlighted during the question time, notably the danger that the agent would steer artists towards the gallery that remunerated him or her better and that agents would just complicate the relationship between collectors, galleries and their artists.

"How to Build a Consistent Gallery Programme" was a panel directed by Jocelyn Wolff. With three very different speakers, the panel explored many aspects of building a programme. Fundamental was the examination of what the "DNA" of a gallery is and how to remain consistent to the programme. However, it was clear that having a consistent programme had to be balanced against the need to stay in business. The panelists also discussed internationalisation of the roster of artists—should they bow to fashion and bring in, say, a Chinese artist or a woman artist, even if their programme did not necessarily demand it.

The last two sessions were devoted to technological aspects of the market. The most controversial was a presentation by Marek Claassen, **"Art Market. The Big Detachment"**, in which he showed how his website, ArtFacts.net, uses algorithms to classify artists into rankings, depending on the prestige of the institutions which show them, the internationalisation of their reach and so on. Even more controversial was his ranking of art galleries, based on elements such as discovery of young artists, participation in art fairs and so on. His thesis was that the computer can't lie, and that his data "quantifies the unquantifiable" and so increases trust and transparency in the market. However his methodology was questioned, and he admitted that data input could not be 100% perfect in view of the lack of accurate information concerning the beginnings of artists' careers and their early involvement with galleries; the necessity of going back to the pre-internet age and filling in some relevant gaps; and the general absence of market information available in the primary market.

To close the symposium, Anders Petterson addressed the question of **"The New Online Art Consumers"**. He pointed out that the art world has been late to come to the internet and remains quite small—it represents some 5% currently, depending on how you define "online sales". But, he said, "Online is starting to have an impact on how we engage with the world around us." He talked about how galleries will need new skill sets, how to build trust and credibility in an online world. Galleries will also have to

think how to reach and engage younger people in particular, who are "at the gate" and interested in art, but not yet buyers. Among the issues he identified as problematic was the question of authenticity. And he noted that one of the dangers of the online market is the high level of motivation for buying art as an investment, something which he thought could be problematic for the future.

In summary, Talking Galleries was able to give a good overview of different aspects of gallery practice today—from how to choose a fair or the importance of a consistent gallery programme—and also look forward to the changing landscape, both in the real world and, increasingly, in the virtual world.

*__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.

SESSIONS

Marc Spiegler

In his role as Art Basel Global Director, Marc Spiegler oversees the global development of the organisation across the three shows in Basel, Miami Beach, and Hong Kong. Spiegler joined Art Basel as Co-Director in 2007 and became Director in 2012. Over the first six years, Art Basel developed into a truly global platform for leading international galleries to show their programmes. In recent years and under the directorship of Marc Spiegler, Art Basel developed further worldwide projects such as the Crowdfunding Initiative in partnership with Kickstarter and a course for emerging collectors, realised in collaboration with Hong Kong University and Central Saint Martin's in London. Before joining Art Basel, Spiegler, a dual citizen of France and the United States, worked as freelance art journalist and columnist for more than a decade, writing for such magazines and newspapers as *The Art Newspaper, Monopol, Art+Auction* Magazine, *ARTnews* Magazine, N*eue Zürcher Zeitung*, and *New York* Magazine. He studied political science and journalism in the United States and England.

10 QUESTIONS EVERY GALLERIST SHOULD BE ASKING THEMSELVES NOW

SPEAKER

Marc Spiegler

CONCEPTS

connoisseur collectors, leisure class, internationalisation & homogenisation, fair strategy, individual prototypes, fast fashion professional models, fast-moving market, gallery perspective, to grow collectors, weaknesses of the gallery system, finance, face-to-face contact, gallery space

10 QUESTIONS EVERY GALLERIST SHOULD BE ASKING THEMSELVES NOW

I stand here as the Global Director of Art Basel, but also as someone who for 15 years before that was a journalist who wrote a lot about the art market. What I am hoping to do is to throw a lot of tinder on the fire for your discussions in the next days.

Art Basel is a fair and an organisation that was founded by gallerists and is still very much driven by galleries. We have very close contact with our selection committees, not only in terms of who they choose for the shows, but also when it comes to the development of the fair. Those of you who are gallerists know that you will see me popping around a lot, asking all sorts of questions about the development of the scenes, the development of the gallery, etc.

This presentation is given in the form of questions that I think gallerists should be asking themselves today. But before that, just a little bit of context. Working with galleries is what we do, so galleries are what I think about most. Not just individual galleries but the whole development of the gallery world. With our three fairs, Art Basel is at a stage where we are working with a lot of galleries.

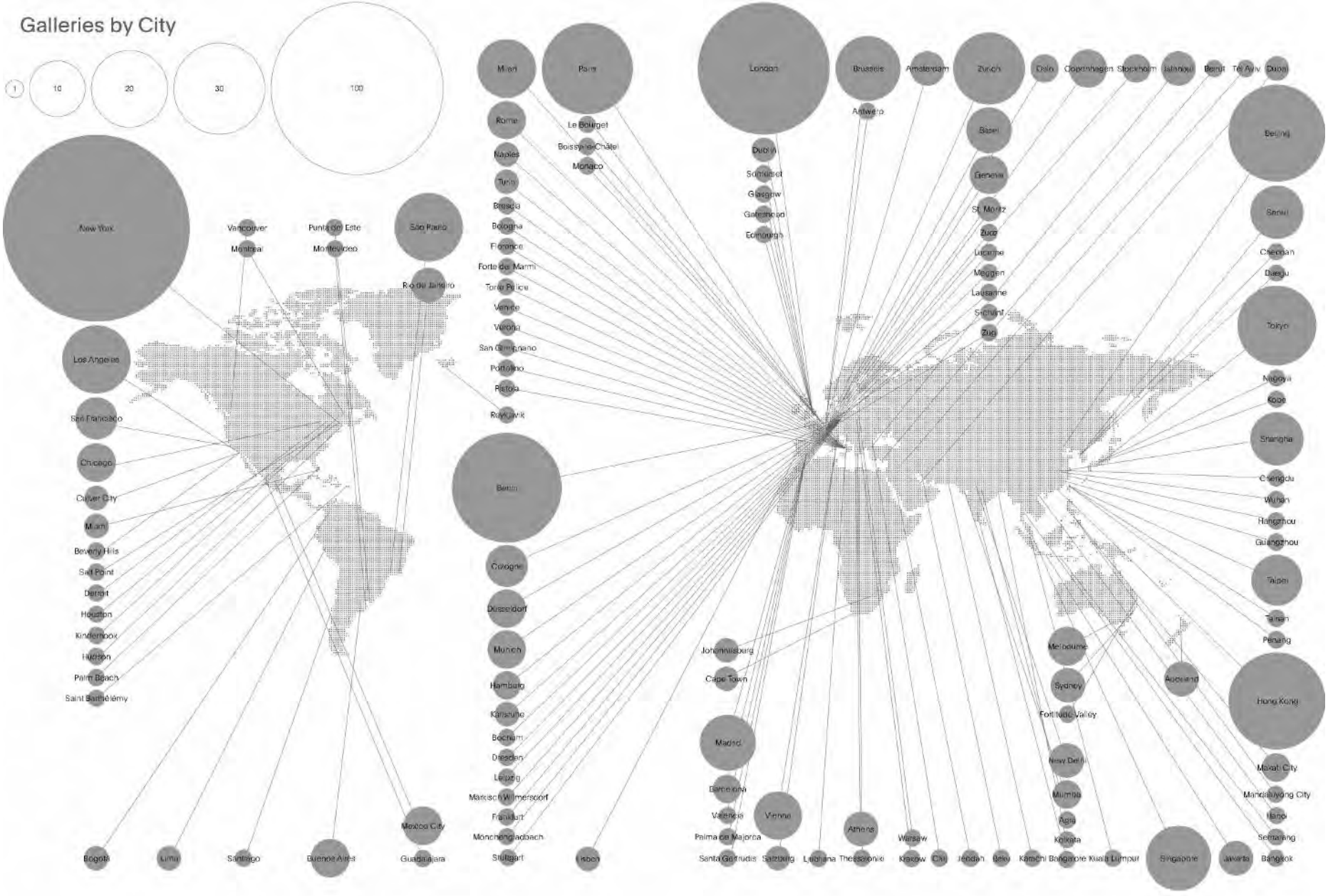


Chart "Galleries by city", published in the Art Basel Yearbook 2015.

This is a chart that many of you will recognise. It has appeared in the first two editions of the annual Yearbook that we produce. What it shows is the locations of all the different galleries that we deal with in one or more of our fairs, and there are more than 550 of them. The size of the circle represents the number of galleries in the various cities. What is interesting, is that you have, of course, places like Berlin, New York or Hong Kong that have a lot of galleries. But you also have galleries sprinkled all over the world. And I think this is one of the great dimensions of Art Basel as it stands today. The fact we are dealing with galleries literally spread more or less all over the world, even in the case of Africa with galleries now coming not only from South Africa.

So, let us start with the questions that I think you should be asking yourselves as gallerists:

1. Are connoisseur collectors a dying breed?

This is a concern that I hear over and over: "The people coming into the gallery booths now know much less about art than the people who used to come." "People are not spending time in galleries learning about the artists." "People are shopping quickly, jumping in before they know things." The impression is that people are buying not with their eyes but with their ears—following trends, rumours, a hot name. They have no idea what the work looks like; they just know that this is the artist to buy now.

"THE IMPRESSION IS THAT PEOPLE ARE BUYING NOT WITH THEIR EYES BUT WITH THEIR EARS—FOLLOWING TRENDS, RUMOURS, A HOT NAME."

It is hard to say whether connoisseurs are truly a dying breed. Certainly, the demographics speak against it. I try to read a lot both within and outside of the art press. One of the most interesting pieces that I read outside of the art press—one that has much shaped my understanding about what is going on for galleries—was an article in *The Atlantic* a couple of years ago by Chrystia Freeland called "The Plutocrats"[1]. Here is the really important take-away from the article when we think about the development of collectors:

1. Editors' Note: Chrystia Freeland's article appeared in *The Atlantic* originally titled as "The Rise of the New Global Elite", in the January/ February 2011 edition. In October 2012, the author published the book *Plutocrats: The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich and the Fall of Everyone Else* (Penguin Books).

> "Our light-speed, globally connected economy has led to the rise of a new super-elite that consists, to a notable degree, of first- and second-generation wealth. Its members are hardworking, highly educated, jet-setting meritocrats who feel they are the deserving winners of a tough, worldwide economic competition (…) Perhaps most noteworthy, they are becoming a transglobal community of peers who have more in common with one another than with their countrymen back home (…) a defining quality of the current crop of plutocrats is that they are the 'working rich.' (…) In 1916, the richest 1 percent of Americans received only one-fifth of their income from paid work; in 2004, that figure had risen threefold, to 60 percent."[2]

The important part about the first quote is that it points to the statistical proof that the notion of the Leisure Class is completely outdated. The people I see coming to our fairs as new collectors are working their asses off. They are making a lot more money than any of us are, but they are working just as hard. They are actively running hedge funds and start-ups. They may be interested in art, but they are certainly not going to devote every Saturday to walking around Chelsea or Mayfair or the East End. The future clients of most galleries are people who are really, really wealthy, but also are really, really busy. One thing it implies is that a lot of them are using intermediaries, specifically advisers. Another thing it means, sadly, is that a lot of them are starting to buy at auctions—because it is quicker; and since they come out of finance, also because it feels more transparent to them.

"THE NOTION OF THE LEISURE CLASS IS COMPLETELY OUTDATED. THE PEOPLE I SEE COMING TO OUR FAIRS AS NEW COLLECTORS ARE WORKING THEIR ASSES OFF."

One of the transformations that people point to often is the growing importance of fairs. Part of that is because fairs have done a good job of serving as a place where you can get a rapid overview of a global market at a moment when the art world is internationalising constantly. But I think a part of it also comes down to demographics. People say fairs have grabbed power, yet I think power was handed to fairs by this demographic fact. Your current and future clients do not have as much time as the clients 20 years ago. These are not the people who were handed wealth and could not figure out what to do with their time. These are people whose time is devoted to growing their wealth.

2. Chrystia Freeland, "The Rise of the New Global Elite," in *The Atlantic*, January/February 2011.

Now, do not give up hope, because many of these people retire before the age of 50. We have seen this already in Silicon Valley. The people who used to live in Silicon Valley have moved to San Francisco, because it is a much more pleasant place to live. And we are starting to see some collectors coming out of Silicon Valley.

The other thing we have to face is the fact that they come to the art world with another mentality. The classical notion of the collector as someone who came from a very sophisticated background, perhaps from generations of collecting, has to be, if not superseded then at least accompanied by the notion of collectors who are coming out of a completely different culture. The French have the term *'déformation professionnelle'*, which means that your entire character, your entire way of viewing the world is shaped by what you do for work.

Those of you who have dealt with people coming out of finance as your clients can see that they have a completely different approach. They want to know what this piece is worth, why it is priced this way, how you predict it will develop. Silicon Valley is even more extreme. I went to San Francisco and Silicon Valley about a year ago and had a lot of conversations with the advisers, with the gallerists, with the museum directors there who were trying to make things happen. It is a kind of amazing tragedy: there is a new wealth generation of young, smart and countercultural people; why are not they buying more art?

Part of the answer is that they are just too damned busy. But part of it is also the fact that we have a culture clash. Traditionally, art has been sold based upon two things: the notion of exclusivity—you are buying into a special world—and a market built around opacity. But there is also the notion that buying art is a form of social good: you made all your money in banking or real estate, and now you are going to do something good for the world. The people who run Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tinder, do not feel like they need to do anything more for the world because they feel like they are already doing a great thing. So we are not going to sell to them on the notion that buying art is going to make them a better member of society.

Some gallerist will eventually crack that code and really start connecting with Silicon Valley. But it is not going to be by making things more opaque, not by putting up a bigger velvet rope. It is going to be by actually figuring out how to take the traditional modes of selling art,

of promoting art, and make them work in a world which is built not on opacity but on transparency, and not on exclusivity but upon the notion of a vast market.

"THE PEOPLE WHO RUN FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT, TINDER, DO NOT FEEL LIKE THEY NEED TO DO ANYTHING MORE FOR THE WORLD BECAUSE THEY FEEL LIKE THEY ARE ALREADY DOING A GREAT THING. SO WE ARE NOT GOING TO SELL TO THEM ON THE NOTION THAT BUYING ART IS GOING TO MAKE THEM A BETTER MEMBER OF SOCIETY."

In short, the new wealthy, the new collectors have completely different mindsets from the old ones. And if you are going to be a successful gallerist 15 or 20 years from now, you are going to have to figure out how to deal with that. Because all the old ways of playing different social hierarchies—such as having people at the front desk who do not smile when you walk in, or telling people they are going to be on a waiting list because you do not think their collection is good enough—are not going to work. So throw them out and think about something new.

One other interesting fact about ultra-high-net-worth individuals is that they are much more like each other than they are like the other people in their country, partly because they all go to the same schools, vacation in the same places and have homes in cities like London and Paris and Ibiza. These people move in packs. And the only thing that connects them is the fact that they are all super-wealthy. And thus their collections often look very similar to each other.

2. Is art world internationalisation purely positive?

First off, I think it is a good thing that we have a more internationalised art market. Because in the old days, if you were a Spanish artist, you had to first become famous in Spain before you could be exported somewhere else. Now, you do not even need to have a gallery in your home country to be successful. There was a long period when Santiago Sierra was a Spanish artist who grew famous while living in Mexico, with galleries all over the world. And it was fine, because they brought his work to fairs, they got him into biennials, etc.

On the one hand it is a good thing that an artist is not constrained by the place or the generation they were born into. So if they want to make abstraction at a moment when figuration is really important in their home country, that is OK—because they will find a gallery elsewhere that has a whole roster of collectors of abstraction, and they will be able to live from their work.

The internationalisation of the art world allows a greater number of artists to be successful because they can choose galleries in different countries who will find those several collectors who allow them to continue their work. Obviously the fairs play a huge role in this. And this is one of the things that Art Basel does best: fairs do for our galleries what auction houses do for their consignors, which is to convene a huge global market and get them excited about an artist.

But there are downsides. I have often met an amazing collector, who comes to all our fairs, but had never been to see the best local galleries. This was a huge frustration on part of the gallerists in Chicago—where I am from originally. Chicago was a much stronger scene then that it is now. At the time, some collectors were buying artists from Chicago in New York, even though they were also showing with Chicago galleries, because buying in a Soho gallery was cooler! So I think the internationalisation of the art world is fundamentally good, but it is not a purely positive thing. It can lead to a homogenisation and if you do not watch out, all the flying will kill you. It will kill the gallerists, artists, collectors. This is what people mean when they talk about "fairtigue".

3. How many art fairs should I do?

So… here you have the director of Art Basel questioning how many art fairs you should do.

For me, the favourite part of my job is going to a young gallery that has never been in our fair—that is even afraid to apply to the fair—and to say "you are ready," then to see them apply and get in, and then to see them in a single morning have the entire trajectory of their gallery change. Because suddenly they have great museum directors, biennial curators and collectors who are interested in their programme. Likewise with helping a gallery that is bringing back fantastic artists who are forgotten because they happened to be in the market at the wrong moment. This is where I think Art Basel can

do the most. The major power-play gallerists need us much less and we can do much less for them. They are important because they bring collectors and their reputation helps our reputation and vice versa. But working with the small galleries is very important.

One of the trickiest things for those galleries is how to manage this whole fair strategy. When you are a good young gallery, there is a moment when you have to do fairs…there is a moment when fairs approach you. But the fairs take away time and money from your gallery programme. I see a lot of galleries doing too many fairs, and I get worried about it. If I talk to them, they say "If we do not do the fairs, the artists will jump to bigger galleries who are doing the fairs. They want their work to be seen."

"THE MAJOR POWER-PLAY GALLERISTS NEED US MUCH LESS AND WE CAN DO MUCH LESS FOR THEM. THEY ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY BRING COLLECTORS AND THEIR REPUTATION HELPS OUR REPUTATION AND VICE VERSA. BUT WORKING WITH THE SMALL GALLERIES IS VERY IMPORTANT."

On another token, we see that the young gallery applications get weak over time. What is going on here? They're doing six fairs a year, and they have to do a different artist every time. Previously, we had a rule at Art Basel that if an artist had been shown at one of our fairs or at one of our major competitor fairs or at a major institution, they were considered not to be "fresh" any more. The rule made sense when it was created, around the year 2000. But that was a totally different moment. What we realised is that this rule was penalising young galleries because it was taking away their possibility to show the very artists who were at the core of their programme. So we changed it. If an artist has been shown at one of our fairs, at one of our competitor fairs, or at a major institution, the proposal just has to be a new body of work. It is not *the name* that has to be fresh. It is *the work* that has to be fresh. This was really a fundamental debate that we had within the committees as a result of understanding how much things were changing within the art market.

One of the problems with the number of fairs, is that there are lots of new fairs, and each one has their place. Let's analyse three cases. Paris Internationale: a fair founded by a bunch of young gallerists as a parallel fair to FIAC when some Parisian galleries felt that they should be in FIAC but they were not, and did not want to go the Officielle, which is the official parallel fair. It has been very successful. Art021, one of two fairs in Shanghai, the other being the West Bund. It established itself as a boutique fair—a very small fair, targeting a very local audience, which is incredibly wealthy and suddenly much more interested in buying art. And the Seattle Art Fair, where Amazon and Microsoft are based, which is a reason enough to try a fair there.

"GALLERIES CANNOT JUST BE 'FAIR GALLERIES,' OTHERWISE THEY WILL LOSE IDENTITY."

If you are a gallerist, do you do this fair or do you not? If you are a big gallery, you have got a fair team and they never stop going to fairs. But if you are a young gallery, do you do these new fairs, and how? People are getting smarter and smarter about this. The solo booth is a great way to do it because you are only asking one of your artists for work and you make a big impact. On the other hand, I see that people are trying to do the big international fairs like Frieze and FIAC and the Art Basel fairs year after year. But with the regional fairs, they do it once and if it does not work, they pull out.

People used to wait longer, thinking that it would take three or four years to build a market. Nowadays, if they go and it does not work, they try another one. The other thing that I see is that they do rotations, for example: doing Brussels one year and Artissima the next one. Or only doing a fair if one of their artists has a show at one of the local museums. Basically they are piggybacking on the show: the museum is doing their marketing for them. But galleries cannot just be "fair galleries," otherwise they will lose identity.

4. Is the art world's speed a fatal addiction?

We do not know the answer yet. We are all prototypes. The art world and the people in it have never moved this fast. There is no proof that being on email 24 hours a day or flying so much is a good thing for your health. In fact, there are a lot of proofs against it. There are gallerists that need to fly to Malmo one day, Paris the next day and Barcelona the day after, because his/her three major artists have openings. Other people are much more at the whims of their collectors, specifically auction-house specialists. The point is all of us live in a world which is moving much too fast.

That is true at many levels. But to bring you back to the artists, what really strikes me is that a lot of them seem to have a life model like that of a football player or a supermodel. The goal of most older artists was "I want a MoMA or Met retrospective when I am 50. I want to build a career, I want to be in the canon, I want to do something important." But I do not think that is so true for a lot of successful artists today.

art market, where quick ... common for young, emerging artists like Mr. Vo, 39. Wealthy art collectors are on the prowl for works produced by an elite group of artists like Oscar Murillo, Lucien Smith and Eddie Peake, whose works have been rated like technology stocks, their prices rising drastically. Artnet, the online art researcher, said that last year the number of works created in the past three years and sold at auction topped 9,800, compared with about 3,100 in 2012.

Since 2012, the total sales of Mr. Vo's

FEUD, PAGE 11

Excerpt of Doreen Carvajal's article "The Rising Artist Versus the Collector" in *The New York Times*, July 14, 2015.

This is a picture I took from an article this summer about the lawsuit between Bert Kreuk and Danh Vo. What really struck me was the number of works created in the last three years that were sold at auction was almost 10,000, compared to only 3,000 in 2012, three times as high as it was three years before!

I occasionally go the auction previews or flick through the auction catalogues and find the names of all these artists who were so hot only five years ago and find people are dumping them off in the day sales.

But it sometimes also makes me feel old or out of it because I see the names of artists who I do not even recognise. Keep in mind that I sit through the selection committees meetings of three fairs on three continents, and I see the dossiers not just of the galleries that get in but also the hundreds of other galleries that are applying, and there are still names of artists being sold at auction that I do not recognise. Things are going from the studio and into auction in two years—almost 10,000 pieces per year! And I am sure the statistic for next year will be more or less the same.

One of the effects of the internet and the fast market is that many artists are focused on monetising the moment, the kind of Zara fast-fashion model. When Jerry Saltz wrote the article called "Zombies on the Wall"[3], the thing that struck me about it was the opening image: six different artists made those paintings, all of them very hot, five of them male, all of them young. This is not a movement. This is merchandising. I do not want to talk badly about some of the artists because some of them believe in their work more than others. But what you see is what is selling: abstract squares made in different ways—burning, exposure to sun, being dragged through the streets, chemical treatments—which are sold at very high prices.

"ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF THE INTERNET AND THE FAST MARKET IS THAT MANY ARTISTS ARE FOCUSED ON MONETISING THE MOMENT, THE KIND OF ZARA FAST-FASHION MODEL."

This is what happens when you have a fast-moving market. There is simply too much work out there. Like when Thomas Ruff put out his catalogue résumé and people saw that there were hundreds of star photographs—suddenly people realised that the supply is much bigger than they thought. So you have a problem when you try to sell and another ten come out.

3 Jerry Saltz, "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the Same?" in *Vulture Magazine*, June 17, 2014.

Art is not a great investment from a financial standpoint, because when it goes down, it goes totally illiquid. There are previously popular artists that you cannot sell now. You cannot even pay people to drag them away. You could probably give them away for charity, or if you are lucky and get a stupid tax auditor you could probably get a deduction. But the point is that there are artists who were very hot five years ago, that would be unsellable 20 years from now. That's fine, because contemporary art is about the zeitgeist.

5. Can my gallery grow with my artists?

Oscar Murillo went to David Zwirner. Jacob Kassay went to 303. Alex Katz went from Pace to Gavin Brown. These facts point to the erosion of one of the traditional models: you try to identify the best artists in your generation, and if you choose the right artists and you manage their careers well and you are decent with them, then you will grow with them. There are many "generational" galleries who had the same artists for 15 or 20 years. But it is not so much the case anymore. Certainly, that model is one that you cannot count upon now.

"THERE ARE MANY 'GENERATIONAL' GALLERIES WHO HAD THE SAME ARTISTS FOR 15 OR 20 YEARS. BUT IT IS NOT SO MUCH THE CASE ANYMORE. CERTAINLY, THAT MODEL IS ONE THAT YOU CANNOT COUNT UPON NOW."

When I talk to young gallerists with young artists who are very successful, they ask me "what should I do?" The answer: Pay your artists. And if you feel like an artist might leave you, then at least try to buy or keep some of their work for yourself, so when that big gallery comes in and takes them away and jacks up their prices, you are not the pure loser. But this is tough since most such young galleries do not have lots of extra capital.

What is really interesting to me is also the trend of super hipster-young galleries in weird neighbourhoods who are working with extremely old artists. Part of that is financial necessity because their best young artists are getting poached by older galleries. But it also makes sense, because they are working with the artists that their younger artists

looked at when they were in art school, the older artists who have an intellectual or emotional relationship with their younger artists. If you do it right, you are building a programme whose artists really make sense together. This is a discussion, a dialogue. It is what sucks collectors in.

"WHAT IS REALLY INTERESTING TO ME IS ALSO THE TREND OF SUPER HIPSTER-YOUNG GALLERIES IN WEIRD NEIGHBOURHOODS WHO ARE WORKING WITH EXTREMELY OLD ARTISTS."

Remember, one of the jobs of a gallery is to sell art. But just as important is growing collectors, taking people who have the means to buy art and making them passionate about it. I have seen some of you sell art and it is miraculous, because you are like preachers: you take someone standing in front of oil on canvas or a pile of soap and make them believe that this is a transformative object.

6. What does Simco mean?

Stefan Simchowitz, son of collectors. As *The New York Times* put it, the art world's patron Satan. A lot of people dislike Stefan. He has a very hard-nosed way of moving through the art world, but you cannot disregard him. What strikes me about Stefan is that he has disintermediated the traditional gallery process. Stefan has identified good young artists, people who everyone is now talking about, like Petra Cortright, Amalia Ulman, Jon Rafman, etc. He has introduced them to galleries, setting up their shows, while buying enormous amounts of their material. In the same way that Saatchi did, and being very transparent about what he does. He has a collector base—software guys, sports guys, socialites—that nobody else has. You have to go through him to get to them. And he has a market-maker quality in the same way that the Rubells do: what he puts forward has momentum *because he puts it forward.*

The reasons why Stefan has been successful are: a) he has moved much faster than a lot of galleries have with those young artists; and b) he has taken a market that was built on opacity and made it more transparent. He goes to artists' studios and puts the stuff on Instagram. Now, if you

look at the services he is offering with his new company, Simco, a lot of those are the services of a traditional gallery: artist management, buying and selling art, and client representation, which is something a lot of European gallerists did. Before there were art advisers all over Europe—if you wanted to sell to certain clients, collectors, you had to go through the gallery.

"I HAVE SEEN SOME OF YOU SELL ART AND IT IS MIRACULOUS, BECAUSE YOU ARE LIKE PREACHERS: YOU TAKE SOMEONE STANDING IN FRONT OF OIL ON CANVAS OR A PILE OF SOAP AND MAKE THEM BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A TRANSFORMATIVE OBJECT."

7. Will auction houses leave any gallery terrain untouched?

Ten years ago Philippe Ségalot at Christie's was considered a revolutionary for bringing young artists into play. Now we have auction houses that have tried—mostly less successfully—to function as galleries by representing artists directly. Two things are worth bearing in mind: 49% of the auction volume in 2014 was comprised of roughly 1,300 works. The huge numbers are compiled around a small group of artists. When we think of auctions, we think of Warhols and Basquiats and Koons. And the reality is this: if you are representing Christopher Wool as a primary gallery and his work comes up, suddenly you need to rally up $3 million to make sure that it does not crash.

I remember talking to Tanya Leighton, a gallerist from Berlin, who told me the auction houses will call her up and say "We have an artist in you programme coming to auction. It would be a pity if it did not sell. Can you please rally your collectors around this?" Put yourself in Tanya's position: there is a limited amount of work; she is not the only gallery representing him; there is a limited number of collectors; and she is not getting a commission from the auction house. But if she does not do this, it might crash because they have no idea who those collectors are. Suddenly she is working for the auction house. This is as bad as it gets: auction houses turning young gallerists into their sales agents—unpaid—as a way to protect their markets.

On the other hand, I was talking to Simon Preston from a Lower East Side gallery. He had a case where a John Gerrard work that should have been priced at £80,000 was put into sale at £8,000. Suddenly all these collectors started calling and saying "What the hell is going on? Did his market collapse?" and he said "No, it is just the wrong price."

There is a weakness of the gallery system: the only sales we know that are publicised are of those at auction. Is it really such a good thing to hide what is going on in terms of your sales? It allows the auction houses to define what is important and what is not important, what is working and what is not working. Because there is no transparency on the gallery side, galleries are a little bit at the mercy of what goes on in the auctions. And it is not a good thing.

"THERE IS A WEAKNESS OF THE GALLERY SYSTEM: THE ONLY SALES WE KNOW THAT ARE PUBLICISED ARE OF THOSE AT AUCTION. IS IT REALLY SUCH A GOOD THING TO HIDE WHAT IS GOING ON IN TERMS OF YOUR SALES?"

Some artists have taken very innovative approaches against auctions. One of Wade Guyton's "U" paintings came up for auction, and Wade's approach was to basically point out that he could print out a hundred of these paintings—it is a digital file. He said "there are more of them out there," hoping that it would depress the price of the sale. It did not. Wade did a similar thing at Art Basel—he had six similar paintings that were exactly the same size on six different stands. Wade is in a position to do that in a way that other artists are not.

8. Will the art world merge with finance?

We have been talking about art funds for years, and the interesting thing about funds is that most of them fail. There was a time when there were roughly 38 art funds floating around out there and in the end the Fine Art Fund was the only one that stuck around. Funds are tough to make work, because they usually rely on advisers, and those advisers are probably more likely to buy pieces for themselves than to tell the fund what to buy.

We have two interesting new developments. The Carlyle Group, one of the most important private-equity groups in the world, recently announced Athena Art Finance, which is focused on lending money to people who have works that are worth at least $500,000. So that rather than selling it, you can borrow against it. They have got a $1 billion fund to loan money against artworks, which is interesting: the notion that a serious finance group is willing to go that deep on art.

Now you gallerists could say "This does not affect me. I do not have any work that is worth more than $500,000". But then you have Levart, which was founded by Carlos Rivera, the same guy that did website Art Rank, which ranked young artists as "buy, sell, hold". This business is the same concept as Athena's—loans against art. But it is not a $500,000; it is $5,000, 4% minimum fee, nice minimum fees, money tomorrow... like a payday loan in the United States. "You need some money? Incredibly fast and easy loans against your artwork. We accept all works from emerging to blue-chip". I have no idea if this is working, but the reality is someone intelligent is seriously putting out the proposition that whatever artwork you own, he will give you cash for it. The fact that you have both a very high-level finance group—one of the most important finance groups in the world, publicly led by Olivier Sarkozy—running into this and also a much faster LA-based, internet start-up means that finance thinking will be a big part of the artworld.

Is this a bad thing or a good thing for galleries? Part of me thinks that such loans might be a good way to fund production of work for a biennial: instead of selling a work, you can borrow against it. Might it also mean that those galleries that now lose an artist because someone else can fund more production can keep that artist? In theory liquidity is good for a market, especially liquidity like this. You might have a bunch of work from an artist that left and you do not want to sell it right away, but you need cash so considering the possibility that the artist's market will grow, you can take loans against three paintings.

The reality is that cash flow, finance, etc. needs to be understood if you want to be a gallerist now. Obviously, I know a lot of people who feel like the art game they entered is not the game that they are playing any more. But professions change, the world changes, and you can choose to get out or you can choose to stay in, but then you are going to have to face the realities. And I think that the more and more successful your

artists are, the more and more you are going to have to understand this finance game and its implications.

9. Does Instagram replace: Artforum ads? Art-fair booths? My gallery? Me?!?

Instagram can serve as a great form of promotion. You can hit people in their phones. There are galleries who specifically photograph works so that will look better on Instagram. And I am willing to bet that if you were to do a big data analysis of the size and format, especially the format, of the works being created by today's young artists, you would have a hell of a lot more squares than rectangles, because that is what looks good on Instagram. In the same way that I think if you were able to trace the history of architecture from the point at which computer-assisted design becomes a part of the daily process, you would see a lot more things that look exactly the same as the progam's template version of a doorknob or a door. So today's artists make squares. They are not conscious of it, it is just that on Instagram the square thing gets many more likes.

Does Instagram replace an Artforum ad? Maybe. But not yet. Because one of the big stipulations that a lot of artists have when they move to a new gallery is "I want a full-page ad in Artforum". Does it replace art fair booths? Certainly people are selling work over Instagram to the same kind of global audience that you try to reach via a fair. And they are having conversations with those people. But not the same kind of conversations that you have in person.

Does it replace my gallery? Do you not have to have a gallery if you have an active Instagram account? Well, Stefan Simchowitz sells a lot of work without having a gallery. For a secondary-market dealer it could absolutely be the case, especially when you combine all-purpose Instagram for the stuff you are trying to sell and DMing—direct messaging—for the things you are trying to sell to someone specific.

Does it replace the gallerist? Well, there are artists selling their work before their gallerists even saw it. One could argue there will be artists who say "You know what? I do not need to do this percent-commission gallerist thing, I can sell this work myself." And some of them will do just that.

All that being, and though I am a total technophile, I still think that the best way to sell art is to stand in front of the work with the collector. That is why fairs work. Because we are human beings, there is something primal, something about the way we sell and also about the way we get to know someone. There is no question that people are doing a ton of work digitally. I spend between half a day per week thinking about what more we can do online for our galleries. But I think there is still a huge value to that face-to-face contact.

"THE BEST WAY TO SELL ART IS TO STAND IN FRONT OF THE WORK WITH THE COLLECTOR. THAT IS WHY FAIRS WORK. BECAUSE WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS."

10. Do I really need to be paying rent for a gallery space?

People have been predicting the death of the gallery for a long time. And yet, we see that the major galleries keep building new spaces all over the world. In a moment when everyone says "the gallery is outdated", "no-one comes to galleries," you still have people building these global empires. And if you go to Lower East Side in New York, most of the galleries there are on their second space—and it is three times as big as their first space. In downtown Los Angeles, the new Hauser & Wirth gallery will be an amazing complex, with a restaurant and a huge bookstore. And it is not in West Hollywood, nor in Santa Monica. It's Downtown.

I think for the moment—not just because most fairs require you to have a gallery space and run exhibitions in it—the gallery space is still essential. Because artists don't want to work with a gallery that does not have a space. Most galleries should probably change spaces every seven to ten years because by then, your artists have done several shows in that space and there is just nothing left to give. So either you change your artists or you change your gallery. Also, new spaces can energise the collector base. This change of venue, this expansion, this change of neighbourhood, etc. has a real value in terms of keeping things dynamic.

So we have the fact that people are expanding, moving, getting bigger spaces, going to other cities, etc. And on the other hand, we have the analysis of Magnus Resch, the German art market analyst, who recently did a massive survey. And his argument about why galleries are not more financially successful was three-pronged. First, they are paying their artists too much, which is an interesting argument and not one that many artists are going to agree with. Second, that they are not paying their staff enough; if they paid people more, they would get better people who could sell more and work more efficiently, i.e there is too much reliance on the *jeunesse dorée* who will work almost for free but are not actually very hard. And third, people are paying too much for real estate. Why are people paying so much for real estate? To secure their artists. And if you are a gallery that does a lot of fairs, you need work to sell at those fairs. So in order to generate inventory, and also keep your artists' programme lively and exciting, the gallery space is still essential.

"MOST GALLERIES SHOULD PROBABLY CHANGE SPACES EVERY SEVEN TO TEN YEARS BECAUSE BY THEN, YOUR ARTISTS HAVE DONE SEVERAL SHOWS IN THAT SPACE AND THERE IS JUST NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE."

One of my great pleasures is to go to galleries in different cities. I recently went to Bogotá for the first time, and it was interesting to see Casas Riegner and Instituto de Visión. In the fairs, these galleries are 30 to 50 square metres and look similar. But if you go to Bogotá, they are in totally different neighbourhoods with different architecture, etc. This is the interesting part when you see a gallery space and not a gallery's booth: you understand it much better. In Berlin, when people started moving out of Mitte and into other places where you have wainscoting and terracotta ceilings, it was not about white cubes any more. It says something in terms of defining the gallery's identity, because the fair booth is a kind of flagship store or prototype, but you do not understand a gallery until you have seen the space, the neighbourhood and the architecture.

11. (Why) Should I continue being a gallerist?

Auction houses are encroaching on the galleries' territory. Gallery practice is becoming a finance game. Artists are going to leave the gallery. Gallerists have to figure out how to use Instagram instead of printing catalogues, etc. It's a tough vision, and I cannot give you an answer but I hope you find one.

My favourite book about the art world is from Massimo Minini named *Pizzini/Sentences*. It is a beautiful little book in English and in Italian with his stories of all the artists who he worked and did not work with. There is an amazing story about James Lee Byars hassling Massimo to work with him and the final part of this little essay is: "I only understood too late, I am sorry". Read this book in your darkest moments as a gallerist. It will inspire you to live a life with artists and with collectors.

"THE FAIR BOOTH IS A KIND OF FLAGSHIP STORE OR PROTOTYPE, BUT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND A GALLERY UNTIL YOU HAVE SEEN THE SPACE, THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND THE ARCHITECTURE."

There is a French saying: "*Il n'y a que les poissons morts qui nagent dans le même sens que la fleuve*" (Only the dead fish swim in the same direction as the current). I think that if you can find the collectors who are not buying with their ears but with their eyes, people who can get excited about your work, it can happen. There are collectors who are among the most sophisticated, interesting, philosophic people that I know. There are people like Harald Falckenberg, who is a voracious collector, someone who has deeply studied what it means to be a collector and is deeply critical of the ways other people collect. You even see it in places like China. It was long dominated by the auctions, and over time there is an emerging new class of younger collectors who understand that when you buy from a gallery, you support the artist, you become part of a programme, part of a dialogue and part of a conversation. And I think that conversation, that talking, is an essential part of what it means to be a gallerist in the future.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Georgina Adam Do you think that this creeping overlap of the luxury goods companies, of the notion of art and luxury being the same, is something worrying for the art market or something the gallery world needs to adapt to?

Marc Spiegler (M.S.) There are two realities. One is the people who have the means to buy luxury goods are the same people who have the means to buy art. It is a similar market. And the other reality is that fashion is more and more interested in art—they rip us off more and more. It can go well and it can go badly. As a rule, hopping into bed with fashion brands, with luxury, is a tricky thing and it takes a very strong artist and a very strong gallerist to make it work for them. The question is: do I use the tool or does the tool use me? I think it is something that can be used, it is a possibility that artists have now, but it is not one that should be taken lightly.

I will say I am never comfortable with the notion of art being sold as a luxury good. I think it is totally counter-productive. There is a magic to art, to the selling of art, and if you sell it as a luxury good, you strip away the magic. I think the short-term approach is to sell it as a luxury good like it is a handbag. The long-term is to say "No, that is not what we do".

One of the interesting developments for us (Art Basel) has been the changing attitude of our partners who come out of the luxury goods world, who are targeting ultra-high-net-worth individuals. Once, they were happy to just have a logo and a lounge. Now they want to do something in the art world. So we have partners like BMW, a luxury car company, doing this BMW Art Journey prize, where young artists from the youngest sectors of the fair are selected, shortlisted and they can each propose a journey that will take them round the world. A company like Davidoff, a cigar company, originally they would just hand roll cigars out at our events. And now they are doing a residency for Dominican artists because the tobacco plantations are in the Dominican Republic.

Q. What is your view about the necessity of galleries to organise themselves to define best practices? We spoke about poaching, because right now from my economic point of view, I find the art

market like the law of the jungle and the strongest—the one who has the most influence, the most money, is winning.

M. S. In December 2013, I signed a letter to all of our gallerists saying we had reached an agreement with the auction houses about the behaviour of auction house specialists at the fairs. They should not approach clients in the booth, not denigrate works, not treat the fair as a happy hunting ground. It was a kind of gentleman's agreement that was reached. But the auction houses said that there were also gallerists who come and try to break up their sales and denigrate the quality of the work by saying "I have a better one" or "I have a cheaper one."

Running a gallery is very hard and you are often in a very reactive state. I know of few galleries that have actually taken the time to sit down with an organisational consultant and elaborate a five-year plan and a new organisational model, new efficiencies, etc. But I do not see a lot of long-term strategic thinking outside of conferences like this one. Within Art Basel and the selection committees, we also have a joint committee which does not select anything: we talk about the big picture. We do a lot of long-term strategic thinking because our greatest fear is not that other fairs will bypass us, but that running the best fairs in the world will be irrelevant because the galleries are much weakened. And so one of the things I think you will find us doing more and more is stepping into places which were considered beyond our bailiwick. We have realised that where we can help galleries, whether it is with digital initiatives, with discussions of best practices or whatever, we should do that. Because we have a kind of federating function that can go beyond the commercial platform that we have.

As for the law of the jungle...I do not know of any industry that is getting easier or less competitive. I do not know of any industry where globalisation offers fewer pitfalls than opportunities, where speed is not the defining characteristic.

Yes, there are cases where an artist opportunistically jumps from one gallery to another. But I think artists are highly conscious of the fact that their moment may not last forever and they need the right gallery to work with. If you look more historically, like why is that Mono-ha and Gutai, which you could buy for pennies on the dollar before, now going through the roof? It is because the Japanese gallery system was not very strong and it was not until Western galleries like Fergus McCaffrey

or Blum & Poe went to Japan, resuscitated these artists, gave them a global platform, that it became important.

I work for Art Basel because I like galleries. Galleries play an incredibly important role. They tend to be the one taking the biggest and the first bet on an artist's career. And the difference between having the right gallery and the wrong gallery is just as important in an artist's success as their talent and their inspiration.

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAVING THE RIGHT GALLERY AND THE WRONG GALLERY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT IN AN ARTIST'S SUCCESS AS THEIR TALENT AND THEIR INSPIRATION."

Q. Is there a strategy for you to include more African galleries?

M.S. We do not believe in quotas, we believe in observation. When we see that the gallery has the potential, we encourage them to apply. Before that, there is no point. We have made the mistake in the past of taking a gallery too early and it did nothing for anybody. It created sub-par booths for us and it put the gallery under enormous pressure and they failed on the global stage when they just could not compete yet.

We said to the galleries that seemed promising, "If you have questions with your application, please come to us and we can help you at least not waste time". But that I think is as much as we can do. And I think it is a natural process. The best we can hope for is that the galleries that are ready will apply to the shows. But I do not think we should take galleries who are not ready.

On the other hand, there is this notion that you do Hong Kong to get into Miami Beach, you do Miami Beach to get into Basel. That is wrong. First of all, it is different committees and different directors who are responsible for each of the fairs. And finally, the notion of hierarchy according to which it is easier to get into Hong Kong than it is to get into Miami Beach, and it is easier to get into Miami Beach than it is to get into Basel, is totally wrong.

Our strategy is that each fair needs to be rooted in its region. When Annette and I launched the show in Hong Kong, one of the things we realised is that organically the Art Basel show in Basel was 50% roughly European galleries, and that the Art Basel show in Miami Beach was 50% North American and Latin American galleries. So we set actually as a rule for our committees that 50% of the galleries need to have spaces in Asia.

Q. What is your vision on how art fairs and also collecting are going to evolve? Sometimes I get the feeling they are too focused on objects and maybe they should be more focused on experiences?

M.S. It is a hard question. The fair model and to some extent the gallery model is very much based around selling objects. Objects are unique, you can buy them and you can own them. One of the things Art Basel has produced is a lot of experiences, whether it is films or performances, things like 14 Rooms or Il Tempo del Postino or the ICC tower in Hong Kong. These are not things that you sell but I think they are important.

For an art fair to stay relevant it has to include every aspect of an artist's work. That being said, I am not sure fairs are the best places to sell this kind of work. The market for video is infinitely smaller than the market for painting. The market for large-scale installations is quite small: most people just do not have the room for it. What does an Art Basel digital sector look like? I am not sure if the fair is the right environment for that.

Most fairgoers feel this constant pressure to see as much work as possible because there is an unbelievable and unseeable amount of work at those fairs. So, durational works are difficult. I know people who go to Basel and only go to Unlimited, but that is a very particular kind of connoisseur. Usually they are not even collectors, just people who want to see the most interesting large-scale art of today.

Q. Concerning the so-called single-venue gallery, which most galleries are. There is a concentration in the art world, and the domination of the multiple-venue galleries seems to be also in relation to Art Basel and to the different fairs. This seems to be very important. What do you think about it?

M.S. There was an article which showed that nearly half of MoMA solo shows had come from artists represented by just five galleries. In comparison with that Art Basel—where the galleries you are talking about have spaces which are no larger than the two dozen 40-odd galleries in the front row and where you do not have a huge predominance of their works in Unlimited—is a more egalitarian space. The reality is no art fair is going to change the fact that certain galleries have more firepower than others, and that means they are able to draw bigger artists, and able to throw bigger dinners.

But when we think about these galleries, as I said before, we treat them well, in the way we treat our other clients well. It is not like we are giving them ten times as many VIP cards or six times as much space. From our perspective it is important that the show works for all of the galleries. There is never a fair where everybody does well, but when I hear that the powerhouse galleries, the young galleries and the mid-tier galleries did well, then I feel like the fair is working. If I hear only the heavy-hitters did well, then I feel like something is wrong.

It is perhaps an altruistic notion, but my feeling is that when it works well, a fair is a very optimistic gesture on the part of the gallerists because what you are doing is you are pooling your collectors with the notion that although your collectors will discover other galleries, other people's collectors will discover you. So it is good to have the big powerhouse galleries there because they bring a kind of collector who would only follow them. One of the things we have done at Art Basel is to extend the opening VIP hours with the notion that if you give people four hours, they go to see the five gallerists that they always see; if you give people a day and a half, then they start wandering, and then they go to dinner, and then they hear about some gallery they have never heard of and then they go see that gallery the next day. So I think the fairs need to get as much from the powerhouse galleries as we give to them.

Q. Every time we attend an art fair, we are sometimes overwhelmed about all the parallel programmes, off sections, performance, programmes, you name it. Is it necessary? Sometimes it is disturbing even in our interaction with the visitors. What is the added value of this?

M.S. Too much is never enough, but you have to be selective and realistic. One of the reasons why, for instance, a lot of people feel like the FIAC week is more pleasant than the Frieze week, is because there is less to do. You leave Paris feeling like you saw the Pompidou show, the Musée d'Art Moderne, the Palais de Tokyo, the Marais, Belleville, the fair, Officielle, and maybe you saw Paris International; you had a nice lunch, you caught up with an old friend, and that was three and a half days. Whereas I think with London there is just too much. In the same way that a fair that has too much going on can leave people unsatisfied.

I do not expect everybody to do everything, but we like to think that by having a rich and diverse programme, we give people a kind of choose-your-own-adventure modus. The original model of the show, which was much more like a flea market with buyers and sellers and objects, has been replaced for better or for worse by the notion of the art fair as a kind of family reunion for the art world, and there are people who go there. You see curators and museum directors. I remember talking to Matthias Mühling, who is a director of the Lenbachhaus in Germany, who said "I always come later in the week" because "once people have sold, you can start asking them to support catalogues". Quite frankly we use our talks and panels as a way to have curators and artists come who might otherwise not attend, but also because it is important.

I was a journalist for 15 years and one of the first things that we did when I joined the organisation was to start putting all of our talks and panels online in video. It is not always beautifully recorded, but the point is that it is there. So the eight years I have been there, we have probably put around a thousand hours of video online. And that is valuable. Anyone with a high-speed connection, whether they are in Vietnam or Tunisia or whatever, can actually go there and watch these videos. There is a kind of agenda-driving focus that goes beyond just the buying and selling of objects.

What a show like Art Basel does can help to define a market, and I think Unlimited is the best example of this. Unlimited was started in 2000 because the show organisers realised there was a lot of work that just did not fit in a booth: it was too loud, it was too noisy, it was too smelly. Or it was video and nobody was willing to devote enough space in a booth to show just one video. For a lot of people the fact that Art Basel put this kind of work forward—not just for museums but

for private collections—meant that a lot of private collectors suddenly realised "Hey, I can buy this. And actually I have room for it because I am just converting some giant paper mill into my loft."

The answer is yes, it can be too much, but we are not expecting you to do all of it. The role of the modern fair is to try to serve a lot of different groups, not just the buyers and sellers. When we think of what we are doing for the galleries, it is not just about attracting collectors. It is also attracting curators, critics and museum directors.

Q. How much do art fairs consider visitors like people that are just there to be with their family or their friends in a meeting point—a place to be, a place to be seen, a place to hang out—and how much does the architecture of the fair give to them in terms of seats, have their coffee, walk around… How much are art fairs thinking about this other sector of visitors?

M.S. I know gallerists who say you could close after VIP days because the rest of it is a waste of time. From a financial perspective, ticket sales only represent 10% of our revenue. So from a financial perspective, it is really not that important to us. You could also solve this problem very easily if you wanted to have fewer visitors by just jacking up the prices to, say, £150. But there are two things you have to keep in mind. One is that most artists want their work to be seen, and the other is that you never know who the future collector or artist or curator is. We live, thankfully, in a world where it is not just the children of the social elite who become artists and collectors and curators and critics.

We have hundreds and hundreds and thousands of school kids who come to our fairs every year. Keeping them under control is not easy, but we think it is an important function. I remember Yana Peel, one of the great patrons in Hong Kong, saying "Marc, before Art Basel came to town, the only place we could show our children art was at an auction preview."

Last year we quadrupled the amount of sitting space in the halls in Miami Beach. And it does not matter whether that sitting space is for aged billionaires or young kids, but people need to sit during the fair if they are starting to walk through 250 booths. We do not have a radically different approach in terms of the general ticket-buying public and in terms of the VIPs. We segment their presence so that

the people who are at the core of the galleries' immediate success—collectors, critics, curators, museum directors—have the time to see all of the fair and not just part of the fair. If you are a contemporary fair, you have to take the general public seriously.

Q. Would you speak more about the notion of transparency? We talked a lot about the potential merger, of the finance world with the art world, vis-à-vis that transparency. But I think we all know that consensus really builds value in the end.

M.S. I will be very honest with you: it is a notion I am still grappling with. There may need to be a redefinition of how we do business, and transparency will have to be part of that. There is a whole choreography going on. Very few galleries in New York respect the law that you are actually supposed to have all your prices printed at the front desk. Some people are getting zero discounts, and some people are getting 20% discount. And some people more than that because they are heavy hitters, and some are getting extended payment terms. Transparency goes against the way the art business has been conducted for the last few centuries, but I think it should not just be the auction houses that are defining for the public what is going on in an artist's market. The danger of transparency is this: you will not be able to hide when an artist's market has collapsed. Of course, when it has collapsed, it usually collapses at auction, so everyone is clear on that anyway.

C. There are really two markets. There is the financial market and there is the museum market for an artist, which can be independent of that…

M.S. Yes, except that with very hot artists galleries mix the two by forcing people to buy a work for a museum when they buy a work for themselves. But of course, the museum market is different. It moves much more slowly and has a higher value for the artist—because the artworks are not usually sold off by the museums, although it happens occasionally. The museum market is to some extent more transparent because museums announce their acquisitions: every year you get a list of the works that were bought. Although I do not think they usually say for how much. And the fact the auction prices are more and more visible for younger artists today means they are defining more of people's perception of the market.

Elizabeth Dee

Elizabeth Dee is a cultural entrepreneur, curator, dealer and producer. She is the CEO of Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York and of Independent Art Fairs (New York/ Brussels). The gallery, established in 2002, is located on Fifth Avenue in Harlem. Dee has produced numerous groundbreaking, first and internationally recognised exhibitions by such artists as John Giorno, Adrian Piper, Julia Wachtel, Derek Jarman and Ryan Trecartin. Previously, Dee created X Initiative, a non-profit consortium of the global art community, presenting exhibitions and programming in response to the major philosophical and economic shifts in contemporary art.

Touria El Glaoui

Born and raised in Morocco, Touria El Glaoui holds an MBA in Strategic Management and International Business from Pace University, New York. She began her career in the banking industry as a wealth management consultant before moving to London in 2001, where she undertook various business development positions in the Telecom/IT industry. Alongside her career she has organised and co-curated exhibitions of her father's work, Moroccan artist Hassan El Glaoui. In October 2013, she founded 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, held in London and New York on an annual basis.

Annette Schönholzer

Annette Schönholzer is based in Basel, Switzerland, where she worked for Art Basel in broad variety of roles for 12 years. In the period 2002–2007, she held as Show Manager of Art Basel Miami Beach; 2008–2013 as Co-Director of Art Basel fairs with a focus on strategy, finances, human resources, logistics, and design. In 2013, she was appointed Director of New Initiatives, spearheading strategic development and global projects for Art Basel. In 2014, she founded ".connect the dots", an independent company offering consultancy, coaching and concept development in the realm of the arts and culture. Starting in January 2017, Schönholzer will be the new operative and administrative director of the Kunstmuseum Basel.

Carlos Urroz

Carlos Urroz is Director of ARCOmadrid since May 2011. His contributions to ARCOmadrid include: forging the link with Latin America through the section "Solo Projects"; the new section "Opening" for young galleries; and the "ARCO Professional Meetings", a new activity format that gathers together over 100 museum and biennials directors and art professionals to Madrid each year. Previously, in 2005–2011 Urroz founded and ran UP (Urroz Proyectos), a company aimed at designing and implementing projects within the cultural context. From 1998 to 2006, he held as Director of Galería Helga de Alvear, Madrid.

FAIRS UNDER REVIEW

SPEAKERS

Elizabeth Dee, Touria El Glaoui,
Carlos Urroz

MODERATOR

Annette Schönholzer

CONCEPTS

"fairtigue", proliferation, moving the gallery practice forward, scale, experience, to build audiences & collectors, discovery, representation, public awareness, education, geographical focuses, differentiation, committees, marketing, the gallery's strategy

FAIRS UNDER REVIEW

Annette Schönholzer (A.S.)
For the purpose of this conversation, we are going to move away from the major galleries and art fair system and dive more into asking ourselves what is actually happening at a point in time when the art fair fatigue, or "fairtigue", has become a term that is regularly used amongst gallerists, collectors, and curators.

I'm sure that you are aware of some of the numbers of what has happened over the past 40 to 45 years. Contemporary art fairs started in the late 1960s with a couple of prominent art fairs in Central Europe and then increased in number, particularly over the past 10 to 15 years and even over the past five years since the economic crisis, to the point where we stand today at an estimated 220 art fairs worldwide that represent contemporary art. But alongside some of the major fairs, there has also been an increase in international and more regional fairs that lay claim to being different to the major fairs that we know.

In this panel we all have been either former art fair directors or are current art fair directors. What we would like to investigate is what this current array of different types of exhibitions and sales platforms actually offers to galleries. What do they expect from galleries that participate in them? What do they bring to collectors? And how should galleries choose to participate in one or the other? For which reasons? I would like to start with each of you giving us maybe a quick rundown of how those fairs actually came about and your role as directors of those fairs.

Touria El Glaoui (T.E.G.)
1:54 specialises in contemporary African art and African Diaspora art. We launched it in 2013 in this beautiful neoclassical building called Somerset House in London, so is three years old now. We strategically started the fair to be in parallel to Frieze in order to have a leverage on the base of collectors and the entire event that the Frieze Week was providing to London.

"ALL THOSE MAJOR ARTISTS IN AFRICA, SOME OF THEM VERY ESTABLISHED, HAD ABSOLUTELY NOT CROSSED OVER THE GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS AND WERE NOT REPRESENTED IN INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS, FAIRS OR EVEN BIENNIALS."

The idea started in 2011 when I was travelling a lot to Africa with my previous job and I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in amazing places with very rich art scenes, like Ghana, Lagos or Johannesburg. I was very surprised when I was leaving the continent that there was very little evidence of what I was seeing. All those major artists in Africa, some of them very established, had absolutely not crossed over the geographical borders and were not represented in international museums, fairs or even biennials.

My objectives were then to initiate a platform that would give visibility to the multiplicity and the diversity of contemporary art and artists on an international stage. When I started there was a very important initiative which was the Tate Acquisition Committee, which had created an African commission. That really supported what I was doing in terms of putting a focus on contemporary African art and giving it a voice. Since then, there have been at least five new galleries in London supporting contemporary African art. Now there is the potential of a second art fair in Paris doing contemporary African art. So things have changed and they're changing really fast, but in 2013 besides the two art fairs in South Africa, we were pretty much the leading European African art fair.

I am the daughter of an artist and know how important visibility is. On top of this, there is absolutely no infrastructure or collector base that can support the development of the artistic art scenes on the African continent. And all those international collectors are not going to move to Africa to discover artists. It is obviously difficult in terms of access. So the best way was to create a platform and bring the art to them in London or New York, where the main collector base of artists are.

It has been very productive since we started. We have had the chance of having some of the biggest collectors from Frieze coming to check out 1:54, so it was a very smart move on our part to do it in parallel to a big event, and avoid those people having to come back for a very specialised art fair. For the moment it is a very small fair, a boutique art fair. We have 38 galleries participating in London and 16 galleries with one special project in our first satellite edition in New York. It's still something we can export easily.

My idea of the fair is to speed up the inclusion of contemporary African artists and African diasporan artists into the market. There were absolutely zero African galleries at FIAC 2015 and probably six African artists out of 1,732 artists. Those numbers are not acceptable. So the idea of 1:54, which by the way is a reference to the 54 countries that constitute the continent, was to gather people and get museums engaged with contemporary African artists and African diasporan artists in a very speedy way, to make sure that they are included in all the museums and all the biennials that are happening around the world. And in many ways we have changed the way the market sees African art now. There are a lot of museums that have acquired a lot of pieces since we started. So I am very happy to provide this one-stop-shop in Europe or in the US.

"THERE WERE ABSOLUTELY ZERO AFRICAN GALLERIES AT FIAC 2015 AND PROBABLY SIX AFRICAN ARTISTS OUT OF 1,732 ARTISTS. THOSE NUMBERS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE."

Elizabeth Dee (E.D.)
Independent started in the middle of the financial crisis. Darren Flook, the co-founder of Hotel Gallery, and I were sitting on a selection committee for Artissima for three days in the middle of August, going through hundreds of applications and just starting to question the nature of what we were doing. As young to mid-career gallerists, moving from one status to another, we started to think: "We've inherited a system. Does this system really work for our generation? And given the fact that we have this tremendous financial strain going on, how do we inspire ourselves to keep moving forward in our practice? How do we preserve the practice of gallerism for others?"

The idea was not necessarily to start a fair, although that is what we did. The idea was to take a look at the territories of gallery work as it is now: what the tradition has been and what it could potentially be; the studio and the needs of our particular artists that we're working with and representing; the international and biennial circuit and how effective it is in bringing together deeper discussions behind the content of artwork; and then the museum model and its benefits and obstacles.

"WE HAVE INHERITED A SYSTEM. DOES THIS SYSTEM REALLY WORK FOR OUR GENERATION? IN THIS TREMENDOUS FINANCIAL STRAIN GOING ON, HOW DO WE PRESERVE THE PRACTICE OF GALLERISM FOR OTHERS?"

We looked a lot at scale and how one needs to navigate an experience, and the fact that we are human beings and it is important for us to physically show up and engage with artworks; at the power of consensus and how that really is a fundamental driving factor in what ultimately becomes the market; and at the work that young and mid-career galleries are doing towards the development of artists and the reintroduction of artists who maybe were in the market at the wrong period of time. How do we highlight that programmatic identity, which can often be very lost in a large-scale market fair?

We were very lucky in that we had access to a former museum, the Dia Center for the Arts in New York that allowed us to do our first edition there. It was from the second edition that we started something that people really valued, and it was something that we wanted to keep developing in a more collaborative way. Our gallerists, particularly the European gallerists, became extremely important to us and we began really deep conversations about what their needs were. A lot of these galleries were developing artists abroad and we weren't seeing them in New York because the city was so related to the market. Art Basel was in Miami, so we were missing a lot of people like Maureen Paley and other galleries whose artists didn't have representation in New York at the time necessarily, and we didn't see a generation coming up unless we went to fairs in Europe or saw them at their galleries or in their own cities. So this became a consideration as well.

Every year we have tried to evolve the project in relationship with those concerns and considerations, which have changed because we've moved through the financial crisis. A lot of our galleries closed, many continued and others became stronger and matured becoming major galleries. We're still very much in a consortium with them and with the network which has now gone to over 150 galleries.

We wanted to bring our project in some form or another to Europe. To do it in a way that could make an impact, that could add value to the existing ecosystem and that could also give back to some of our European gallerists who had really taken the risk over many years of coming to New York and presenting material that often hadn't been seen there. So the idea was to find a home that was very central to continental Europe—Brussels is very central to Paris, to the Rhineland, to London—and to go into a place that was itself moving from one status as a city to another. Plus, we wanted to go in where there was a new generation coming in; a place that was affordable for people to live, work and do their practice there and also that we could be in dialogue with. The collectors of Belgium have been very supportive of our fair. They were very instrumental in bringing us to Belgium, and that is how we ended up starting the fair.

Carlos Urroz (C.U.)
ARCO started 35 years ago. In 2016 we celebrate our 35th anniversary in February. It was the initiative of a gallerist, Juana de Aizpuru, who

was inspired by the models that existed in Basel and Paris. It was five years after the death of Franco. Madrid at that time was a very grey and dull place. She proposed this to change the image of the city, having all the institutions supporting this project and investing in the fair. The Madrid Fair Organisation took the lead, mounting an international contemporary art fair at a moment when there was no art market and very few galleries that were doing an international programme, mainly because it was very complicated due to taxes—there was a luxury tax at that moment.

That initiative was so popular with the public that it became one of the most visited fairs from the outset. One of ARCO's pitches is that it is highly attended. For the last five years, we have had two days of professional visits. Also since the beginning, it was Juana's idea to include lots of museum directors and art critics as part of the fair itself—in public talks and discussions—and that has continued to evolve ever since. Now we have over 115 panelists coming every year to visit the fair and to do talks at the same time. ARCO is also supported by the institutions. In the beginning, the Ministry of Culture and the City of Madrid funded the fair. Now, we don't have any public funding except for some projects, but it is still very much supported by the royal family, which comes to the opening.

ARCO is organised by the Madrid Fair Organisation—IFEMA—which is a non-profit organisation. That means all the income is reinvested in the fair itself. We are also the venue owners, which means we don't have to rent a super-expensive space or build a huge tent; that allows us to reinvest more money into other projects. Most of our income goes to create new collectors, raising awareness of contemporary art among the general public through press actions. So, over the course of these 35 years, ARCO has already created a generation of art collectors: people that used to come with their schools when they were young and later, with their first incomes, they bought a small piece; and now they have a business, they're doing well, and they've become collectors. We really work a lot on finding new audiences for contemporary art. For instance, we go to companies to encourage them to start collections, like Coca-Cola, encouraged by ARCO to set up a foundation and to purchase at the fair.

We created the ARCO Foundation in order to give an example to the general public about how to do an international art collection, with international art critics making the selection of the works. It was Edy de Wilde who in 1987 made the first acquisitions for the fair. The collection is now on loan in a public museum, and we keep buying at the fair every year. We try to find potential collectors among people who are becoming wealthy or are just afraid of going into the galleries.

We have also a consultancy service within the fair. ARCO is a big fair: we have over 150 galleries. This consultancy service is not someone that is dealing with the galleries but is leading someone that is making their first purchases at the fair. Most of the work is in building new audiences, new collectors, and of course in bringing lots of foreign collectors to Spain. We have an international collectors programme with over 250 guests that we invite to Madrid. We pamper them to make sure that the participating galleries do business.

One of the important aspects of art fairs is creating an awareness of contemporary art. Galleries are so disseminated and so isolated that only when the art fair takes place, there is public awareness of the situation of contemporary art and the media talk about it. In the long run it generates a new breed of collectors. You see that also in countries where they start doing an art fair—Colombia, São Paulo... So that's one of the assets of art fairs itself. It is not just bringing together the collectors that already exist and gathering them together, but fostering the generation of new ones.

"GALLERIES ARE SO DISSEMINATED AND SO ISOLATED THAT ONLY WHEN THE ART FAIR TAKES PLACE, THERE IS PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE SITUATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE MEDIA TALK ABOUT IT."

A.S. Apparently all of the fairs sprang out of a particular moment in time and out of some type of crisis, whether that was 35 years ago or whether it was the most recent economic downturn, or because a showcase for an entire continent was needed. In most of the cases, what I also find interesting is that there's a gallerist very much behind the idea. Touria, you don't have a gallery background at all. How did you become the founder of 1:54?

T.E.G. I'm the daughter of an artist. It was very far from what I was doing before but it was in my DNA. My father's studio was always in the heart of our home, so I was able to look closely at the gallery dealings, loans to museums, etc. But I think it is more my trip to Africa that made me realise the lack of this platform outside the continent and how artists were misrepresented in terms of every international encounter in the art world. And it is still the case. Okwui Enwezor did the Venice Biennale this year, which featured a lot of artists from the continent, but it is probably a one-off. We won't have another Nigerian Biennale director very soon. There were a lot of galleries focusing on and specialising in contemporary African art and African Diaspora artists, but not showcasing the work because the art fairs were not inviting them. Or they were not known by the art fairs so that they could be showcased on their platforms.

These galleries didn't have a platform before, and now they are also the ones pushing me to do New York. They are conscious both that we need to be there and that we're stronger together. It was quite interesting. Art fairs are very different. My biggest worry is education—having a forum of discussions to educate people about contemporary African art in general and also bringing a lot back to the continent. I have less worry about losing my galleries and who's pitching for them. The more they are taken away from me, the happier I am because that means that actually inclusion is happening with more space for them in the market. I just hope that we're not creating a trend, but providing a very consistent platform for those artists, one that helps them grow in their local artistic scene. Sometimes they're the only people making things work in their villages and cities. So we do hope that we are helping them to sell and to keep on with their practice.

"MY BIGGEST WORRY IS EDUCATION—HAVING A FORUM OF DISCUSSIONS TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART IN GENERAL (...) I HAVE LESS WORRY ABOUT LOSING MY GALLERIES AND WHO'S PITCHING FOR THEM."

A.S. Armory will be putting on an African focus next year. What does that feel like to you? Do you feel like different fairs are taking on the responsibility—or at least the interest—and creating that kind of focus on African art?

T.E.G. From my galleries' perspective, they know it is a one-time shot. With 1:54, they have a constant platform where they can showcase. It is part of our role to be very careful, so I do tell them that those shows are very expensive and sometimes have strong requirements to participate. The Armory Show is about the focus on one solo artist, which is quite an expensive bet for them considering first of all their currency and the rate of exchange compared to the cost of booths internationally. That is why I advise them to "Negotiate better, and have a booth for next year as well because it is quite a big bet." But at the same time, the objective of 1:54 was always to provide visibility and if this is helping them to put on their list of artists at The Armory, that is very good for the gallery's biography. I just hope that there's not too much of this craziness of a one-time shot and it doesn't create a bubble that will just crash down very fast. But for the moment we still need those events; we need this acceleration to happen for African artists and African Diaspora artists.

A.S. You also have mentioned that you're thinking of launching a third fair and that it would possibly be in Africa...

T.E.G. I'm kind of pressured by the press to do it. They're all asking me to do it on the continent and people don't realise how big Africa is. We're talking about 54 countries and different economic growth rates at the moment. I do believe there is a lot more to do than just showcasing art on the continent, which would be useful for them. Even if we were just taking the 1:54 forum in Africa, it would be an extremely important thing for the country where we decide to do it in. There are countries starting to have a strong collector base. Lagos, for example, would be a potential base because the galleries there are selling in situ 70% of the work their artists are producing. This is not the case for other galleries, which don't sell much locally and actually sell everything internationally. It would be a way to know how the galleries do and how receptive the market is to 1:54.

C.U. ARCO has experience in geographical focuses. In 1994 we decided to invite a country in order to offer new contents and to bring foreign galleries. Since then we've done lots of countries. These one-year invitations create awareness and it is good for the country, but it doesn't create a long-term relationship. Not all those countries come back. At the same time, for the last five years we have been doing solo projects dedicated only to Latin American artists, which has created a stronger link with Latin American collectors, galleries and curators; it's an ongoing focus. There is also a symposium of Latin American and European museums lead by the Museum Reina Sofía. So, geographical focuses are interesting if they are done for the long run, five or six years at least.

A.S. It is a very interesting comment and it leads to this other question of who is invited and who is not invited, and who actually makes those decisions. I understand that in the case of ARCO, there might be a couple of galleries that you would love to have, and have not agreed to come yet. With Independent, Elizabeth, it is by invitation only. How does that work?

E.D. We've had the same founding curator from the beginning, Matthew Higgs, the director of White Columns, and we have really developed the concept with him. Our goal with Independent was not to form a fair in the traditional sense but to take elements of event culture that help people focus, and also a particular bespoke response to works as they're being developed. We're not particularly interested in replicating anything that is out there. We're interested in developing dialogues with particular presentations developed specifically for Independent, and it has become one of those fairs that artists do want to make specific work for. It really is something curatorial and very collaborative in nature. We also want to rotate the gallerists every year: 30% on average. So we really see it as a larger network that features the gallerist as a curator, a cultural producer, a developer, and someone who isn't just showing up with six artists in a stand, of which two are the hot names. We really wanted to get away from that market situation that happens in the larger fairs and to really develop projects from the inside-out. The navigational system of the fair experience is really defined until we really have our projects in and gallerists have given us their feedback. We really take that into consideration with every aspect, so it is very much a bespoke project in that sense.

"WE REALLY SEE IT AS A LARGER NETWORK THAT FEATURES THE GALLERIST AS A CURATOR, A CULTURAL PRODUCER, A DEVELOPER, AND SOMEONE WHO ISN'T JUST SHOWING UP WITH SIX ARTISTS IN A STAND."

It was not our full concern to start a fair. It came out of a broader sense of inquiry and dialogue and collaboration with other galleries. Keeping costs low is another important issue. Something that I definitely want to address in this forum is the increasing amount of pressure that gallerists are under to participate. They want to participate in these fairs because it is great for them and for the artists they represent. But the costs are becoming increasingly prohibitive. We just hired our first full-time staff people after seven years because we didn't want to pass that cost on to our galleries. We felt that we had the network to produce something that people wanted to see without having a dominant infrastructure that would add to the costs of doing this. So that is also another reason we're structured in the way that we are.

A.S. I'm going to point to a publication that came out recently from Edward Winkleman, which is called *Selling Contemporary Art*. There is a whole chapter in this book about dealers being fair organisers. Do you think that dealers are better fair organisers?

E.D. Dealers are great fair founders and there is a wonderful tradition of that. I don't feel I organise the fair. I am a conduit for discussion that leads to people working independently together. We're providing a service, but I see us more as advocates for the autonomy of gallerists. We don't want to regulate how they work. We want them to essentially take the opportunity of the invitation and develop it completely for their own needs. And we want to be there to support that. We're a very particular kind of project. Gallerists really do understand what is needed. They're sensitive to certain key things. And our world is changing, so the scale that Independent is at the current moment means we're in a position of being able to respond to that. We're very nimble. We can move and make adjustments. That is something that we do with the galleries that we're working with in every particular edition.

C.U. Art fairs have to be very close to galleries. The organising committees cannot be in charge of the application and selection process only. It is about the contents of the fair, the marketing, the image, what to do, and what not to do.

I worked for seven years at a gallery with Helga de Alvear. We did lots of art fairs at that time: four per year. We were the ones doing most art fairs in Madrid. And it is a very good practice to be on the other side to understand what a gallery needs from an art fair. If the fair is too small, the scale won't work and you won't make a profit; if it's too big, it won't be interesting.

"DEALERS ARE GREAT FAIR FOUNDERS AND THERE IS A WONDERFUL TRADITION OF THAT."

In the late 1990s, there was a huge discussion about galleries selecting other galleries to come into the fair. It was considered unfair because they were selecting who was getting in, so it's competition. IFEMA tried to solve that by including other professionals in the 14 people committee—like museum directors—and it was a mess because they don't have any knowledge of young galleries. So again, it's very important that fairs stay close to the galleries. Otherwise, they don't work.

A.S. Maybe we should talk about this general perception that in the past fairs were meant to service galleries, while now there is a broad perception by gallerists that basically say "Well, we're here to service fairs". How do you avoid this perception? Or is this perception only something that's more geared to the major fairs?

T.E.G. For me it was completely absurd from a business side that participating galleries would make the decision of who's getting in. I didn't really understand the whole concept of having galleries who could have a clear mind of who was coming in as part of the art fair. In 1:54 we decided to not go through this and instead to have a very small committee: one curator, one gallerist that was not part of the fair, and me, who had a broader vision of where I wanted the fair to go. It seemed much easier to veto or not to veto the galleries.

We're about discovering young artists and galleries from the continent. It's not about bringing galleries that could be seen everywhere in the world right now. But everybody has to play their role. Galleries should service themselves. I'm very happy to listen to the galleries at the end of the fair. We go around; we ask them how they felt, what we could do to improve the fair, where they want to go next. I'm interested in their feedback but I won't let them tell me who we should take, who we should have on board, or what we should do next. We have a vision that we're trying to accomplish and they're part of the journey, but without having too much influence on what we do.

"THE ORGANISING COMMITTEES CANNOT BE IN CHARGE OF THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS ONLY. IT'S ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THE FAIR, THE MARKETING, THE IMAGE, WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO."

A.S. Touria, I have the impression that your focus is really on the representation of the artists. The galleries seem to be more of a vehicle through which those artists can be represented. Is that correct?

T.E.G. Completely. It's probably the result of being the daughter of an artist. I'm all about fighting for the artists and their visibility, and educating them as well. Education is a big part of what we do. Sometimes even their relationship with their gallery is very new to them. In their country, they are able to sell directly to collectors. They don't really see the point of a gallerist in general because they can do their own sales and they are used to doing that. And collectors are used to going to an artist's studio and buy directly from them. So it's also about allowing them to understand why a gallery is useful in promoting them, but also publishing publications on their work, referencing their work, managing their relationship with museums, etc. For a lot of artists it is their first international exhibition: they have not been invited before to any museums or to have solo shows. It is a lot about them. That is why we are very friendly to artists.

C.U. Because of this proliferation of art fairs, there are more and more solos happening. In ARCO, we try to encourage galleries to do duo

presentations. I think a solo at an art fair is a very specific project and sometimes the relationship with the artist is difficult for the gallery. But there are more and more solo projects happening all over. Art fairs are encouraging artists to do more and more solos, and the galleries are accepting it. I think it's also less tiring when galleries are doing seven or eight fairs a year, and they do solos in two or three of them.

It's something different if they have to put in artists in dialogue, it's more curatorial. For us there is a big strength in the gallery: it's the gallery who is doing the selection, who is putting these two artists together. I think it is a good curatorial exercise for the galleries just to bring two artists to the fair. The strengths of the fairs is to be more and more different. We don't want to be like the major fairs. We want to have a different geographical focus, different contents, a different layout, a different architecture, to be in a different space. The more different fairs are amongst themselves, the more they will survive. If we all clone each other and are simply moving the same galleries, the same works and the same collectors from city to city, the only difference will be the local museums and the restaurants. People want to see something different regardless of whether they like or dislike it.

"THE MORE DIFFERENT FAIRS ARE AMONGST THEMSELVES, THE MORE THEY WILL SURVIVE. IF WE ALL CLONE EACH OTHER AND ARE SIMPLY MOVING THE SAME GALLERIES, THE SAME WORKS AND THE SAME COLLECTORS FROM CITY TO CITY, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WILL BE THE LOCAL MUSEUMS AND THE RESTAURANTS."

A.S. Are art fairs moving more and more in the direction of discovering emerging art?

E.D. Every good fair has that. Even if it's a work you've been following for 20 years, you may be surprised by what's coming out of the studio now, or seeing work that has previously not been shown. Fairs should always focus on that element of discovery.
What you're talking about is management of expectations, about the responsibilities of the gallery versus the fair. That's a cloudy area that

needs clarity. You have different reasons for participating in different ways: if I were to go to ARCO as a gallerist, I would want to bring a range of my programme because that region of the world doesn't come to New York. That becomes perhaps one strategy. But if I were a local gallery, then I would essentially do something very focused for those that know the programme well and are looking to be surprised by something that they thought they knew already.

It's also about how much of the culture of the gallery you can bring into a particular platform. There is the geography, the scale, issues of other galleries representations of the same artist so there's that strategic alliance that has to happen. All these things need to come into play, and once that all those conversations have been had, go back to the drawing board and ask: "What worked here and what didn't work? Are we thinking in terms of the larger market ecosystem of these particular artists at this time? What about the museum awareness of the artists? How do I get that balance right? Where is the gallery at this point?" It is starting to think in a more strategic way, a level of inquiry that goes beyond the short-term memory of that particular weekend. If we don't think about it that way, we're not going to have a longer-term, sustainable economy.

C.U. Strategy is very important. I am having more and more conversations with galleries about art fair strategy. Firstly, with the galleries that we want to bring to ARCO, but also with some of the galleries that are not accepted. They call me and ask "What happened? What can I do?" And if it's a Spanish gallery, they say "Now I should go and do fairs abroad". And it's not just like that. You cannot simply go and apply to all the Latin American fairs or all the European satellite fairs just to develop an international programme. You have to be focused and think where it makes sense for you to go. The preparation for art fairs is very important and it's even more difficult now that there are so many artists. You can see the results for galleries that have prepared in advance: researching about collectors or arriving one week before in order to visit people. They make more contacts; they learn how to address the people and how to talk to them. One may think that going to every continent is a good idea, and maybe that's not the strategy right now. It's better to be focused and understand what the profile of the gallery is, the artists, the geographical concerns, etc.

“ARE WE THINKING IN TERMS OF THE LARGER MARKET ECOSYSTEM OF THESE PARTICULAR ARTISTS AT THIS TIME? WHAT ABOUT THE MUSEUM AWARENESS OF THE ARTISTS? HOW DO I GET THAT BALANCE RIGHT? WHERE IS THE GALLERY AT THIS POINT?”

A.S. What about the notion of brand association? Do galleries choose to go to one fair or another because of the transfer of image between the gallery and the fair and vice versa? A gallery can say to their artists “I’m participating in this fair, which might have a particular value”. Or a collector might even say “I bought this at this fair” rather than say “I bought it at this gallery”. “I was at Basel” or “I was at Frieze” or “I was at the Armory” or “I was at Independent”. Each one has a certain type of image and a reputation that might express more than the gallery itself can express at the moment. How important is that in terms of the choices that galleries have to make?

C.U. It’s important but it cannot be the only reason. Imagine a small gallery going to Frieze for a couple of years and they don’t sell. Spending a week in London and paying for an art fair booth there is a very expensive kind of branding. If the gallery’s strategy is not working, they should reconsider it. Perhaps this aspiration about being in the major art fairs is killing some of the smaller galleries.

E.D. It depends on what you’re talking about. If the brand of the fair is too dominant, that is an issue. Or when you forget the name of the gallerist you bought the work from, and you just remember the name of the artist and the fair where you bought it. In that case, something’s out of balance and needs to change. We need to be the advocates for each individual gallery platform and featuring them. The brand of Independent is far less significant than that effort. I find that when people over-determine the identity of a fair, it is often through misinterpretation of what that fair actually stands for. We don’t even have a logo. There’s a reason for that, but that’s just our particular approach. It’s about what can you add that isn’t being added already, and how can you come in as a gallerist and benefit from that context, but also provide something that is innovative to it. Lots of galleries

write to Independent all the time, wanting to be considered for an invitation. Rarely are those questions actually answered in the emails that come in; rarely does someone say “I’ve been looking at the context and there’s a particular project I have in mind that might add value to the next edition”. We’re looking at the consensus of how things evolve. The sale at the end of that consensus is just a sign of it being successful for the galleries that want to do it and want to keep returning to it.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q. Carlos, you spoke about the long-term relationship with the solos and the Latin American focus. How does ARCO make the selection each year, and what is the goal?

C.U. Regarding the Latin American focus and the solo projects, it’s something that has been going on for five years. We regard it as a research practice: we have curators that research emerging galleries and artists, and they make the proposals. In recent years, it has not only been about Latin America, as there has also been a subject chosen by the curators, so it’s really distinctive and worthwhile seeing within a fair context. It was an ongoing strategic decision to link with Latin America. In a recent planning meeting we decided to continue this Latin America-Europe link for the near future, which makes sense for the galleries coming and for the perception of the fair.

Regarding the invited countries, it’s also an ongoing strategy that we have had at ARCO. I think there are three factors to make a specific decision: 1) An interesting contemporary art scene, with at least 10 professional galleries that can attend the fair, museums, institutions and collectors. 2) Even though the galleries are invited to the fair, there should always be other projects happening in the city funded by the invited country. In 2015 the Colombian government supported over 11 shows from the Prado to the Reina Sofía. 3) The decision of which country to choose is also strategic as far as IFEMA is concerned. We always have several scenes in mind. It’s a decision in which the fair, the country and the Madrid Fair Organisation are involved.

Q. Why did you choose Latin America? What is your strategy or focus?

C.U. ARCO has always been very focused on Latin America. In 1997, ARCO decided to invite the entire Latin America to the fair. It was a project ARCO worked on for two years, and it was very important for the visibility of the Latin American art scene. Since then, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia have been invited countries. ARCO was the first fair where the most important Latin American galleries were able to participate. Now we all consider Latin American art very interesting, but at that time there were no Latin American galleries at Art Basel. There were maybe some at FIAC but there were no Latin American galleries in German art fairs. I was sitting on a committee for Artforum Berlin and it was very difficult to include Latin American galleries because they were not noted. The appreciation of Latin American art in the late 1990s was completely different to what it is now. ARCO has also had this natural link with Latin America for reasons such as: language, big companies being in Latin America, collectors having second homes in Madrid and Barcelona.

When I started as director, ARCO had invited several Asian countries—India and Korea—and I decided that we had to provide a stage for this link with Latin America, which wasn't happening, and also because there was Art Basel Miami Beach, which had done a great job. We wanted to bring in younger Latin American galleries, that's why decided to focus on Latin America for five years. And we'll continue for a while because there are excellent Latin American artists and contents, which is the most important aspect for ARCO. It's very natural and it's working well for the Latin American galleries and for us.

C. I very often hear galleries saying that if they do a small fair they lose their chances to get to a big fair, which is the most stupid statement I ever heard. In fact it's the presentation, wherever you're doing it, which will count. As long as the presentation is good, it's not harming your chances of getting into the so-called big fairs.

T.E.G. With regards to 1:54, the feedback I have had is that a lot of the very established galleries—which are probably not the big galleries that are doing Art Basel but the ones that are doing a lot of different international art fairs—say that actually it was a very different feeling, a kind of 1970s and 80s atmosphere where everybody was still talking to each other having very interesting discussions during the fair. Galleries were a bit reticent when I started talking about showing their African artists at 1:54. Now we are approached by very established galleries

as they think it's the best platform for showcasing or promoting their artists. There are still galleries saying they still want to be seen as the discovering galleries, and they are doing 1:54 because this is where they want their positioning to be. 1:54 is also playing the role of being the first fair for a lot of the galleries coming from Africa. For them it's a stepping stone to be accepted by another international art fair. In the end, the most important thing is the quality of the fair. This is something where we don't compromise. We have a lot of applications, we have a limited amount of space and we are always trying to keep the right balance between very young galleries and galleries that have been around showcasing African artists for quite a while. But we make sure of showcasing the highest quality of what we see on the market at the moment. Therefore I think that the galleries feel comfortable about being part of 1:54—even if it's a boutique young fair—because they know that they will be surrounded by quality.

E.D. It's a lack of strategic thinking to focus on the short-sighted end goal. You must also think about what that end goal means to you as a gallerist. We did Liste for three or four years and with 75 galleries we got all the major collectors that were in town to spend a lot of time with us. When we did NOVA with a two-person presentation, it was far more curatorial. The collectors walked past our stand at Art Basel because they were looking for things in the market: it was a financial sacrifice to do that fair. You have to think about your gallery in chapters and stages. When you're in the first chapter, the second one is about how you get your point of view introduced to the community, into the conversation, how you add to that conversation and what kind of contextual lines you want to draw. Then maybe there are times to make a push, and an invitation from Art Basel to do a particular section can become very useful. But that also might mean a major financial sacrifice, and you may eliminate your ability to do other fairs as a result of doing that. There has to be a sense of a larger trajectory.

C.U. It's all a question of scale. ARCO is medium-sized fair. Galleries can go to smaller fairs, but if they do something outstanding, we all will know it. A presentation of an African artist will make sense at 1:54; doing something related to Latin America makes sense at ARCO. Whatever it is that you do, it has to be outstanding. You cannot simply go there, hang four paintings and expect to do well because that makes no sense for the gallery, nor does it for the artist.

E.D. Also where you are in those big fairs is critical, and that can change too as you go from one chapter to the next of your gallery. You can be in a context of primarily emerging market material, where the price point goes up to about 25,000. Then suddenly you're working with senior artists who are in their seventies and eighties, who are getting major museum retrospectives and the works start at 150. Suddenly you feel you can't participate in a specific fair any more unless you're given a stand in a different section with a different level of context, and that might not be available to you at that point. Then you have to make the determination: "Do I step out? Or do I only show part of my programme because showing $500,000 paintings in a 30 square metres stand is just going to be strange and it just won't translate to this group?" You also have to think about the microclimates of these larger fairs and what's happening in different sections and aisles, and to make sure that it really works. I think it's not an issue of just starting out and getting yourself established. It's ongoing: you go through your whole lifelong career as a gallerist working with different kinds of artists and their differing needs.

A.S. What fairs try to do by establishing different sectors is to provide the opportunity to create focus within a larger fair. In a digestible-sized fair, that's different because with 26 or 30 gallerists, you can walk your way through. But at a fair that has 260 or 300 galleries, sectors are the only way to guide people through what's available. That would be something that I would encourage gallerists to do if they're going to larger fairs: look at the other sectors really carefully and wonder what they can do for you. Where you want to go is often a question of scale.

Q. Do art fairs collaborate with each other? And what new marketing actions are you doing?

E.D. When we started Independent in New York, we didn't have to sell New York to the larger art world. We also had the luxury of being able to draw on the biggest collector hub in the world, which is so deep and so wide-ranging that it far eclipses the scale of our particular platform. So we were able to let that work for us. In addition, at that time of year, with the Armory Show and the ADAA fairs happening concurrently, we were already very aware of adding something to that existing ecosystem. So we don't have a VIP programme for New York. We haven't put our energy into marketing. We've just wanted to create the best project

possible and to know that we are in an environment where we have a very knowledgeable audience ready to receive this project.

With Belgium, it's really different in several ways. You have this incredible, rich collecting history in the country and you have a wonderful establishment there that has a legacy to it in terms of galleries, curators and collectors. But we never really considered that as being enough for us: we wanted to sell Belgium to the larger international community and to bring that scene that we already represent in New York to Belgium. So it's not about having 15,000 people on the weekend. Locally it's about bringing people who are really interested in having this discussion to that country, at that particular time and in that week. That, for me, is not a marketing campaign but just a simple outreach project. If you have 70 galleries and you're reaching out to all of the key national and international people for each of those galleries and their specific location, you definitely have that leveraged group. Making that experience really rich with programming is something that we are going to put energy into and that's going to be very different from anything we've done in the past.

T.E.G. We chose to be in parallel to Frieze, so we have been working very closely with them. We are obviously leveraging on their collector base in London and for us it's very important to benefit from Frieze Week. We accept their VIPs and invite them to our entire VIP programme. In addition, we do have a lot of specialists coming just for African art, so we have a VIP programme that is dedicated to contemporary African art in London. They're there to see the most contemporary African art they can. Moreover, the new collectors from Africa are not yet invited to all those dinners, etc., so we are very lucky in that way: we are providing them with things to do in London exclusively for them.

We have never had a very strong budget to mount crazy marketing campaigns. Even so, I think word of mouth is better than a marketing campaign. People having a good experience in the fair is better than having adverts in different art magazines. Part of it is that we always choose very unique venues, so Somerset House in London obviously really is part of the experience of visiting 1:54. In New York we also chose quite a unique venue and took a bet on going to Redhook, Brooklyn, which is far away from Manhattan. We are offering the people the opportunity to discover not only great art but an amazing venue.

C.U. ARCO is a main fair, not a satellite fair, so we have to do a lot of marketing in order to create business. For example: we use our social media channels in order to share with the galleries the panels programme for example. And, although we don't provide email addresses, galleries can invite people and let them know about the collectors' programme. We have a high attendance and tickets are expensive, but selling tickets is not the main income of the fair. Basically we want the galleries to be satisfied and to consider our marketing tools as theirs.

E.D. There's the promotion of the event itself and there's also what happens the rest of the year and how you manage that. During Fall 2015, for instance, we launched exhibition initiatives with other galleries from our network. So we now have a gallery space in the Rue de la Régence in Brussels where we host different exhibitors, who come in and take over the gallery as their own gallery for a month and a half, and do it with an economic model behind it as well. So we wanted to concierge that experience and also feature and highlight one gallerist at a time. We've just opened a beautiful Ian Breakwell retrospective with Anthony Reynolds. Here's a gallerist who has over 30 years of experience in London, a wonderful curatorial programme, has not had a space since February, and is questioning whether he should have a space. Reynolds is doing shows around the world. What I love about the project and the way it has worked so far is that the collectors and the curators that come and see these shows really start to regard the gallerist as a curator, someone with a level of expertise in an artist that no-one else has because of the long-standing relationship that they've had over the years. What we hope is to bring this to other cities, so when people are travelling to Madrid or to New York, they can say "I wonder who's curating the show at Independent." That space is always available and open for the art galleries ecosystem, with gallerists invited to come and do things there that aren't being seen in that particular city.

Q. Touria, could you share with us the factors, qualities and characteristics that your committee takes into account when accepting or refusing art galleries?

T.E.G. One of the high-priority factors for us is to keep a balance between the galleries coming from Africa and the galleries coming from Europe and the US. If we don't, the balance wouldn't be right. Obviously the quality of the work is very important, as is the quality

of the gallery's programme locally. If they have a presence in Africa, what is their vision? Is it to promote artists locally or are they engaging with education programmes? There are lots of very different aspects. In addition, we have another side of the programme: since we started we've given three spaces away to a very young gallery from Africa who couldn't come otherwise. With those booths we're a bit more open since it will be their first time doing any kind of fair, so it's really about even helping them to do the application, get grants, etc.

We are trying to sell the artworks in London or New York. Consequently, we have this director of a very mainstream gallery as part of our committee, who also steps in to make sure that it's not too craftwork based, that we're doing what people—the collectors—are expecting to see. We are very flexible in many ways because we are dealing with very new variables: we don't have the kind of rules that a lot of fairs have; we have a lot of dealers representing the main artists in Africa; and at the same time we have to deal with people who don't have galleries.

E.D. It's very important to encourage galleries to be in a dialogue with other gallerists and not living in the vacuum of their own programme; to have a lot of collaborative thinking with local and international curators and gallerists; to be part of an engaged, inquiring, questioning community; to seek out that knowledge base that is constantly changing; to think programmatically about the gallery rather than about specific artists; and to be committed to the culture of gallery practice as an essential habitat for nurturing artists and representing them.

C.U. At ARCO, we have to be much more objective. For example: the gallery has to do four shows a year; have a space with regular opening hours. After that we have the criteria of the organising committee. It's quite fixed, with points and figures attached to those factors, because if someone makes a claim we have to be able to justify our decisions. Out of 100, 30 points are related to the gallery programme; 30 more points have to do with what they propose for the fair; 20 points are related to the work the gallery does in order to link their artists to collectors and to curators; and the remaining 20 points are for the marketing of the gallery itself: attendance to other art fairs and their active role within the ecosystem. Those are our selection criteria. Since

we get lots of complaints from galleries that are not accepted, we are forced to make the process as objective as possible.

Doing something fresh and something surprising doesn't mean younger artists; not at all. We encourage difference in the presentation and the contents. It doesn't have to be an artist that has never been shown in Madrid. Last year we had an exquisite booth with a duo presentation of works on paper by Giorgio Griffa and Joan Hernández Pijuan. They are artists that we all know, but the display added new contents to the fair. When a gallery is proposing something new, it creates a lot of awareness. All the fairs are looking for that more and more.

Elizabeth Dee

Elizabeth Dee is a cultural entrepreneur, curator, dealer and producer. She is the CEO of Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York and of Independent Art Fairs (New York/ Brussels). The gallery, established in 2002, is located on Fifth Avenue in Harlem. Dee has produced numerous groundbreaking, first and internationally recognised exhibitions by such artists as John Giorno, Adrian Piper, Julia Wachtel, Derek Jarman and Ryan Trecartin. Previously, Dee created X Initiative, a non-profit consortium of the global art community, presenting exhibitions and programming in response to the major philosophical and economic shifts in contemporary art.

Dora García

Born 1965 in Valladolid (Spain), Dora García now lives and works in Barcelona after having resided in Brussels for over two decades. García uses a wide range of media including performance, video, text and installation. Her practice investigates the conditions that shape the encounter between the artist, the artwork and the viewer. Her work focuses more particularly on the notions of duration, access and readability. García's pieces often involve staging unscripted scenarios that elicit doubt as to the fictional or spontaneous nature of a given situation. Marginality becomes central in the artist's work, unsettling the viewer. Her work has been shown in major contemporary art institutions, including: MACBA, Barcelona (2003); SMAK, Gent (2006); GfZK, Leipzig (2007); Kunsthalle, Bern (2010); Spanish Pavilion of the Venice Biennale (2011). In 2013, she was winner of the 45th PIAC (The International Contemporary Art Prize), Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco.

Lisa Ruyter

Lisa Ruyter is known for large scale, colorful and immediately recognizable treatment of a range of subject matters. These works have served as a personal index to the artist's lived experience via self-made photographic images. Ruyter began exhibiting in New York in 1993 and, like many artists of that moment, her concerns involve identity and pathologic constructions that cross biological and social boundaries. This work emerged from an education that had pop art and minimalism functioning like shopping mall anchor stores, in relationship to which Ruyter formed a special interest in navigating the glut of images, storytelling, invisible architectures, dissolving skins and representation, especially self-representation. Lisa Ruyter lives in Austria since 2003, and is very active in the Vienna local scene.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS OF THE ARTIST/GALLERIST RELATIONSHIP

SPEAKERS
Dora García, Lisa Ruyter

MODERATOR
Elizabeth Dee

CONCEPTS
equality, collaboration, partnership, involvement, production, new models vs. social specificities, context, support, recommendations, mutual consultancy

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS OF THE ARTIST/GALLERIST RELATIONSHIP

Elizabeth Dee (E.D.)
Dora, Lisa, can you please give us some details of your history with galleries? I think it can give us a contextual basis for the discussion on the complexities of the artist-dealer relationship.

Dora García (D.G.)
I am a Spanish artist but most of my professional life has taken place outside Spain. I studied in Holland. Then I lived in Belgium for 16 years where most of my professional life happened as a citizen of Brussels. Four years ago, I moved to Barcelona and this is where I live now. I travel a lot because I am also a teacher in Geneva and in Oslo. I work here and there, although now I am based in Spain.

The first gallery I worked with was Juana de Aizpuru and this was the first time I exhibited. That was in 1994. I also started to work with Jan Mot—with whom I stopped working in 2006—and Ellen de Bruijne—with whom I'm still working. More recently I've been working with Michel Rein since 2005 and with ProjecteSD since 2009.

In general terms I have a really happy relationship with my galleries, even galleries with which I stopped working with. With Mot it was quite a satisfying relationship while it lasted. They have been galleries in the traditional sense —dealers—but they also have been companions and I have developed a lot with the gallery itself but also with the artists from the gallery. Perhaps what I learned the most was from the artists of the different galleries I have worked with.

E.D. Can you talk a little bit about the particular relationship with these four galleries? What aspects you collaborate on with your galleries?

D.G. Among the artists of my generation, the thing to do was to find a gallery that would almost adopt you in the sense that they would give you a monthly allowance and in exchange for this they would keep the work and would be free to deal with it. In a way, they bought the work in advance and they could deal with it in whatever way they wanted. I always thought this was not correct because it undermined the freedom of the artists. I believe that you as an artist should always be in full possession of your work and hence it really should be a relationship of equals between the gallery and the artist. So I always resisted having an exclusive relationship with the gallery and I tried to diversify as much as possible, depending, of course, on my circumstances. It made sense to me to have a gallery in Spain and have a gallery in Belgium I always thought they had to be several.

"AN ARTIST SHOULD ALWAYS BE IN FULL POSSESSION OF YOUR WORK AND HENCE IT REALLY SHOULD BE A RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS BETWEEN THE GALLERY AND THE ARTIST."

E.D. That is an important distinction: you have no primary gallery. Lisa, do you have direct relationships with each of the four galleries you work with?

Lisa Ruyter (L.R.)
I'm supposed to keep the art studio work and the gallery stuff separate, which is not how I see it. At the beginning of 1993, I had one of those hot years when you're the artist that everyone wants to show. I did group shows at many of the top New York galleries like Andrea Rosen and Jay Gorney. I also did solo shows at Brent Sykkema Gallery and Tilton Gallery. At the very end of the year I did this show with Friedrich Petzel, who was still the director at Metro Pictures at the time. I ended up leaving New York and found nobody wanted to talk to me anymore because I wasn't there. In 1993 nobody was selling anything, so if you had a positive press or a year like that, it was a huge success.

Finding myself back home was the first time that I opened a gallery out of pure desperation. I was broke and I couldn't make enough money to get back to New York, so I got a space in Washington DC, which later was where all the galleries moved to, and it was called Team Gallery DC. I was on the phone constantly and kind of reconnected with people in New York. I got back together with an old boyfriend, we got married and we started Team Gallery in New York. We were running Team on the weekends and both doing desktop publishing jobs to keep it open.

E.D. So we are talking about 1996. This is when Chelsea was coming together.

L.R. Just starting. The galleries were only open on the weekends until Metro, Gladstone and Matthew Marks moved in. Suddenly it was SoHo hours.

I was working with Pierre Huber and it was the first time I went to Art Basel. I tend to work more with people that are outside of the field or curators. But with Stations of the Cross, it has been probably the closest I ever worked with a gallery one-on-one towards a project. That was a massive project that ended up in a church. So I went from Art Basel, Art Unlimited to a kind of church museum. The curator had seen it at Art Basel and invited me there and then it fit in this church like it was made for this church. It was the most incredible art experience I've ever had. There were two people from the art world there and none of my dealers would come to see this, which was really frustrating. But the whole experience was incredible.

Around 2003 in Vienna I opened a very straightforward commercial gallery. I participated in ARCO the year that Austria was the invited country, but Austria didn't invite me to come even though I was an Austrian art gallery with an Austrian artist coming to ARCO. I got none of the promotion from the home country to participate in that. It was interesting for me just in terms of production and these issues with galleries.

I've been collaborating with a lot of artists to try to sort out some of the possibilities from my experience having the galleries: what is the difference between collaborating with an artist as another artist versus collaborating with an artist as a gallery or a provocateur?

How you do that? I did an art show with a Polish artist named Dorota Walentynowicz. She makes pinhole cameras, and my proposal to her was to build conceptual stages that could be also cameras. And so in the context of a feminist festival performance project exhibition, I became a co-author, but honestly I did exactly the same work with her that I would have done if it were in my space and she were the artist and I was the gallery.

E.D. That's a point that I want to bring up in our discussion: the producer aspect of the gallery-artist relationship and how that factors in. The artist-dealer relationship is commonly seen as a marriage, and yet it is also commonly seen as an impossible bond between the studio and the gallery. And it can be combative, it could be use driven, it could be lifelong, it could be a perfect relationship on many levels and provide for years and years of really productive exchanges.

"THE ARTIST-DEALER RELATIONSHIP IS COMMONLY SEEN AS A MARRIAGE, AND YET IT IS ALSO COMMONLY SEEN AS AN IMPOSSIBLE BOND BETWEEN THE STUDIO AND THE GALLERY."

D.G. It's not a marriage. That's a metaphor. We speak about marriage because there was this easy way for artists leaving galleries and galleries leaving artists. Of course you have the full right to fall in love with someone else and to start all over if you've found something more exciting. There are lots of ways of leaving your partner. You can say "You can just drop dead. I don't want to see your face again." Or you can say, "Let's talk. We have something to discuss." You can do this in a civilised way so that people don't get hurt. In addition, there are many years of work behind you and this should be repaid, just as in a marriage. There are many years of living together, so this should not disappear just like that. This is why I think it could be compared to a marriage in this sense but, on the other hand, I think it's good to keep a healthy distance, which is not something you should do in a marriage. For instance, I'm an artist who does not have a studio—and I think this is already a difference—because I have always felt uncomfortable with the idea of the passive role of the artist as someone who's expecting to be visited by a gallery or a curator. Do you have to wait for these people to

like what you do and go out with it? I have always resisted this idea. In that sense, I think this healthy distance is to keep your destiny in your own hands. If you find someone who wants to walk along, then it's OK but you should not be waiting to be taken.

"I HAVE ALWAYS FELT UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF THE PASSIVE ROLE OF THE ARTIST AS SOMEONE WHO'S IN THE STUDIO AND WILL BE VISITED BY A GALLERY OR A CURATOR."

E.D. So you see it more as a partnership.

D.G. Absolutely.

E.D. Lisa, what do you think?

L.R. I always chafed at this description. If it's a marriage, it's a really warped one. You'd have to equate it more to a harem or something like that. It's an old model if there are 10 to 20 artists to one poppa or momma. Things are going so fast and it's really hard to find if you're thinking of a gallerist as somebody who's going to provide some kind of service or background or context. I think all of that is getting compromised. Things are happening now. Art fairs, as much as building markets, are also creating formulas. The best fairs are trying to find creative ways to keep themselves from becoming a generic sizing process, but I find that anything that gets formulaic becomes generic very quickly, including making artwork and working in series.

E.D. Dora, even though you have four galleries that are all very active with your work, there's been more of an engagement with the biennial and the curatorial circuits. Lisa, I feel like you really came into New York out of grad school. Having Bob Nickas write about your work and showing at Friedrich Petzel within the first year are things that wouldn't necessarily happen for a young artist today. You have different opinions which are very interesting on this topic.

The marriage question then leads to this issue of loyalty. Dora, given that your work is so embedded with the notion of storytelling and

narrative, how do you see the relationship in the long term? How critical is that a factor for you? What is your philosophical approach to these relationships?

D.G. The traditional relationship—as in the conventional way of understanding the relationship between the artist and a gallery, which is normally the gallery goes to the studio and then picks up the work and then it goes into the exhibition space where it is spotted by the collector—is a very small percentage of the work that I do. First of all, I don't have a studio, so there is really nothing to take in the sense that most of the work is developed in situ, even the gallery work is site-specific. And it's also time-specific. Even as a collector, you are really buying something that develops in time. The most realistic way to understand it is as a kind of a contact, not only with the gallery but also with the collector, who may be a person or an institution. So you get to understand an idea together and then you decide that you're interested in that idea and you will help this idea to happen. I think this comes closer to how it works.

E.D. Loyalty in your case is to the project more than to each other as individuals. Lisa, how about you?

L.R. If you're co-producers on something, that is a much better model and I think it is the key to find the right relationships. But if you're making transportable pictures, there's a whole other level of problems that come in. I find that the people who tend to talk about the problems of lack of loyalty are usually the people who are the most incapable of being loyal themselves. In my experience, a better word for what's expected of an artist might be 'obedience'. Why would you leave somebody who's doing great things for you unless there's another problem, like not being paid or somebody's bringing something better?

The galleries are moving away from models where they are supporting artists in a long term. It is silly to sit around and wait for somebody to promise you something that nobody is offering any more. It's really important to be extremely proactive as an artist, but also as a gallery: if you want to keep your artists, you have to be involved in the making of the work at some level. And I don't mean paying for it, I mean any way: have a discussion, go to the studio. I have people who say they don't need to come to my studio because they know what my work is about, which is frustrating and insulting.

"IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR ARTISTS, YOU HAVE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE MAKING OF THE WORK AT SOME LEVEL. AND I DON'T MEAN PAYING FOR IT, I MEAN ANY WAY: HAVE A DISCUSSION, GO TO THE STUDIO."

E.D. Do you see the issue of time having an impact? People are going to have to figure ways to stay still very engaged in production and developing projects together.

L.R. Artists can find this elsewhere, and that's the risk. I don't think it's necessarily going to be with galleries. If the galleries want to stay in the art field, they need to be involved with the production of art. That's not the production of art market, that's the production of art, whatever that is. What is art? Is it these objects? Is it something in between? We're so stuck in old-fashioned modes of representation that are like straight out of the Old and New Testament, including the art market: everything's embedded in these objects that we move around. In my case, I've never thought of the paintings as the artwork. The artwork is somewhere in between: it is between the interpretation, it is between the objects, it is between activities. If you're always convinced that artworks are objects, you're missing a huge rich thing that we could have access to and that could take us somewhere else. We also need to consider that art might not be made by artists or that it might not be something made at all. My hero is Robert Smithson and his notion of the site and the non-site.

D.G. But there are already other models which are beyond this idea of art with a price, etc. They are not related to the art market, but to selling or finding partnerships with owners.

E.D. Are you talking about collectors that step in to produce works for biennials?

D.G. I'm talking about collectors that follow a way of doing that does not necessarily go through objects and that might be involved from the beginning in the production of something, that might support the

work, from publications to actions—before it happens, while it happens and afterwards with the products that come out of that. These people are present all through the process. The same as well even in art fairs, where there are lots of different sections that try to divide along the lines of these new models: performance, publications, cinema, outdoor installations, out-of-place, displacement sections.... Art fairs are very primitive and always fall short of what artists would like to do. But there is a kind of will to comply with these new models because it's everybody's interest.

E.D. Do you feel that these models can be expanded upon in the next generation? What's your feeling about the gallerists that are coming up? What's your perception of what's happening in terms of gallery culture moving forward?

D.G. There is a tendency for gallerists to work with their generation of artists. Among the gallerists that are ten years younger than me, I have already seen in different shows they do engage actively with works that are not exactly happening in the gallery: they would go to a community of neighbours living in the same building to discuss a certain event that is going to happen; they will talk to a theatre about hosting a certain thing. They are very much aware that actually galleries are just one possibility of many to show the work. This I have seen as well with the idea of publication: whatever other format this might take and not just a catalogue. They might range from newspapers to flyers to posters to forms of publications that continue in time with online publishing, etc. It's only natural because they have followed artists from the beginning, perhaps studied with them in the art school, and so they are very much aware of this way of doing.

E.D. It is a good moment to diversify the discussion about the new models. There's definitely an American and a European distinction between not only on what a gallery is, but also what these potential future models could be like. Lisa, you're living on both sides, what do you think of that?

L.R. One thing that could make a really big difference is if the educational programme stopped replicating the existing models. Why do curatorial studies students go to different schools to artists? I don't understand this. How are they doing something different than us at

this point? I think that it would make a lot more sense for people to go to school together. Curating and even art history students: why are they not going to the same school? Let's find a way to stop replicating these media specificities and these social specificities. Stop making it a privilege for rich people and connected people.

"IT WOULD MAKE A LOT MORE SENSE FOR PEOPLE TO GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER. CURATING AND EVEN ART HISTORY STUDENTS: WHY ARE THEY NOT GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL? LET'S FIND A WAY TO STOP REPLICATING THESE MEDIA SPECIFICITIES AND THESE SOCIAL SPECIFICITIES."

As far as a model is concerned, I can't make a model for anybody else, but I know my fantasy: opening a gallery in a refugee camp. I strongly believe that whatever art is, it is something that is essential, it is not a secondary need. It is a primary one, like we need food to keep our bodies going and we need shelter to not die from the cold. And what better way to do it than to bring the idea to do something in a place like that? I got so into it and the questions of what an art gallery is and what art is in this most primary situation of need that I started to research it a bit. After a reality check with the people I knew, I realised I wasn't really ready to do that yet. But the idea of going to places that address topics that are very specific is interesting.

E.D. When you engage in the relationship with the gallery, how essential is the programme for you? Is it more important than the relationship with the gallerists themselves? Is it on equal footing?

D.G. The programme of a gallery is the most important thing, this notion of you feeling good with the artists that are in the gallery. One of the most important points in a gallery is that you are placed in a context that you want your work to be read in. It doesn't matter how wonderful the relationship you have with your gallerist is. If the artists you are put together with are not the constellation where you want to be, you will be misunderstood.

L.R. Pragmatically, the galleries that want to show me are pretty much treating my work like Pop reproductions or something. I know I have a certain group of people who follow me and I have some kind of faith that in the long term I'm working on a much bigger project than this or that show. So my compensation has always come through the work that I do with other artists. And I look to other artists for almost everything, which is a little bit of a surprise to me, even after all these years, actually. But spaces at this point are becoming context-free: these mega spaces are so meaningless and offer absolutely no context. When I was a young artist I wanted to show in the biggest, best gallery with the crazy, huge space. I liked to make big things, so I always wanted this. Now I don't want to do that because it's taken away any kind of theatricality potential from the artwork. It's like dead theatre. Theatre is something that's supposed to be alive no matter what you do. How can you kill theatre? It's beyond me, but people do. It's just dead on arrival. Giant spaces that look exactly the same because it's an indicator of a brand.

"ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS IN A GALLERY IS THAT YOU ARE PLACED IN A CONTEXT THAT YOU WANT YOUR WORK TO BE READ IN. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW WONDERFUL THE RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH YOUR GALLERIST IS."

E.D. We've seen the rise of that arc and we've seen some people who were part of that now saying "We're going to take a slightly different approach to the ideal space." That leads to another question which is: as you go through different stages and chapters in your careers, have your needs changed? What do you need now from a relationship with a gallery that you may not have needed in the past?

D.G. In my case, that has not changed that much. It has been the same in the sense that it is really almost the work of an executive producer: you have a project and you want to be supported, not necessarily with money but rather helping you to find the right way to do it, either by putting you in touch with foundations or another kind of context. It's really this type of help and it has always been like this.

"YOU HAVE A PROJECT AND YOU WANT TO BE SUPPORTED, NOT NECESSARILY WITH MONEY BUT RATHER HELPING YOU TO FIND THE RIGHT WAY TO DO IT, EITHER BY PUTTING YOU IN TOUCH WITH FOUNDATIONS OR ANOTHER KIND OF CONTEXT."

L.R. What I need from a gallery is to help me getting institutional support to start to build some of this context around the work. I've been so focused on just getting the stuff into place. I'm going to be gone any day now and I really want to bring the rest into play. I want somebody who can understand my work but who also can communicate that, which is not so easy.

D.G. You mentioned the differences in America and Europe. In some European countries it is perfectly possible for an artist to exist without a gallery because there is a system of grants, state support and artist-run spaces that allow artists to have a career without ever having a gallery, or having sporadic shows in state galleries that do not really buy them. This freedom of the artist from the market is perhaps also linked to this question: state money allows you a way of working that would not perhaps exist in other places where there is no state money for this, so you are completely at the mercy of the sponsors, collectors and the gallery. That is not necessarily a worse place than the other one!

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q. I liked the point about this artist-gallerist relationship being very much a partnership or collaboration as opposed to a marriage because it's an extremely complex issue with a lot of nuances that depend on the two individuals involved. One of the things I'm interested in as a dealer is listening to our artists, in particular if there's an artist we're considering bringing into the gallery. I may speak to some of the artists about it and ask "What do you think about the work? Do you feel the context would work?" Do you talk to your gallery about artists that they ask you about? How comfortable are you about that? Do you ever make

recommendations? I often find that the best validation I can get is from another artist.

D.G. I have entered most of the galleries I have worked with on the recommendation of one of the artists. And I have recommended a lot of artists as well. Most of the time my advice is never followed, but I always speak up because I love artists and I think the best possible company for an artist is other artists.

L.R. It might have happened, but I don't remember any gallery I'm working with ever coming to me and saying "How do you feel about how your work's been positioned up till now?" It's not something people do. If I'm interested in something, I tend to talk to people about it all the time. But most of the time I don't interfere with a future relationship.

Q. I was very happy to hear from Lisa about your interest in exhibiting in spaces that are not a gallery but some unusual spaces because, as a curator, that's been my direction ever since I left an institution. And to the artist-gallery relationship, I would add the curator-artist-gallery relationship. On occasions I've been to an art fair and approached a certain gallery to ask about an artist that I want to include in my show and the first question I get is "In which institution is the show?" And if it's not an institution, I often don't get a very good response. I wonder that it might not be interesting for them to have the artist represented in a place that's not an institution. Where does the gallery stand in that kind of relationship? Where does the artist stand and can you as a curator contact directly the artist?

L.R. The best thing I find if I'm interested in somebody and want to approach them is to stop thinking in terms of "the curator approaching this person". And if the conversation is not yet at a place where you know that you'll get a yes, don't ask the question until you know the answer is yes or at least you know the question will be taken on the terms that you've presented it in.

E.D. There's a tipping point in all of these situations. You're vetting opportunities and potential projects constantly, but often those projects aren't fully formed before they come to you and you're being asked to judge them without having all the information.

L.R. Opportunism is a really major topic for all of us because that is something we're all guilty of, and I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing. It takes a talented person to recognise a good opportunity. We're all opportunistic and we should look at these opportunities perhaps with a broader window than the immediate gain.

D.G. Don't you think it has become increasingly easy to ask the artist directly? 15 years ago everybody was going through the gallery. Curators would always go to the gallery. And, very often, when a gallery didn't have a big name, they would say "No". But now it's just super easy to find the address of an artist, make a contact on Facebook, etc. It goes more and more over the wall of the gallery.

E.D. Out of all the projects outside of the gallery that you do, either in biennials or group shows that are non-commercial in nature, how many of them go through the gallery versus how many come to you directly?

D.G. In my case, most of them come directly. But that was very different ten years ago. It was always through the gallery back then.

L.R. I would definitely contact the artist if they're accessible. It's normal these days. And if an artist has a good relationship with the gallery, they've worked through this a number of times. They've had a lot of tests, experiments of how they navigate this relationship. As to where a curator fits in, it depends who you want to work with and for. Some curators are working more for institutions and although it could be less interesting to me, I'm happy to be included and to represent one element or strain of thought. I also really like people who provoke me and make me think in different ways. That's a very different relationship that I don't think would survive going through channels of a gallery.

C. I'm Silvia Dauder, director of ProjecteSD gallery. I represent Dora García and 14 other artists. She's very used to sorting out projects and making Yes and No decisions very fast. That doesn't mean necessarily that every other artist works like this. In the case of Dora, it is true that a lot of the times she's contacted first for the institutional shows or projects and this generates no problem. In 90 or 95% of all these external projects that she's asked for directly, we are involved, either myself or some of the other three galleries that work with her. It's not incompatible. It can be done, as long as there is good communication between the artist and the

gallery. But this is not a model, nor is it the general trend. All the other artists that I represent don't work like this. Most of the projects they get go through the gallery first.

In addition to the question from the person who said that the galleries never consider curatorial requests, I get tons of questions about artists every week. I never answer Yes or No without asking the artist first. We don't judge by ourselves: we can have an opinion, we can advise the artists, we also know how busy they are, but we always talk. I never say No to a show without letting the artist know all about it. It may be small, it may be big, but if the artist is interested in, we do it.

Q. Lisa, you are an artist and you were a gallerist more than once. Did your experience give you more sympathy for the position of the artist or more sympathy for the position of the gallerist?

L.R. I don't think either is role-playing. I wouldn't want somebody to accuse me of role-playing in what I do and not being genuine or authentic. It's given me more sympathy for people and I can't say more for one or for the other. I do it to understand myself more than anything else. And it has also helped me to be more reasonable when I work with galleries.

C. I think we all understand that we have to move forward. The relationship between the artist and the gallery is not like a 19th-century entrepreneur-worker relationship at all. We all understand that we are in the same boat and we have to be a team, then we have to consult each other. But it has been my repeated experience that it's difficult to try to explain what the gallerist provides. An artist who works with a good gallery will of course know what they do, but others and the public may not.

D.G. I worked with Juana de Aizpuru from 1994 and she had the gallery since 1975. She has been in the business for 30 or 40 years. I can say when I work with art galleries like ProjecteSD or even with art galleries that are from my generation, there is a big difference. And it is not precisely a quality difference, because both are very good galleries. The relationship is different: the old model is far more like a dealer in the sense that you always expect to get something to deal with, whereas the younger model is much more like a producer, someone that accompanies you even before that thing is produced. I think this

has to do as well with an evolution of the market and of the collector. People who are 10, 15 years younger have a different way of working that is almost very close to that of a curator in the sense that they even think before the artist about how to produce a work. This is really a big evolution, but there is not a quality difference. It really pertains a different way of working. They have changed as artists have changed, and as probably curators have changed. Things have really changed a lot but it's not necessarily a qualitative change.

"THE OLD MODEL IS FAR MORE LIKE A DEALER IN THE SENSE THAT YOU ALWAYS EXPECT TO GET SOMETHING TO DEAL WITH, WHEREAS THE YOUNGER MODEL IS MUCH MORE LIKE A PRODUCER, SOMEONE THAT ACCOMPANIES YOU EVEN BEFORE THAT THING IS PRODUCED."

E.D. I think there's still a role for the dealer today: the more curator-cum-gallerist model, which has many different permutations, and also what I call the cultural producer gallerist. You said you see this is as a trend. What has instigated that trend in your view?

D.G. I think it has to do mostly with the way the artists work.

E.D. I think that anyone that's looking for the one key to a successful artist-gallery relationship really has to see it as a very personal thing. Dora, do you feel that formalising your own personal relationship, creating a bespoke written agreement, makes sense to you? How do you feel about the idea of contracts between artists and galleries? It's obviously a debatable point and something that should be tailor-made to an individual and their unique experience and relationship with the gallery. We talked about new models and about looking forward, but we're not going to be here forever. There are certain kinds of considerations for the work that's been made. There are going to be increasingly more people involved in the stewardship of your work. How do you feel about contracts and how do you feel they might be viewed in the future with regard to your own particular viewpoint?

D.G. I've never had a contract with a gallery, but now that death is approaching, one wonders what is going to happen. So then maybe it's time to make a contract. The relationship is trust and honesty, being convinced that you will be always treated this way and that you will do the same. But it is true. At a certain point you might not be there, so what is going to happen to all those things?

L.R. What you're talking about is like writing a will or if you want to set up a foundation. You should decide this at some point and find the people, talk to a lawyer to figure that out because there are very specific considerations related to it. And because all the people who support you now might be put in a position where there is a conflict of interest once you're gone. But in my experience, the only contract that I think is essential is the consignment agreement. If you're not making a consignment agreement, as an artist you're just missing something really basic. It makes things very clear.

Annamária Molnár

Annamária Molnár is director and owner of Ani Molnár Gallery in Budapest and Masters in Economics from the Corvinus University. In the late 1990s, Molnár started to get involved as a curator in the Hungarian contemporary art scene organising non-profit exhibitions and projects. In 1999, she won the curatorial scholarship of the Institut für Kulturwissenschaft in Vienna. She was a member of the Studio of Young Artists Association. In 2008, she opened her gallery focusing on emerging and mid-career Eastern European artists. The gallery hosts non-profit public space exhibitions that received the Summa Artium Award in 2009. In February 2011, she was elected president of the Hungarian Contemporary Galleries Association, an organisation she helped to revitalize and become a member of the F.E.A.G.A. (Federation of European Art Galleries Association). Among other projects, in 2012 Molnár launched the international visitors programme "Budapest Contemporary".

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT FAIR FOR YOU?

SPEAKER

Annamária Molnár

CONCEPTS

strategy, development, visibility, participation, communication and dissemination, balance, gallery programme, hierarchies, interdependency, globalised art market vs. regional markets, top fairs, presence vs. capacity

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT FAIR FOR YOU?

Originally, I was asked to present my own approach as a case study. But I thought it would be more interesting to put it in a wider context and not just talk about my own experiences. I was also curious about what other professionals, especially art fair directors, are thinking about this topic. That is why I also did some research and talked to quite a lot of fellow gallerists. The objective was to collect ideas, experiences and possible strategies about how to select and how to apply for international art fairs focusing on emerging and young galleries.

Our starting point is the globalisation of the art world, which goes hand in hand with the growth of the art market and the increasing proportion of art fair sales in the total gallery business, which was around 40% last year. So let me start by sharing some personal figures: when I started my gallery, I only sold to local collectors or buyers in the first couple of years. In the last two years, 60% of my sales go to foreign collectors.

What are the reasons for attending art fairs? First of all, it is a way to present artists internationally. Visibility is quite important as well: the top 22 art fairs were visited by more than one million people last year. Participation becomes also a reference for the galleries, as there is immediate feedback and judgment by art professionals and collectors. Since art fairs have become global meeting points for the sector, lots of networking opportunities arise, and it actually is one of the most crucial elements. Finally, the international and local media coverage is also quite useful.

“WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR ATTENDING ART FAIRS? FIRST OF ALL, IT IS A WAY TO PRESENT ARTISTS INTERNATIONALLY. VISIBILITY IS QUITE IMPORTANT AS WELL: THE TOP 22 ART FAIRS WERE VISITED BY MORE THAN ONE MILLION PEOPLE LAST YEAR. PARTICIPATION BECOMES ALSO A REFERENCE FOR THE GALLERIES.”

The most challenging thing is to find the balance between local and international in the gallery programme. In this regard, the decision to choose the right art fair is not so easy. There are around 300 art fairs per year. Galleries that apply have to deal not only with the excitements and disappointments related to admittance, but also the pressure of the process and its costs: €2.3 billion were spent in 2015 by galleries participating in art fairs, a figure which is based on the TEFAF report. After the application has taken place and once a gallery is accepted, expenses are on: booth price, transportation, insurances, travel, accommodation and personnel costs. Here is my own number: I spent last year €50,000 on 5 international art fairs. This is a huge number for a gallery coming from Budapest.

“THE MOST CHALLENGING THING IS TO FIND THE BALANCE BETWEEN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL IN THE GALLERY PROGRAMME. THE DECISION TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT ART FAIR IS NOT SO EASY. THERE ARE AROUND 300 ART FAIRS PER YEAR.”

There is a strong hierarchy in the art scene, not just among artists, galleries and collectors, but also among art fairs. These levels are mutually interdependent. The better the artists a gallery is able to represent, the more prestigious art fairs it can get into; the better the collection the gallery can place the artworks into, the higher the position the gallery will acquire in the art world.

Exhibit 8 – Top 15 Leading Art Fairs

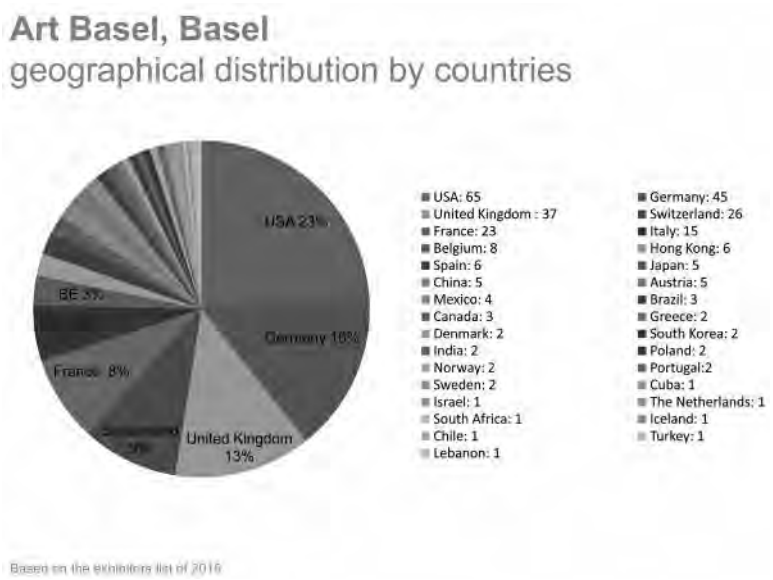
# in 2013	# in 2012	Name	Period on the market, 2013	# of galleries, 2013 and change since 2012		# of visitors, 2013 and change since 2012		Reputation 2013 and change since 2012	
1	1	Art Basel	43	304	Up	86,000	Up	10	Same
2	2	TEFAF	26	265	Same	70,000	Down	10	Same
3	4	FIAC	39	184	Up	73,543	Up	8	Same
4	6	Art Basel Miami Beach	11	258	Up	75,000	Up	8	Same
5	13	The Armory Show	19	210	Down	60,000	Same	8	Up
6	3	Paris Photo	17	136	Up	55,239	Up	9	Down
7	7	Arco Madrid	32	201	Down	150,000	Same	6	Same
8	8	Frieze London	10	152	Down	70,000	Up	9	Same
9	9	Art Cologne	46	200	Up	55,000	Down	7	Same
10	5	Artissima	20	190	Up	50,000	Same	8	Down
11	11	Art Basel HK	6	245	Down	60,000	Down	8	Same
12	10	Fiera di Bologne	37	172	Up	42,000	Down	7	Same
13	12	Art Brussels	31	186	Up	30,000	Same	7	Down
14	New	Art Miami	24	124	New	72,500	New	7	New
15	25	Frieze Masters	1	120	Up	70,000	Up	7	Same

Source: Skate's Annual Report 2013

The above ranking was made by Skate market research company. It is interesting because they have taken into consideration the reputation of the fairs, not just numbers such as longevity and the number of visitors.

Whenever I get into a conversation with fellow galleries, it usually goes like this: “Which art fairs do you attend? What is your next fair? How did it go? What did you sell?”

The undisputed number one is Art Basel; and by number of visitors ARCOmadrid takes the lead. But I was also asking key players in the art field about their opinions, because rankings are not always good. You will see below what are the best art fairs according to my findings. Although Liste was not in the previous rankings, it appears on my chart as Liste plays a very important role for young and emerging galleries mainly because it can be an important gateway.

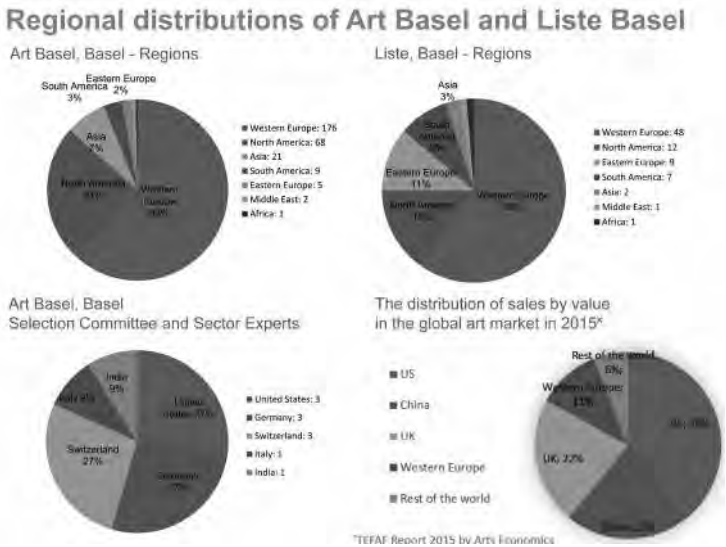


The world of art fairs is huge, varied and colourful. There are some very good fairs, which have a regional focus or some other specialisation, such as LOOP Barcelona which focuses on video & moving image based art practices.

The previous chart is about Art Basel in Basel. It indicates the geographical distribution of participating art galleries by countries. Why is this interesting? I come from a region (CEE, Hungary) which is actually on the periphery of the art market, so we are always interested in this type of numbers as we try to understand what kind of chances we have when applying for different art fairs.
USA dominates this fair and then come Germany, the United Kingdom,

Switzerland and France. It is based on the exhibitor list of 2015, so the numbers that we used are accurate. However, it won't show the complicated structures already existing in the contemporary art scene. Let me give you just one example: the Gregor Podnar Gallery is classified as German, but he is actually from Slovenia. His first branch was in Ljubljana and now he has a gallery in Berlin; he represents mainly artists from Eastern Europe, like Attila Csörgö, originally from Hungary but currently living in Poland. These kinds of nuances cannot be seen in these charts.

We also did this analysis for Liste. Again, the USA dominates. At Frieze London, the United Kingdom and also the United States are in first places, with Western European countries playing an important role as well. In the case of Art Brussels, not a surprise, Belgium and France go first. And in the case of The Armory Show, the USA and UK are first and second respectively.



The regional distribution is quite similar for Art Basel and Liste, having even analogous proportions of European countries participating. The latter is quite positive from my point of view, as Eastern Europe is well represented at Liste.

And what about the selection committee? 60% of the members at Art Basel come from Western Europe, so it is basically the same proportion as the countries taking part. The last chart shows the distributions of sales by value in the global art market, which is still dominated by developed countries like the US, the UK and regions like Western Europe.

Conclusions

• It is a globalised art market, but sales volumes are still dominated by developed countries: US&UK (with a significant portion of the international buyers) and Western European countries.

• China is an exception, with a large domestic market versus a low international presence of Chinese galleries.

• There is a huge number of local/regional markets. They represent a fraction of global sales values individually, but have a much higher importance in production and number of sold artworks (due to lower price levels).

• Top fairs are truly global, but the geographical distribution of galleries participating roughly reflects the global market proportions. However there is an overrepresentation of local and related countries (English, German, French, Spanish speaking) and they are tailored to collectors' geographic profiles.

• Young/emerging galleries and galleries from peripheral markets have the highest chance to attend at more experimental fairs with higher quotas for new entrants.

"TOP FAIRS ARE TRULY GLOBAL, BUT THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF GALLERIES PARTICIPATING ROUGHLY REFLECTS THE GLOBAL MARKET PROPORTIONS."

I also conducted interviews with some art fair directors, either by email or personally. Here are the highlights:

Peter Bläuer, Director of Liste, Basel

According to him, the most difficult thing for galleries is to learn to recognise relevant young artists and to get them.

Features of Liste:

• Emphasis on emerging art galleries, presenting the most important galleries from a new and middle generation.

• Secretive selection process. The members of the jury are not announced (all museum people, no art dealers).

• Very competitive. Most of the galleries of a new and middle generation want to be in Liste.

• Commitment to young galleries. They make it possible for these kinds of galleries to exhibit for several years.

Strategies of the fair:

• Small fair for scouting (discovering) new art.

• Only quality and the artistic programme of a gallery matters.

• Particular interest in introducing a lot of new, unknown or less known artists.

• The geographical factor is not an issue.

Advices for galleries:

• Find the "best" and most interesting young artists (that is the most difficult element).

• Show new, different positions, not "only" zeitgeist artists.

• Find your own identity and your own way in the market.

• Be engaged with the artists, not with the market.

Katerina Gregos, Artistic Director of Art Brussels

She emphasised the discovery nature and the curatorial aspects of the fair are very important: "I am always on the look-out for inspiring emerging artists and young galleries who can bring a singular vision to the fair".

Features of Art Brussels:

• “Discovery” fair.

• Adventurous, experimental and playful.

• Curatorial vision: identifiable areas of artistic coherence in the fair.

Strategies of the fair:

• Curatorial driven criteria in the gallery selection process, not only market reasons.

• Discovery is unique within Art Brussels as it is selected by a committee of international curators.

• Cultural mixing.

• Interest for communities who more recently accessed the international scene of contemporary art.

Advices for galleries:

• Build a solid gallery programme, roster of artists and track record.

• Negotiate the limited context of the art fair booth in imaginative and creative ways, rethinking in terms of what and how it is presented.

Sarah Cosulich Canarutto, Director of Artissima

She also emphasised the curatorial aspects very much. Being innovative is one of their prerogatives, that is why they give really good opportunities and chances for young galleries.

Features of Artissima:

• Experimentation and innovation: discovering young artists, new trends and fresh ideas.

• A large number of respected international curators in its projects, juries and committees.

• The highest quality artworks.

• Established and cutting-edge galleries.

Strategies of the fair:

• New geographies and perspectives.

• Affordable costs for young galleries presenting emerging artists and also for galleries that dare to present lesser known but important artists and projects.

• Pioneering new ways to involve curators and collectors.

Advices for galleries:

• Look for high quality.

• Represent cutting-edge artists.

• Willing to believe in a “curated” fair.

Marc Spiegler, Global Director of Art Basel

Here is a very good quote by Spiegler: “the stronger the galleries are, the stronger art fairs are.”

Features of Art Basel | Basel:

• 45 years of history, constant innovation.

• Rigour of selection.

• Count with galleries with the artists who have been shaping the last 110 years of the art world.

• Their objective is to make galleries successful.

900 applications for 300 spaces in total.

Strategies of the fair:

• Quality is always the first criterion. After that comes the geographical balance. But there is no quota: “We do not measure quantity. We measure quality”.

• To reflect the diversity of the international world.

Advices for galleries:

• Understand how to work with social media.

• Travel around the world.

• Deal with different cultures than your own.

• Work with fascinating artists and promote them to great patrons and museums.

• Regular expansion.

• The fairs are a gateway to galleries through which new collectors enter.

Comparison of some major fairs for young galleries

Fair	Total nr of galleries	Nr of countries	Young section	Nr of new galleries	Nr of appl./ new spaces	Acceptance ratio	Booth price (EUR)
Art Basel, Basel	283	31	Statements	16	200/16 Main900/283	8 % app. 31%	10,600
FIAC	170	22	Secteur Lafayette	10	150/10	7 %	6,700
The Armory Show	199	28	Presents	20	150/20	13 %	12,700
Frieze London	164	27	Focus	36	Main: 500/164	Main: app.32%	7,200-13,100
ARCOmadrid	212	30	Opening Solo	29 20-22	By inv. 82	n.a. 25% m:33%	5,000
Art Brussels	195	33	Discovery /Young	14 85	90/14	15 %	5,200-7,480
Artissima	207	31	New Entries Ex-New E.	25	90/25	27%	4,700-5,600
Liste	79	31	n.a.	10-20/year	300/ 10-20	3-7 %	6,500-13,000

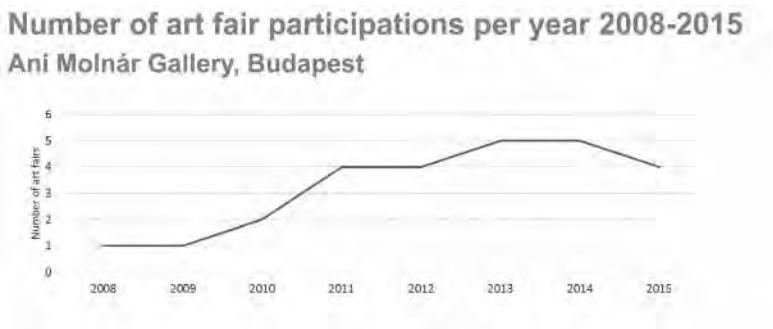
In this table it is possible to see: the total number of galleries participating in each of the major fairs, and the number of countries they represent. It is also good to see they all have sections for young galleries, which have different names with the exception of Liste as the whole fair is a big 'young' fair. It is also possible to see how many spaces they have in these sections. In the case of Liste, they take 10-20 new galleries each year; the rest come from previous years. And it also shows the acceptance ratio of each fair, being Liste one of the most difficult to get into: between 3-7% of the galleries are accepted. FIAC is also hard to get into because they have a very small section for new galleries. ARCOmadrid has Opening, a young section that works by invitation so the acceptance rate is not applicable. It is not easy then to get into the young sections, but it is not easy to get into the main section either. Here are some figures: in the case of Art Basel, it is 30%. In the case of Frieze London, it is 32%. Actually Frieze London did not provide the acceptance ratio for the young section, but probably it is equally difficult to get into the young or the main section because these fairs like Basel and Frieze take lots of galleries that are already existing exhibitors. And finally the costs: the most expensive fair is the Armory Show's young section, Presents, and then Art Basel. The most reasonable ones are Artissima, Art Brussels and ARCOmadrid.

The way I did it...

I tried to compile the information about my own approach and strategy at Ani Molnár Gallery. I opened the gallery at the beginning of 2009, but I already had done a local art fair in 2008. I was desperate to get in and I succeeded: I was in a fair before actually opening my gallery space. It was a really nice experience. It was right before the economic crisis hit and the market was quite pleasant at that time. In Hungary, unfortunately, there was a major decline after this crisis and the market never really recovered.

I have done 26 art fairs during these seven years. And what I can say is that the first most important milestone was VIENNAFAIR, which focuses on the Central and Eastern European region. My advice to any gallery from this region is to start with the fair now called viennacontemporary (former VIENNAFAIR), where I was able to make really great contacts and step up. Then I got into Artissima in 2012: I was the first Hungarian exhibitor there and I regard it as an important fair for me. ARCOmadrid was also a major step forward where I was invited to the Opening section twice. I was in the Armory Show Presents section twice, also as the first Hungarian exhibitor. And I really like Art Brussels as well. I was also there twice.

Actually, I was not aware how difficult it is to get into these fairs when I first applied, since I had no knowledge of the above admittance ratios then. I tried some other art fairs as well, but I think they didn't really match my profile, so I had them once and I did not return. Nonetheless, all of them gave me important experiences and I don't regret being there.



Here are the main recommendations I can give to a young gallery after my participation in several art fairs:

• Visit fairs to gain first hand impressions on the profile and atmosphere of each fair on the spot.

• Search for opportunities through personal contacts. Take advantage of the art fair as meeting point.

• Learn from fellow gallerists from your own region. Talking to gallerists like Gregor Podnar, Mihai Pop from Plan B and Hans Knoll, was very helpful as they shared their experiences with me.

• Maintain consistently high quality booth presentation: concept, layout, attention to details. This is why our gallery has been shortlisted for the best booth in a number of fairs. Ani Molnár Gallery focuses on installation art, so I always try to do booths at fairs which are high-quality and the best possible that we can do. Since I have a project space in Budapest in a shopping centre where I exhibit large-scale installations, I have had the opportunity to work with the best artists from Budapest.

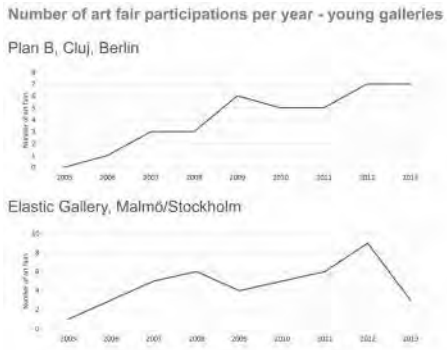
Here are a few examples of my booths at different art fairs:

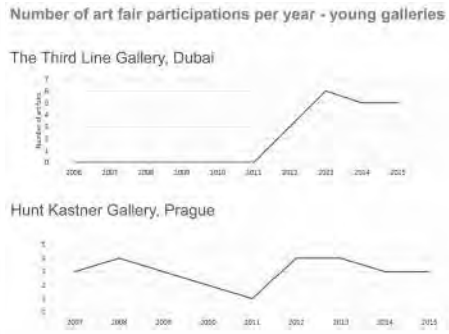
Viennafair 2011 (works of Emese Benczúr and Szilárd Cseke)

The Armory Show 2014 (solo show of Denes Farkas)

Concerning my strategy regarding the selection of artists, it is necessary to mention that there is a relatively high number of galleries in Budapest for that market site, so I realised that there could often be a fight for the same artists. It was an obvious decision for me then to reach outside Hungary in order to find new artists.

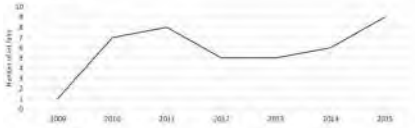
I was also curious about how many fairs other galleries are doing. And I was surprised to find that not all galleries disclose this information on their home page. I made a selection of galleries and I wanted to see how they do it: Plan B (Berlin), Elastic (Stockholm), Third Line (Dubai), Hunt Kastner Gallery (Prague), KOW (Berlin), Maisterravalbuena (Madrid), and two galleries based in New York, Clearing and Bureau.



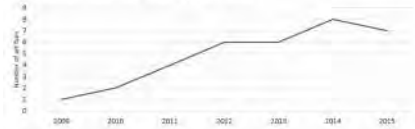


Number of art fair participations per year - young galleries

KOW, Berlin

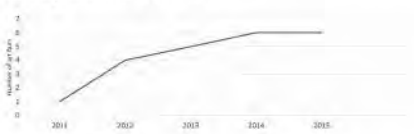


Maisterravalbuena Gallery, Madrid

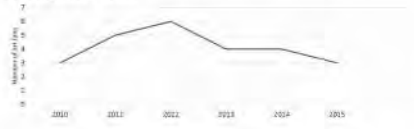


Number of art fair participations per year - young galleries

Clearing, Brussels/New York



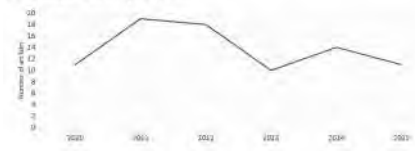
Bureau, New York



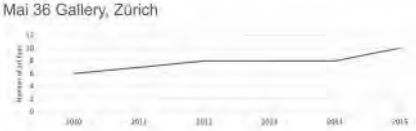
I also analysed two well-established galleries, Galerie Krinzinger (Vienna) and Mai 36 (Zürich). Here are the results:

Number of art fair participations per year between 2010 and 2015 – established galleries (more than 25 years of operation)

Krinzinger Gallery, Vienna



Mai 36 Gallery, Zürich



Both of these galleries are doing a very stable number nowadays: nine to ten fairs per year. Although Krinzinger did an amazing number of fairs for a while, and then they cut back their participation. Probably it was just too much. And I found information about one big mega-gallery: David Zwirner. They also increased the number of art fair participations and settled in the range of 19-20.

Number of art fair participations per year from 2010-2015 - megagalleries

David Zwirner Gallery, New York, London

Pace Gallery: 12 fairs in 2014

Hauser and Wirth: 8 fairs in 2015

Conclusions

• Presence in the quality art fairs can only be built up gradually.

• Young and emerging galleries usually have the capacity to make • three to six fairs a year.

• Established galleries optimise their presence, usually in the range of eight to twelve fairs per year.

• The development is not linear for most galleries. From time to time we have to think it over and step back a little and adjust/rethink our strategy.

I did five fairs last year and I have just one full-time employee and one part-time. It was a lot. Besides, there is the cost I mentioned. David Zwirner, as far as I know, has about a hundred employees in his New York gallery, so it is different to do twenty fairs with a hundred employees than to do five fairs with one single employee. So I decided to cut back. This year (2015) I did four international art fairs and I plan to do another four next year.

Finally, some views and quotes from gallerists from all over the world about fairs:

Pros	Cons
"One doesn't want to lose sight of the fact that it's not just about sales for the artists; it's about communication and platforms for disseminating ideas."	"Participation in art fairs drains the energy from local gallery work"
"Art Basel is like the Olympics, or the European Champions League, and every good gallery and their artists wants desperately to compete."	"Applying for Art Basel for years is like paying taxes"
"In case of very small local markets the only way to give exposure to less known artists is to attend art fairs."	
"We do a number of other fairs because we want to work with new emerging markets."	
"Art Basel is like getting admitted to a club."	

Speaking about competition for and among fairs, I should say it is a fair and friendly competition though. And considering the overall results of my research, and if we compare the pros and cons, it seems that we have to do the fairs.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q. If a fair doesn't work for you; do you give it a second chance, or do you immediately decide not to do it again?

A.M. If it's a very high prestige fair, one of these top 10 and 15, I would give it a second chance. I have been very lucky with important fairs such as VIENNAFAIR, Artissima, ARCOmadrid, the Armory Show and Art Brussels. So I didn't have to go through this disappointment phase. I experienced that with some other fairs though, so I know how it feels. In my case, I will cut back but because it has been too much and would like to focus on local issues, such as finding a new gallery space in Budapest. Nonetheless, I won't return at all to fairs, which are really not for my profile or where I didn't feel comfortable.

Q. When you go to art fairs, do you establish a special kind of agreement with the artists other than the ones you have in your regular exhibitions at the gallery?

A.M. I have a contract with some artists but not with everybody. It's a good question because I was thinking about establishing different types of agreements with artists whom I take to art fairs because I represent about 15 artists but I show maybe six to seven of my artists at fairs. My gallery undertakes high costs in order to present the artists and sometimes I feel that only the gallery takes the risk. For artists, there is limited risk basically. They enjoy the benefits of being at the art fairs and getting the visibility. And it has frequently happened, to be honest, that my artists earned good money at art fairs and I could not even cover my costs. I feel it's not really fair, but on the other hand it's difficult to discuss this issue with artists because of course they have a completely different perspective. If I spent €50,000 on fairs it means that I have to earn €100,000 just to cover my costs. The other €50,000 go to the artists. It would be nice if the artists could contribute somehow to the costs and all the effort we make regarding art fairs, but it hasn't happened so far.

Q. How big are your booths in the fairs?

A.M. I have always been in the young sections of these major art fairs. Normally the booths are around 20-25 square metres. At Artissima, I was once in the main section, but it was also only 30 square metres. It will be another development phase for me to go to the main sections and have a different size booth.

Q. I just want to go back to your comment that you would like artists to participate more in the fair business. I think part of being a gallery is taking that risk and going to an art fair. If an art fair doesn't bring immediate financial results, there might be other results which will maybe become apparent in a year or two. Can you go more into the idea of artists doing more than just taking the money and perhaps sharing expenses?

A.M. I talked about this subject with fellow gallerists and somebody said that he asked for some artworks when he takes an artist for fairs. I have not done this. It's an interesting approach. In the long term, it's in the interest of the artist that the gallery can be at these fairs all the time and represent them long-term. But you need to understand that the price level of the Hungarian artists is much lower than Western European artists. Very frequently, I'm extremely happy because I've sold well, but it's still very hard to cover the costs.

Q. Does this still happen in the case of art fairs you've done for consecutive times? For instance, VIENNAFAIR, which you have done five times. In which year would you say you covered your costs and more?

A.M. VIENNAFAIR (now viennacontemporary) is a special place because they support galleries from the Eastern Bloc, as they have a sponsorship from a bank. So we pay a reasonable fee of €3,500 and it's not that big a challenge to cover this cost. But again, I have been lucky with fairs as I have always sold something at every single art fair. So I never had that type of disappointment you often see at fairs. And it's not just from a financial point of view: it's not a nice feeling to go home without selling anything. VIENNAFAIR has been a fair where I always covered my costs or made some sort of profit.

Q. Now you're not so young anymore, will you change your strategy or will you adjust it? What's your next step? Will you have to choose different fairs? Will you have to move on to bigger booths or make different programmes like solos or curated shows?

A.M. I would like to keep these five fairs I mentioned before as are important to me. I probably cannot do all of them each year so I guess I would do some of them every second year. There are a couple of other fairs which are in my focus, and I will apply to them in the future. The gallery is still young and emerging, and I would like to take the advantage of being in these supported sections. In the case of Art Brussels, eight years is the limit, and in some cases is 10 years. Of course, in other cases I have to move into the main sections. Some other fairs, like Artissima, have special projects sections. So if you apply with a curated booth, then you pay less. As a gallery from Eastern Europe, I always look at the costs and see which is the most reasonable way to do a fair.

Q. Over the last ten years or so or even since the fall of the Wall, there have been beneficial periods for the art scenes in specific countries. At some point, it was very good to be a gallery from East Germany, emancipated into the market economy, or a gallery from Romania. And for a certain period of time, there was a very strong focus on Polish young artists. It seems like the market focus has gone through the Eastern countries: from one country to the next without really focusing on one or two artists. Do you see a pattern there? Have you experienced the same for Hungarian artists?

A.M. Eastern Europe was very exciting after the changes in the beginning of 1990s, but I think Hungary and Eastern Europe is not particularly trendy now. Even so, the artists are quite good and there are good galleries. You mentioned Poland as well. Polish artists are all around the world, represented by different galleries.

Q. Is it really that important to think about your work and your position as a gallerist in geographical terms, or is it maybe better look beyond this and concentrate more on other aspects?

A.M. Geographical issues are very interesting because I come from a country where this is an everyday topic. Issues like how to get Hungarian

artists into the international art scene are key for us. It's a globalised art world and the gallery programme and artists are, of course, the most important thing. These international art fairs are very open to countries, and between 25 and 33 countries are generally represented. They are very open to the periphery. We have equal chances to get into the art fairs. However, there is still room for improvement.

Q. I come from Serbia and I think that the geography is still an issue. Is the today's art world really familiar with the contemporary artists from East Europe? Maybe more with an older generation. This is also true for the big shows set up in major museums. Promises of the Past (Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2010) featured mainly artists from the 1970s and 80s. Recently, I saw the MoMA show *Transmissions, Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980*. I have a feeling that whenever it is a show about Eastern Europe, it goes back to that generation but there is nothing contemporary. I also think that there might be an educational gap. Recently, I was struck by the fact that a speaker at Sotheby's Institute of Art did not know that Czechoslovakia did not exist anymore. So the question is: how do we get contemporary artists from East European countries? Art fairs are good platforms, but I just have a feeling that whenever it is East Europe, it is all about the 1970s and 80s.

A.M. I think this region is still to be discovered. There are a number of countries in Eastern Europe, which is not represented by galleries at art fairs. I'm not aware of any gallery from Serbia for example. Some good galleries already exist in Bulgaria. And there is Slovenia and Croatia. These are big countries with good artistic productions and great artists. There's a lot to do.

C. I think that the next step in the analysis you brought could be more along the lines of "What does this mean for me as a gallerist? What do I draw from this kind of information?" It's really about where you sit in the world with your gallery and your artists and what you want to achieve from these art fairs. So whilst you are in Hungary, you have a specific set of criteria which makes these art fairs interesting for you. Whereas if you're somewhere else, you might have a different set of criteria.

Q. How necessary is it now for young and emerging galleries to be talking about ways to collaborate, to support each other when they participate in fairs or sharing spaces? Is that a direction galleries should be going in more now?

A.M. Sharing booths at a fair is a great way to co-operate, but you can only do it if you have either a common artist or a really great relationship with another gallery. I'm planning to do it with a couple of galleries from Western Europe actually. I hope that the art fairs accept it as not all of them like this possibility. I always try to co-operate with my local Hungarian colleagues if we go together to the same fairs. It has happened in a couple of cases. For example, there is another gallery from Budapest that participates in ARCOmadrid and we have always done the transport and shipping together. This kind of cooperation does exist. When I started my gallery seven years ago, it was not easy to understand which fairs were suitable. There were not that many articles and general information available about this issue as there is today. That is why I would like to emphasize at the end of my talk how important it is to share information and communicate among colleagues.

Alain Servais

Brussels-based art collector, investment banker and entrepreneur, Alain Servais started collecting art in the late 1990s. With a strong focus on emerging artists, Servais has built up a significant contemporary art collection which is highly versatile and forward-looking. In 2000, he moved into a 900-square meter old factory, which he later transformed into a three-storey loft, located in a working-class neighbourhood in Northern Brussels, where he lives and works, and showcases his private collection. Servais often participates in public forums on the art business and he also tweets regularly, sharing his thoughts and links to articles (@aservais1). Servais serves on the Armory Centennial Committee and is a member of the Art Basel Global Patrons Council.

Adam Sheffer

Since 2003, Adam Sheffer has been Partner and Sales Director at Cheim & Read in New York, where he has expanded the gallery's scope of representation, adding artists such as Ghada Amer, Chantal Joffe, Tal R and Sean Scully. Prior to Cheim & Read, Sheffer was director at the Robert Miller and Mary Boone galleries, where he began his career as assistant to the owner in 1994. Sheffer is currently an Associate Producer of Lady Painter, a film based on the novel by Patricia Albers about the art and life of Joan Mitchell, and is co-editor of the book Alice Neel: Paintings from the Thirties. In 2014, Sheffer was named a benefactor of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, where he first encountered art during his childhood in Boston. Adam Sheffer is a graduate of Vassar College with a degree in art and archaeology. Most recently In September 2015, he was elected President of The Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA).

ARTIST AGENCIES

SPEAKER
Alain Servais

RESPONDENT
Adam Sheffer

CONCEPTS
platform of knowledge, economies of scale, legal and administrative support, production, interaction, independent and competent services, gallery resources, complementary roles, identity of the gallery, best practices, industry

ARTIST AGENCIES

I will take my article “Art in the Shadow of Art Market Industrialisation” as a starting point for this presentation. It was written after my first talk here (2013) and which you will find online.

I am a fan of the arts: I am a collector and I deeply love art. But I cannot ignore that today the art market has become a business. I call it in an industry. When I use that word in the art world, people think about a long chain of cars or washing machines being built. This is not what an industry is about anymore. An industry can be the luxury goods industry, or the media industry. An industry is a kind of an infrastructure which is organised for business. That is the context we are in at this point.

I want to raise some thoughts which will be touching on a very sensitive subject in the art world: the relationship between artists and galleries. Many gallerists, particularly from the older generation, still think of it as a sacred relationship. I will be giving a presentation to project you into the 21st century and another potential way of doing business. What I am going to be talking to you about is artist agencies.

My job as a businessman and as an investment banker is to try to understand the trend of things, to do it before everyone else and maybe to direct it. In the art world we definitely need to strategise, that is one of the notions that will come out of this talk very much: to “strategise”. Which art fairs are you going to be doing? What artists are you going to be following? What are you going to do with your gallery space? It is about strategising everything you are going to do. So from that point of view, thinking about another way of doing business is quite important.

What are the main roles of a gallery? I sent an email to Edward Winkleman before this talk saying: "you are the specialist in that field. What do you think the functions and the purpose of the art gallery are?" It was very interesting because he spoke a lot about the relationship with the artists.

But there is more than this. 1) Marc Spiegler mentioned during his lecture the ability of discovering artists, which I think is very important. Sometimes galleries care about it, and sometimes they forget about it a little bit. 2) The second element is to support an artist, helping him/her development, and nurturing what he/she will be doing. 3) The third element is to sell the art. Marian Goodman says that "the marketplace is important too; artists need to live and sell; and that is my responsibility." 4) Behind the sale, there is also the element of production. And according to what I hear from galleries, this is a big problem. The artist suddenly wants to build five-metre-high ceramic things that have never been built before, and the gallery has got to get involved and solve that problem. 5) Then, there is the PR element, which is included in the selling but is more and more important today: how to contact the press, how to make the press aware, how to make people aware. 6) And there is one last element I would kindly describe as some kind of babysitting (assistance), because artists are very sensitive human beings. Very often there is the two o'clock WhatsApp about an existentialist crisis: "What am I going to do for my next show and everything?" This question needs an immediate reply in all circumstances. That is a broad description of the functions of a gallery.

"ART MARKET HAS BECOME A BUSINESS. I CALL IT IN AN INDUSTRY—A KIND OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH IS ORGANISED FOR BUSINESS. THAT IS THE CONTEXT WE ARE IN AT THIS POINT."

How does a gallery work in reality? Someone in this symposium has commented that galleries stopped investing long-term in artists a long time ago. Coming back to my description of industrialisation, that is quite logical. Because of the absence of contracts, it is quite difficult for galleries to consciously invest in the long term with an artist because they know that artists may walk away after a few shows, so it is kind of a balance. Why would you invest? One of the problems is long-term investment in the artist.

But there are more and more problems in that new environment called the art market industry, things that are not working properly any more. I will give you a couple of examples. I was involved once with an English artist who had a gallery in Belgium. He was trying to recover his works from the gallery, but the gallery would not release them because they would say "now that you are leaving me, I would like you to cover some of my costs for the art fairs where I have been presenting you." This issue is not formalised in a contract and suddenly it comes up. So what do you do in those circumstances? You also have cases of conflicts of interest, as exemplified by an experience connected with a Spanish artist. At ARCO, you have White Cube's Jay Jopling coming to her booth, spending 20 minutes with the artist, investigating the work and so on. And so the dealer comes to the gallerist and says straight out "can you send me a PDF about the work so that I can understand it? We could work together". In that case, the artist was very happy and excited. One month later, she goes back to the gallery asking if there was any follow-up from White Cube. The gallerist replies that he did not send the PDF because if she starts working with White Cube, it will be at a price range that is much higher than his usual clients pay, meaning they will not be able to work together in those circumstances." It does not mean that everyone is acting like this, but it is happening.

"IT IS TIME TO NOTE ONE VERY SPECIAL THING: THE ART WORLD IS ONE OF THE ONLY CREATIVE INDUSTRIES WITH NO ARTIST AGENTS. HOW COME?"

Another example was an American gallery that started working with an artist in the UK. The US gallery wanted to develop a relationship and do the first show as a kind of a retrospective of the work. The artist accepted but the works were in consignment in the gallery in the UK. The US gallery and the artist requested the release of the works, but the UK gallery refused because retaining them would enable it to sell them. Again, it is an unsatisfactorily resolved conflict of interest. Another first-hand example was some young artists from Brussels. They have a gallery in Paris, showing some of their drawings at the FIAC. To their amazement they discover that the asking price is €20,000, which doubles the normal price of €10,000. They were concerned that their collectors will be surprised and nobody would buy at those prices. The

gallery's reply was that "on the ground floor of the FIAC, they cannot sell art at €10,000, so they needed to raise the price." It was obviously a big problem for the artists.

"WHAT COULD A MODEL OF AN ARTIST AGENCY BE? IT WOULD BE A PLATFORM OF KNOWLEDGE, AND ALSO IT WOULD INTRODUCE ECONOMIES OF SCALE, WHICH ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE CURRENT DIFFICULT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF MANY GALLERIES."

In those circumstances where conflicts of interest arise, it is time to note one very special thing: the art world is one of the only creative industries with no artist agents. How come? There are agents for architects, writers, actors, footballers... for any kind of creative industry. But never for visual artists in an organised way. Why do we not think about a possible model openly, rather than reacting by saying "No, no. You are touching the very sacred element of my relationship?" What could a model of an artist agency be? It would be a platform of knowledge, and also it would introduce economies of scale, which are very important in the current difficult economic circumstances of many galleries.

Independent quality legal and administrative support

One of the main issues the art industry is faced with has to do with contracts. Whether you like it or not, there are many contracts in the art world now: for the production of a work, for a museum or a biennale exhibition, or whatever. There are always legal problems that appear. And we have not even talked about the essential relationship between galleries and artists. Dora García has mentioned she would not be against contracts and I think there is a majority of artists who would agree. But we must recognise that when an artist sees a contract they always think they are going to be screwed. I have had artists telling me "I did not sleep for three nights because I have got to sign the contract, and finally I took the decision not to sign it." This was not because it was a bad contract but just because the artist was not able to handle the technology and the legal terms that were in the contract. Obviously in those conditions the artist needs a trusted independent

point of view. So, the idea would be to have a platform and one of the first services would be the legal service: a dedicated lawyer that understands the way of doing business in the art world, who does not always 100% follow legality in favour of trust and pragmatism, allowing some flexibility but still being able to give proper advice about what to do or not to do.

There are other elements that come up as well: How should I get my social security? What status should I have? Where do I make my fiscal declaration? Where do I pay my taxes? There are sometimes quite complex elements that are difficult for every individual gallery to solve by itself. Another solution would be having independent advice paid for by the artist.

Production support

The same is true for production. Imagine an artist approaches a gallery, saying "Now I would like to create works in ceramics." But as a gallery, where do you find a ceramist who is happy to work on the basis of measurements, not standard works but measurements? Do you have that information at hand? Everybody knows a couple of names here and there but it is not easy to arrange. It would also be a plus if you know of some ceramist that would be happy to work getting some works in return, that would be even better because there are some standards that could also be applied. Again in terms of economies of scale, if you have got that production support on the one platform serving many different artists, then it is sometimes also helpful for the system as a whole.

Public Relations

Looking now at PR, mega-galleries today have got a dedicated PR person in-house. But is it possible to have a PR in every single gallery, particularly the medium-sized galleries, of a quality that is good enough to raise awareness of a show? Having one specialized person on one platform could be helpful too. The same for artists' relations, which are an issue. In mega-galleries, there are also people dedicated just to artists' relations. But when there are only two or three people in the gallery, is it possible to provide that service correctly?

The idea of creating that platform is not against the gallery at all. It is just an independent, competent, service oriented, knowledge platform,

outside of the gallery, that would of course be interacting with galleries as much as it is needed. It would free up gallery resources, which would then have less fixed costs; and as we have seen, these costs have been increasing dramatically on the commercialisation and on production sides. I remember the letter that Jérôme de Noirmont wrote when he decided to close the gallery. He said and I paraphrase, "At this point I would need to hire high-quality people that would be very expensive to keep doing my business in this new art industry." So, would it have been possible for him to keep running the business if he had this kind of platform offering an independent, non-competing service? It would be a complementary service that would help the gallery meet some of its needs more efficiently and potentially in a cheaper way.

"IT IS JUST AN INDEPENDENT, COMPETENT, SERVICE ORIENTED, KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM, OUTSIDE OF THE GALLERY, THAT WOULD OF COURSE BE INTERACTING WITH GALLERIES AS MUCH AS IT IS NEEDED. IT WOULD FREE UP GALLERY RESOURCES."

There are more galleries than you think who would prefer a looser relationship with artists. For many the question would be what the identity of a gallery will be if they don't hold on to their artists for the long term. Marc Spiegler has asked what the identity of the gallery would be if you cannot hold your artists in their evolving career. The identity then could be the gallery's particular vision of the world. For gallerist Stefania Bortolami, what she is also enjoying in the gallery business is being a part in writing art history. And another Marian Goodman quote: "a dealer's genius is to shape a cultural landscape". Goodman has done it more consistently and successfully than any living gallerist. Do galleries need to always have that kind if fixed relationship with artists that is very costly, and also without the cost-benefit of economies of scale?

People defining themselves as "artist agencies" already exist in one way or another, here and there. But what they do most of the time is sell the work of the artists, a little bit like a gallerist without gallery. This is absolutely not what I mean and believe in when I speak about

an artist agency. How to structure the artist agency then? There should be one very clear condition: under no circumstances would it ever be selling work out of the studio. This means that obviously they are not competing with galleries, they are just complementing their functions and tasks.

"ARTIST AGENCIES WOULD, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, EVER BE SELLING WORK OUT OF THE STUDIO. THIS MEANS THAT OBVIOUSLY THEY ARE NOT COMPETING WITH GALLERIES, THEY ARE JUST COMPLEMENTING THEIR FUNCTIONS AND TASKS."

So, how could you imagine remuneration? First of all, through an alignment of the artist agent interests with the artist, which means that it should be based on how much the artist is selling. I think 5% on the turnover coming from the artist and 5% coming from the gallery depending on the service provided. Is the gallery really able to reduce their fixed costs because of the service provided by the artist agent? If so, it makes sense for the gallery to contribute to the provided services. Alternatively,It is very possible that if we are talking about an artist working with a mega-gallery with its own lawyers, PR, etc, the 5% from the gallery could not be charged because there would be services provided by the gallery itself.

In the US, the practice of creating a studio is growing fast among artists, which in fact will cover a few of the functions described here. This is one of the differences between the US and Europe. But the studio has no economies of scale because you need to build it and find the people with the appropriate knowledge. So it could be still interesting for people with a studio to delegate some of the tasks if they are done well in the artist agency. In Europe, the studio practice is less widespread.

That is in broad terms, the model that could be a potential solution to many problems for medium-sized galleries, like the fixed costs and the relationships with the artists as it would be easier to arrange contracts. As mentioned earlier, unbalanced contracts in which the gallerist

sometimes imposes unfair conditions on the artist would not exist, rebalancing various excesses and unfair practices from a minority. So far, the feedback I have had after speaking to quite a few artists about this idea has been extremely positive. Some major curators have also said that if ever this kind of platform was launched, they could line up 20 or 30 artists that would be very interested in that kind of services right now.

Adam Sheffer (Respondent)
You have in many ways described my job as gallerist in terms of the artist agent. As President of the Art Dealers Association of America, we very clearly state in our code of ethics that our responsibility is to act as the artist agents, and that is the terminology that we use. I think about my role as a dealer and as an artist agent. The reason why I ended up in this profession is because it was as close to the mark of being an artist as I was ever going to get. I have learned the business of being an art dealer. And one of the things that for me is interesting is learning how to make an artist's wildest dreams the very least that will ever happen for them. In doing that, I actually really like the complexities of my job. When you talk about certain aspects of artist agencies' responsibilities, there are a lot of extremely salient points which I think are extremely useful and complementary to what we gallerists do.

The idea that you referred to, the term 'instinct', again goes back to this sort of right-brain world that the art dealer, gallerist or agent has to live in. We have to be able to do things that are more than just merely commercial. We have to wear a lot of hats. And some of us are better than others at that. We need to be instinctual, perceptive, to have empathy, to have a sense. And interestingly enough artists respond to that kind of sensitivity, what makes me wonder about who this person would be. If one of my artists has an issue that is legally related, we certainly can go collectively or independently and talk to one of the great art lawyers, people who specialise in this area. Our gallery has very competent financial advisers.

And it is interesting as well because you are talking about real issues. The problems that you have encountered—the FIAC case, or galleries not releasing work, people not sending PDF's—do happen. But there are ways to avoid those situations, and it is the responsibility of the dealers to work together in order to make that sort of agreement

happen. At the end of the day: a) we are working for the artist; and b) we can keep them out of anything that is unpleasant that they do not necessarily want to be involved in or cannot be the best advocate for.

Alain Servais. In the current way of doing things, the artist agency is a very probable development. I also would like the industry to develop and enforced best practices like in most professions. If there were best practices, it would reduce the number of times that kind of issues happen. I forgot to mention another practical example: Robert Blumenthal opened a gallery, got a young artist from the MFA at Yale, and did sell-out shows of his work. Marianne Boesky noticed the artist and started to talk to him. He obviously was not expecting to spend his life with Blumenthal and said "I am going to Boesky." Then the artist said "When is the money coming from the sell-out show?" The gallerist would reply that he's keeping the part corresponding to the promotion costs now that the artist leaves. Numerous examples exist.

Another issue creating a lot of tensions is late payments by gallerists to artists, sometimes I must confess because of late payments by collectors. Nowadays, a law has been passed in Manhattan which makes it some kind of a felony for a gallerist to get the money that is the result of a sale in his general account.

A number of times I heard that the artist is paid, but only after the gallery has paid the booth, transportation, insurances, electricity...As an industry, best practices should work as a code of ethics and the black sheep harming the reputation of the flock should be publicly identified which should lead to their ostracism. Why is there no artist agent in the current circumstances, where the money is now big enough to bring the bad guys into the arena? That is why I think there will need to be an independent agent doing part of your job.

If you are one of those mega-galleries showing Louise Bourgeois and names like those, surely you are very well equipped. But I am talking about the two, three, four, five-employee gallery... How can they cope with all those costs? And with regards to keeping the artists, if the gallery cannot provide this service they will move somewhere else. I am really thinking about how to provide support to the mid-sized gallery, which everybody agrees are the most in trouble right now.

An extension of the artist agent would be the production companies. It is starting to happen more and more now. Jérôme de Noirmont started a production company after closing the gallery.

Looking at other industries, you can sub-contract some services off the shelf, but those services do not exist in the art world.

Adam Sheffer. I had just read Judd Tully's article on Blouin.com about the survivance of the single-venue gallery. This is something I believe deeply in. This idea of the artist agent, is this a way to complement those single-venue galleries and allow them to continue to survive and thrive? Is this a way to alleviate or maybe complement some of the responsibilities of what we do in an equitable fashion? If so, I will be able to get my artist in the next museum show, or encourage a new foundation to make a significant game-changing acquisition. I think there is a lot of merit to this idea.

"THIS IDEA OF THE ARTIST AGENT, IS THIS A WAY TO COMPLEMENT THOSE SINGLE-VENUE GALLERIES AND ALLOW THEM TO CONTINUE TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE? IS THIS A WAY TO ALLEVIATE OR MAYBE COMPLEMENT SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF WHAT WE DO IN AN EQUITABLE FASHION?"

It is hard to wear a lot of hats. You do it, I do it. You call it babysitting, I call it psychiatry. It is actually something that I quite enjoy. When an artist calls up and they say "I put a new mark on a painting and I really want you to come up and talk to me about it". I know that that mark will cost me a hundred-dollar dinner and three hours of my evening, but I am happy to do it because I know this is what I signed up for. That conversation may lead to something. It is also something that validates this relationship.

It is very hard to wear a lot of hats. I come to it with a great of deal of training and experience from being a failed artist. How do you find a single person who is going to be able to do all of these things and give you the confidence for legal advice, financial advice, career development, etc.?

Alain Servais. Why should it be one person? I am talking about a platform counting multiple qualified specialists that could serve 50 or a hundred artists. I am talking about a competent platform, and you described it perfectly. It is for the medium-sized gallery to be able to provide the full quality service without cutting corners. It is for the medium-sized gallery to defend themselves against the "megas" coming and picking up what I call the VBAs: the very bankable artists. Either you create rules at an industry level, or is the law of the strongest in the art world which rules. When artist Lisa Panting was discussing about the gallery offering an unbalanced contract, it was because the gallery was not in a position of strength. If I as a collector, change my mind concerning the purchase of a work in a mid size gallery, they would have no possibility to react. If I do the same to Gagosian, he will sue me. Everywhere it is a matter of force. I do not like that situation, in which a humanist endeavour, art, is right now subject to the law of the jungle.

"WHY SHOULD ARTIST AGENTS BE ONE PERSON? I AM TALKING ABOUT A PLATFORM COUNTING MULTIPLE QUALIFIED SPECIALISTS THAT COULD SERVE 50 OR A HUNDRED ARTISTS. I AM TALKING ABOUT A COMPETENT PLATFORM."

Adam Sheffer. This brings up a very interesting idea. Is there a power struggle between the gallery and the artist, or even between the gallery and the collector? I was really taken by the comment that some artists feel they are in the passive role. It is interesting because where I come from, we always believe that we defer to the artist. Sometimes, even when they are not necessarily right, we will do it because it is part of keeping the harmonious relationship. I like the fact that an artist agency can empower an artist to have a voice that is on equal standing with the dealer. Because I was an artist, I understand that sometimes artists do not feel they are in the position to do that. So having somebody be your voice with your gallery is not necessarily a bad idea. However, does it create yet a third entity in this world? Is this going to create interferences? How do we prevent that from happening? How do we stop a rogue entity from entering what is already a complex, fast, and turbulent?

Alain Servais. Allow me to take the example of the art advisers cottage industry. It is also a little bit like the finance industry. Of course there are crooks everywhere—in my industry a lot (just think about the wolves of Wall Street)—but of course today it is much more heavily regulated. It will be the same with artist agents because humans are humans.

I hear quite a few people calling themselves today an artist agent, but I ask them: what are you bringing to the artists? I am talking about a serious professional platform, with a trained lawyer on board who will intervene when it is necessary. The artist agent will be the contact the artist can call at any time. That will make the difference. You cannot simply justify five and five per cent just for being there and God willing.

Do I believe art advisers should disappear because there are a few rogue people among? Of course not. I see some of my friends starting as collectors and sometimes they have art advisers. It is totally fine with me as long as there is clarity between the parties, preferably through a clear and comprehensive contract.

I truly believe a largest part of the art market is becoming a serious industry, but we are not talking about serious money; it is peanuts. Sometimes the art world thinks about itself like it is the centre of the world. The famous $53 billion that Clare McAndrew mentioned as the global sales of art in 2013 is the amount of pet food that the US is consuming every year That means that Americans are buying more pet food than artists bought and sold across the whole world. So it is not that big an industry, but still, it is a very serious thing.

It is really about making everybody aware again of the importance of art. I do not think of art as a hobby or as an investment. I really think it can help improve the world if not change it marginally for the best. How can we make the industry work better? Can we help to rebalance the relationships between the powerful versus the average participant?

The medium-sized galleries sometimes do not even have time to think about those evolutions and issues. And I am telling them at this crucial moment of extremely fast evolution: Sorry guys, take some time and think! If you cannot do this, you are running and suddenly

the wall will be in front of you. Like that joke: “Heard about the guy who fell off a skyscraper? On his way down past each floor, he kept saying to reassure himself: So far so good…so far so good…so far so good.” Unfortunately, it happens all the time. I hear too often about good galleries closing. So I really want to open mid size galleries some paths to go on with their business.

Adam Sheffer. It is wonderful that you can discuss art on a holistic level and have this notion of industry. I think these are both very real things, but I just did not want to forget this idea of art as a higher calling too. Sean Scully gave a lecture at the Pinacoteca in São Paulo; he was talking about how art is basically the opposite of war. I appreciate that you share a deep understanding of art as a higher entity.

Getting back to the artist agent idea, I am intrigued by this notion of the compensation: 5% here and 5% there is one that logically makes sense. Would that put the financial success of the agent dependent on the success of the dealer?

Alain Servais. And the artist.

Adam Sheffer. This works certainly for artists with a very high production rate, relatively low cost, big output, who are regularly shown at art fairs. They can provide their gallery with work on a regular basis. Not every artist is like this. Do you think it is fair to say that not every artist should have an agent and that a huge part of the population is actually better served just working directly with their dealer? Let’s say I am an artist in my seventies; it takes me a couple of months to make a painting and then I send it to the gallery. Under good circumstances, a week later or so it is sold. Thirty days later I am paid. I have accumulated some sort of security over the years. Do I need to even think about this? Am I too late in the game? Are there people that this model just is not practical for?

I long since stopped trying to assess the art world according to economic principles. And this term ‘underperforming’ is one that I have never heard a dealer ever say. So, I think the artist agencies is an interesting idea, and it is certainly something worth pursuing in terms of the concept.

Alain Servais. Of course not every artist should work through an agent, even if I don't see much downside to having a truly professional independent opinion. There are always exceptions to everything. But again, I would just give a comparison with the Thea Westreichs of this world.

Every two weeks I have got a venture approaching me to look at their business plan and ask me for potential investment money? One thing I am trying to identify to know if maybe someone has got a future is when they understand that key thing: yes, art is an industry, but if the first point is to make the maximum money, you will not make it in any circumstances. Thea and her husband, they are not working only for the money. Of course they make money out of it, but is it the prime objective of what they do in the art world? I do not think so. If you are creating an artist agency just for the money and only with the objective of maximising everything you do and taking out the artists that are not making enough money, you will not last long. Sometimes dealers or gallerists feel offended by what I am saying because they feel "We are going to become like Wall Street". I do not think the Wall Street's selfish way of doing business would ever work in art.

"DO YOU THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT NOT EVERY ARTIST SHOULD HAVE AN AGENT AND THAT A HUGE PART OF THE POPULATION IS ACTUALLY BETTER SERVED JUST WORKING DIRECTLY WITH THEIR DEALER?"

Inject a little bit of the improved efficiency and keep that idea that we are working ultimately for art, that mind-elevating thing called art. I am working with other ventures, and I keep telling them "If you believe always about maximising the profits, the art world will never accept you" We spoke about trust in the art world. For sure, you need to build trust. Maybe the reason why I have got the honour of sitting in this chair is that maybe some people accept that I am a true collector. I really respect Stefan Simchowitz and admire the disruptive part of what he is doing. But what I do not like is that he is masquerading as a Che Guevara of the art world when in fact he is looking to maximise the bank account at the end of the day. That is why in a way the art world rejects him. If it is about the money mostly, it will not work.

"IF YOU ARE CREATING AN ARTIST AGENCY JUST FOR THE MONEY AND ONLY WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF MAXIMISING EVERYTHING YOU DO AND TAKING OUT THE ARTISTS THAT ARE NOT MAKING ENOUGH MONEY, YOU WILL NOT LAST LONG."

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

C. I think the idea of agents exists already. I have had encounters with agents before. I personally would see it at the beginning of the career of an artist rather than when he is very big and already wanted by different galleries performing that role for him.

Alain Servais. I believe that the need exists at all points in an artist's career. It is when an artist starts having multiple galleries that the problem starts happening. How do I sell a work which is in another gallery in New York? Sometimes some production costs are attached to it, so how does it work? What is the commission on the whole thing? At the beginning of a career, I strongly believe that the relationship with artists is a kind of an adoption. I see as a collector, that an artist with one gallery will hardly sell out of the studio. When the artist has got three or four galleries, then it is much easier for him to sneak out some stuff. The natural environment for artist agencies would be mid-career artists as well, artists that have already faced some problems. A young artist will think "My gallery is fine enough. I do not need consignment agreements," and all those mistakes that are done sometimes at the beginning of a career. When you are mid-career, you are aware and ready to understand some rules. But definitely there would be an interest among young artists as well.

Now, when you say it exists already, I really have not met a single artist agent that was not selling work. So it was a gallery without art space. They call themselves an artist agent, but they are not. That is not what I mean as artist agencies.

Adam Sheffer. There are artists with galleries in places where there is no gallery structure per se to the extent that we have it in the United States or Western Europe. They may benefit very seriously from having an artist agent, especially at a time when they are in the Venice Biennale and on an international stage which will expose them to all sorts of problems.

Q. I think there is indeed an inconsistency in our current gallery model. The conflict of interest is I think based there. On the other hand, I also think that perhaps the word 'agent' here might confuse a lot of us. I support your idea of having a true artist agent, but as you are saying, the agents that we already know are always also involved in selling. Would it not be better to perhaps think of concepts such as associations of artists which would perhaps have more objective notions towards the gallery as an agent?

Alain Servais. You can change the name if you want, I do not care.

C. I have a gallery, I am an artist, a curator, I have contracts. Some artists tell me they respect me because I am transparent. Contracts are a very important thing because you do not lie to anybody, and nobody lies to you. I really recommend to everybody to do contracts and not to be afraid of this word because it is a business, it is transparency, and it is an industry. The problem is that a lot of artists do not know all the tax rules and the things a gallery has to do. In Germany for example, we need to pay Künstlersozialkasse, social security: 5% of the price to the German authorities. Even if the artist does not receive the money, I need to do it. Everything is open and clear. You can avoid a lot of problems.

Adam Sheffer. You are someone who believes in transparency, which is a word we discuss all the time in the business, but also clarity. Clarity comes from an ability to be a good explainer. And the idea of sitting down and have the art of explanation between two people so that the contract, the understanding and the responsibilities are clear...When an artist joins our gallery, one of the things I ask them to do is to write me a letter and say what they expect of me. Then we sit down and we go through the points. It is an organic relationship, but as long as you have clarity, it is open for discussion. I think that is what the artists-gallery relationship is about.

Q. I am not so sure if this is a great idea in itself, but I think it is great to discuss it. And I have some remarks regarding the way you suggest that you should get paid through some sort of a success fee, because that will direct his work to the galleries where he will get a better chance to get money. I think a fixed fee would make more sense. On the other hand, I think this is a service much more to the artist than to the gallery. I am not so sure if the gallery should pay. What do you think about that?

Alain Servais. I am not against it. I do not have anything to defend. It is just a point of view. I believe that a fixed fee is not aligning the interests. From a financial point of view, I want people's interests to be aligned with mine: I win, you win. And to get an artist to pay something up front, to commit to whatever happens, whether you sell or not, I do not believe it will happen. A good professional platform will provide a lot of services to the gallery. And I believe in businesses where everybody is happy to pay. If the agent provides the right service, galleries do not have to go to a lawyer; do not have to solve those tax problems or issues on production.

C. The idea of an agency in some ways brings us to the issue of scale again. If we have an executive team running the careers of over 50 artists, we are talking about a pretty big corporation. When you get ten people in a room talking to each other, you have less clarity, not more clarity. Who has the vision to make things more efficient for everyone involved? Are we just setting up a structure that is inherently more daunting than what we are dealing with now? In New York, PR is a big deal for galleries for their exhibitions. Even galleries of the scale of five employees, have had PR agents working because it is more efficient than having someone in-house. They can organise the dinners, they can do talks and book launches, they can work with the social media side, something which is very time-consuming. They go up with the artists, they can eliminate things. The problem I have found with agencies—not in all cases but in a lot of them, and I have heard this from other galleries—is that they spend more time getting new business than they do actually maintaining their existing accounts because their model is too expensive.

Nowadays, we have started hiring our own in-house PR. The reason for that is when you leave a relationship with an agency, you also leave

the network. This was a big question that came up: if we have a PR company for a number of years handling our mass mailings and our VIP list you have a situation in which you have a really out-of-date list in-house when you leave that relationship. So how is that fortifying the organisation and the organisation's growth and network? On the other hand, I do think there is a huge potential in the idea of production. There are certain artists, particularly in the upper tier, who really need a DreamWorks production studio to find really ambitious financing for major films, major, large-scale installations, things that have to go across the world and tour. Art works that can be for museums or large-platform galleries. Financing and production also comes into a legal aspect. There are a lot of things that have to be considered. And I know that most galleries want to develop the idea with the artist, but being a project manager is another job. So that could be outsourced.

Alain Servais. Good point. Concerning the size, you are right and wrong in some sense. Who is the toughest competition for galleries? Auction houses, which have 1,100 people working for them, $1.3 billion market cap at the minimum depending on the stock exchanges' mood. Having the scale is an advantage.

Do not imagine an artist agency as a building on Wall Street where artists enter and go up to 10th floor. There will be only one person of contact with the artist who will then bring to the table some different competencies when it is necessary. Has anyone else done this? Everybody is referring to existing agents, but I do not think that the model I am describing exists right now. So let us not compare to what exists now or people calling themselves agents. What is the added value they bring, apart from some knowledge? They may know the art market better than the artists, but do they really bring something truly useful? At the moment, I do not see it.

C. There is also the potential to be more useful in a coaching situation: how to set up and professionalise the studio for the first time; what kind of corporate entities need to be in place; how you handle your taxes. Before you have a gallery that has the resources to refer you to this kind of assistance, you do need a lot of infrastructure and it is a big investment to start that. A lot of artists come out of school and they are really not that well equipped. And then hopefully they find a good gallery who can assist them. I could see that being a really

useful role on the emerging side. But in terms of the mid-level galleries, what we really need is financing to buy work by our artists, to have access to capital to take certain kinds of risk, either in production or in catalogues, things that are really critical at a moment of certain artist's career growth and development. On the legal front, we also need a lot of assistance for the artist in terms of copyright, particularly with digital video work. It would be nice to have those resources for artists that cannot pay major lawyers, or for the gallery picking up the tab: slightly more efficient, economical services that do provide that strategic legal advice in terms of image reproduction and issues around intellectual property.

Alain Servais. At a seminar I went to on preservation, they had guys from the MoMA, Rhizome and so on. It made me ashamed of the way I am collecting digital art right now because it really is a mess in comparison with what I should be doing. I told them: "the kind of principles you are explaining, should be taught in art school". Again, honestly, I really think that right now a kind of a professional association should give that. That is what I really like about what some good galleries like gb agency, Mot and so on did with that Gallery Programme at de Appel in Amsterdam. So, why not define some best practices, even to artists as you said? The number of times I have heard artists giving works with no consignment agreement. One year or two years later, when they want to get them back, the trouble starts. I keep pushing for best practices in the art world, because right now those best practices would eliminate a lot of problems and maybe reduce the necessity of these artist agents.

Q. Your idea of a professional platform seems quite powerful because I think that, as a small or mid-sized gallery, such a platform could help us by getting off our backs a lot of work that is distracting us from doing our job. Nevertheless, I need you to help me fully buy it. I think about the operational aspect of this collaboration and how it should work. You already said it would be like actors, who have agents and managers. So the manager would be the gallerist? What are the roles? Since I am not so familiar with the acting scene, I do not know what the roles of a manager and an agent are and they look pretty much the same for me.

Adam Sheffer. I used the analogy because it is a Hollywood system, and it functions very differently than we do in the art world because I play the role of the agent and the manager. I am the gig-getter and I am the money guy. I negotiate the sale and I make the shows happen; I get the funding from museums and I take the 2 o'clock in the morning call when somebody is hysterical. Alain has put forth this concept that there would be an artist agent who would handle everything outside of the sale and promotion area, everything outside of what a gallery would do specifically related to the advancement of the finances or the financial health of the work.

Alain Servais. For me, it would be negotiation with the gallery. It would not be one rule for everyone. So it depends.

Silvia Dauder

Silvia Dauder is founder and director of ProjecteSD, a Barcelona-based gallery that opened in 2003. Its consistent programme and its appropriate selection of national and international artists (which is not solely based on commercial concerns, but always goes a step ahead of the market, trends and demands), as well as its personal outlook, have contributed towards the gallery's notoriety and uniqueness, which has helped it to actively participate in the most prestigious art fairs in the world. Together with the gallery exhibition programme, ProjecteSD pays special attention to publishing and distributing artists' books.

Gigiotto Del Vecchio

Gigiotto Del Vecchio is an art critic, gallerist and curator based in Berlin. He contributed to *Frieze*, *Flash Art*, and *Mousse*, for which he is the Berlin editor. He has worked for *Momentum*, and taken part in the Venice Biennale at Utopia Station with Radio Arte Mobile. In 2000-2006, he was chief advisor for the Fondazione Morra Greco per l'Arte Contemporanea, Naples. With Stefania Palumbo, he currently directs the programming of Supportico Lopez, the project space turned into gallery, founded in Naples in 2003, now based in Berlin.

Matthias von Stenglin

Matthias von Stenglin is a gallerist based in Zurich. In 2005-2009, he worked at Klosterfelde gallery in Berlin. In 2010, he co-founded the Zurich-based gallery RaebervonStenglin, in partnership with Beat Raeber. The gallery is situated in an old building in the heart of Zurich West. The gallery features new, often site-specific works by young artists and presents emerging artistic trends to an international and local audience. Only four years after its foundation, RaebervonStenglin began taking part at prestigious art fairs such as Art Basel, Independent in New York or Fiac in Paris.

Jocelyn Wolff

Jocelyn Wolff is founder and director of the Galerie Jocelyn Wolff in Paris. At its beginnings the gallery focused on the new German and Austrian art scene presenting the first exhibitions by Clemens von Wedemeyer, Christoph Weber, Isa Melsheimer, Hans Schabus and Ulrich Polster in France. The gallery programme highlights the legacy of conceptual and minimal art, introducing the work of important historical artists such as Franz Erhard Walther, William Anastasi and Miriam Cahn. Initially situated in a small space in Belleville, in East Paris, from 2006 the gallery is located in a space in the same neighbourhood, rue Julien-Lacroix.

HOW TO BUILD A CONSISTENT GALLERY PROGRAMME

SPEAKERS

Silvia Dauder, Gigiotto Del Vecchio, Matthias von Stenglin

MODERATOR

Jocelyn Wolff

CONCEPTS

strategy, gallery programme, DNA of the gallery, personality, concept, curatorial position, discourse, commercially-driven galleries vs. curatorially-driven galleries, programme galleries, engagement, quality, consistency and a coherence

HOW TO BUILD A CONSISTENT GALLERY PROGRAMME

Jocelyn Wolff (J.W.)
This topic is at the very heart of what we do, but we (gallerists) very rarely discuss what the gallery programme is about and the role it plays in our respective galleries.

Matthias is the youngest gallerist sitting here, and I would like to start with him. In Germany, we hear very often about “programme galleries”. I think it is even in itself a German concept. It seems to me that what you are doing is a programme gallery. Is it something you consciously developed beforehand as a concept or as a model that you wanted to adopt before you opened the gallery? Or is it something that other people recognise as the outcome of your work?

Matthias von Stenglin (M.v.S.)
I think it was a very conscious decision to have artists we really believe in, that we want to work with, but also to build a gallery programme in which everything fits together. So you have a gallery where none of the artists in a show or an art fair booth would be out of place. It was not a conscious decision to be a conceptual programme gallery with a clear vision defined five years in advance and with the artists working in the same direction. My business partner, Beat Raeber, and I have a certain taste which developed over the course of time while being part of the art world and then deciding to open our own gallery. Then, we looked for artists that fit our taste. We have a bit of a love of sculpture, installations, in-situ projects, artists who work with space in one way or another. This was basically the starting point, and then everything more or less formed organically around that.

J.W. Silvia, you are one of those rare gallerists who do not come from the art world. You opened a gallery when you were already quite mature. Your gallery programme is extremely coherent in many ways, reflecting what seems like a very clear vision of what you are interested in. Meanwhile, the reality is that many people working in the art field are not as articulate as you are, even people who studied art history. So how is it possible that someone who comes from a completely different field goes into the art world with one of the best programmes I have seen in the last ten years, at least one of the most articulated ones? How is this miracle possible?

Silvia Dauder (S.D.)
I think it is just work. I didn't study art; I didn't work in a gallery. When I decided to start a gallery—it will be 13 years ago next year—I was already 40 years old. But I knew nothing. And I think that knowing nothing gave me the strength to do a lot of things, and gave me the only possibility of just listening to myself. Maybe I am a bit sophisticated, maybe I have taste, maybe I have eyes, and maybe I have a brain. So I guess it is this combination of things and the fact that I was not following any rules per se.

"WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES A GOOD COLLECTION? IS IT PROBABLY THAT THE WHOLE COLLECTION MAKES MORE SENSE THAN THE ADDITION OF EACH PART? I WOULD DESCRIBE THE GALLERY FROM A SIMILAR PERSPECTIVE: IT IS MORE THAN JUST THE SUM OF ALL THE ARTISTS YOU ARE WORKING WITH."

I decided to stop my previous job, which had a lot of elements that have been very useful in the development of the gallery. I was in film production, and acquired a lot of experience in putting people working together, creating a certain kind of environment for things to happen. But I had no experience in the gallery field and I was aware of that. So my first idea was to find a job in a gallery in Barcelona. I was 40 and I was ready to go through every single little step. But I was too old and it didn't happen. So I said "OK, let's do it". I was brave and I started the gallery.

I didn't have a programme on the first day of the gallery, nor did I have it in the first two years. But by the third year, there were some elements there that were starting to make sense. If you have a personality and clear ideas about what you want to do and what you do not what to do, then you start to create something. But it has been very organic and very intuitive. There was not a predesigned strategy. How could I have one with no experience? It is not possible. I do not think miracles exist. It is just being brave and taking risks. I had very clear that did not want a gallery working for the local context only.

I travelled a lot before I started the gallery and saw many different kinds of shows. I learned by looking, by reading, by travelling, by going to galleries and seeing many things that I liked and many things that I did not like. For instance, I did not like the fact that you sometimes go into a gallery and no-one even looks at you. But when someone asked me something in a friendly way, I felt better. That is what I tried to incorporate into my gallery, and it seems that at that point it was a little new, at least in our context. But I did not invent anything.

J.W. Besides the fact that the good collectors are the people we are working with, and the bad ones are those we are not working with, what is it that makes a good collection? Is it probably that the whole collection makes more sense than the addition of each part? I would describe the gallery from a similar perspective: it is more than just the sum of all the artists you are working with.

Gigiotto, would you describe the gallery programme as the DNA of the gallery? We have had a lot in this symposium about other aspects of the gallery business: the agency part—which represents like 80% of what we do; the sales part; and then we have what could be outsourced or not. In this regard, are more and more galleries working with curators? Is it a way to outsource the content element in a gallery? Why are galleries choosing to work more and more with curators instead of just deciding everything by themselves on the artistic level?

Gigiotto Del Vecchio (G.D.V.)
I work with curators because I am a curator in the sense that I started my gallery from home. I still work as a curator mostly: I used to write, and I am still the Berlin editor of *Mousse* magazine. I try to keep all these positions open. The gallery was something that we started

through a series of steps which are deeply connected with research and curatorial possibilities. Supportico Lopez is something that came to be through these phases. More than working with curators, it is very important—at least in certain steps of the career of the gallery—to keep a kind of curatorial position open. It highlights the centrality of art and ideas; and that means a concept to develop in your programme.

Regarding the presence of the curator in the gallery, it is something that has been developing more and more recently, mostly associated with mid and high-level galleries that need to have some kind of open eye inside the structure.

"IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO KEEP A KIND OF CURATORIAL POSITION OPEN. IT HIGHLIGHTS THE CENTRALITY OF ART AND IDEAS; AND THAT MEANS A CONCEPT TO DEVELOP IN YOUR PROGRAMME."

J.W. Although we do love the complexity of what we do, it is very hard to manage every aspect of the gallery work perfectly at every level. So the easiest thing is to outsource many things all the time. I have heard this about the PR aspect for example. But as a gallerist, I have never had a PR person and I do not do PR. That is a big difference between American galleries and European galleries: for us PR is not key. Lots of technical aspects of the gallery work are outsourced, but my question is: if you commission a curator to do a show, is it a way of outsourcing the gallery contents, a way to get help from the outside to develop the gallery programme? It may not apply in your cases, but it is something you see. Do you not think that delegating to outsiders the DNA of the gallery is a dangerous trend?

G.D.V. I believe in possible collaborations, in having discussions, in exchanges and in the possibility of hosting a project with a curator involved doing something for the gallery. I consider the aspect of creating an exchange, but this approach is not strategic and it is more romantic in a way. When you are working together, you also open the discussion about what the possibilities coming after are. I really believe in this idea of catching things without really thinking they belong to

you. That it is a process, some kind of flux. Sometimes group shows and collaborations with curators can also lead to something else, to another vision, to points that you are not able to touch by yourself.

J.W. Matthias, you are part of this new generation of gallerists that grew up at a time when we have witnessed the emergence of the mega galleries. They have been very visible in the last ten years, so this is your environment. I would like to kill this romantic notion that every gallery that is not commercially driven but is curatorially driven is delivering more interesting shows than their counterparts. In my experience, this is not the case. Sometimes you have commercial galleries, especially in New York, that do incredible exhibitions that I would love to be able to produce. And then you see programme galleries, especially in Europe, that romanticise the idea of the gallery, of the aesthetics discourse; but when you see the results, they are not necessarily at the same level. Do you not think there is a kind of contradiction and gap between this mystification of programme galleries and what they do at an aesthetic level? Do you think that those commercially driven mega galleries, are sometimes able to produce more culturally relevant projects than galleries which are working for collections?

M.v.S. If you go to some of those mega galleries in New York, you may not know whether you are in a museum or in a gallery. This is happening in Zurich as well with the Löwenbräukunst, which houses several institutions and big galleries. It was freshly renovated, and you do not know where the gallery ends and the institution starts.

A gallery should have a very strong programme which you believe in. You don't pick the artists because they sell very well; you picked the artists because you love their art, and you want to really help them with their career. You are the agent. And this is what I love to do. And I wear several hats: I am the psychiatrist helping the artists on the way. But on the other hand, the gallery is also a business and you must never neglect the commercial aspect. It is not that easy.

We have failed—as probably every gallery has to some extent—in keeping both sides in balance. Our thinking is: are we becoming too intellectual? Has it become too complicated? Are we just spinning around, producing huge texts? I think for me it is typical in the art world for galleries to write the press releases and at the end you do

not know what is happening because there is so much air blown into the text. For us, when we started the gallery, we said "We do not want any texts because we just cannot do it and it is always bad." We realised this does not work because you need a text for the press and the journalists. Sometimes they're a bit lazy and they need something to see. Also, it gives other people an insight into an exhibition when they cannot come to Zurich. Not everybody can come to Zurich. We are not in Chelsea, where people just walk in during the week. We are dependent on a few dates in the year when people actually come to the city, and the rest of the year they check online and see what is happening there, the images, maybe they read the text, and get a small insight into what might be interesting.

J.W. Do you think the nationality of the artist is key when you make a decision to represent an artist?

M.v.S. No, not at all. I do not think nationality takes away the identity of the gallery. It is an international world, the art world is also international and the artists live all over. We started in Switzerland with one Swiss artist. I am German. My business partner is Swiss, but he is from Basel, not from Zurich. We never had anything to do with Zurich. And for us it was key to go to the city and bring in an outside perspective. Of course, you have to work with artists who are in your country. And you also see that in terms of how many visitors come to your openings: if a show has Swiss artists, my gallery is packed; if I show a New Zealand artist, it is a bit less. This is how it is. But I think it is very important to have an exchange to bring both sides to the table, make the gallery interesting, invite other curators, other gallerists to come to your space, do shows.

J.W. When I opened my gallery, I constantly heard "Why don't you work with American artists? Why don't you work with Asian artists?" There is a tendency which I call it the "United Colours of Benetton tendency": to be an international gallery means to represent artists from each continent in the world. I see it more as a strategy to access markets. So, whenever there is new wealth somewhere, you need artists from there. Afterwards you use this artist to explore the market, to access collectors, etc.

G.D.V. And you apply to Art Basel with that artist…

J.W. Exactly. So you have this tendency and that is why I think that the nationality of the artist is more important than ever because it hides the lack of discourse about practices themselves. I am totally guilty of behaving exactly like this. When people ask me about an artist, I start to tell them their age and nationality, which is not to describe exactly what they do. It's somehow always requested.

Silvia, you develop quite a European programme. Do you think you would gain commercially speaking from having more artists from different continents?

"THERE IS THIS TENDENCY: TO BE AN INTERNATIONAL GALLERY MEANS TO REPRESENT ARTISTS FROM EACH CONTINENT IN THE WORLD—I SEE IT MORE AS A STRATEGY TO ACCESS MARKETS."

S.D. Maybe in the short term, yes. But who knows what's going to happen in five years. Maybe then having an artist from India, North Africa or Asia will not be in fashion any more. I'm open to bring in artists of other nationalities, from outside of Europe. Why not? Doing a studio visits and taking a twelve hours flight is something I think about now. It affects my life and I don't want to do that ten times every year. There are practical issues that I am considering at the moment. But I am open to every nationality. The nationality of the artist has a meaning, maybe too much now.

J.W. How would you describe this meaning?

S.D. For a young curator, if you have an artist from Morocco, that's already an achievement even before the work. This is something I see every day.

G.D.V. The nationality is important if you want to focus on certain kind of areas which are maybe not well represented. In general I really don't look that much at the nationality of artists; it's not something I consider at first. I find out where the artists are from later. Another element is the place where they often study: London, New York, etc. I come from

Naples, Italy, from a reality that is used and abused. This dimension of national identity is a bit of a problem and is also related to a kind of folkloric idea of self-representation. So regarding identity, I try to take only those aspects that are important for me.

S.D. It's not easy. Sometimes you overlook things, sometimes you make mistakes, sometimes there is a good artist in front of you and you don't see him/her. All these things happen. We don't have the key to success all the time.

I was not concerned about nationalities. Maybe I'm a bit more concerned now because I see that the world has a demand for that or gender. There are 15 artists in my programme, which is not many maybe after 12 or 13 years, and only two of them are women. It's not that I only wanted to work with men at all. It just happened. Probably my next additions to the gallery will be women. But more important than being a woman or a man from wherever in the world, they must be good artists; or at least I must think they are good artists. I try to look at the work first; second at the person. Not the artist, the person, because I have to work with that person and my intention is to work with that person for a long time. So it is important to me that we can get along.

J.W. Do you care about this gender issue when building your programme?

G.D.V. I care, but it is ten percent for me. It is in my nature to regard different aspects as very important. Consequently, I have built the programme taking into account that at a certain point I really need a female touch. Half of the artists in my programme are female, and sometimes I follow them more in terms of exchanges or dialogue, maybe when I need something more sophisticated. It is something I consider, but it is not a prime factor in my decision-making.

J.W. Is this gender issue important for you Matthias?

M.v.S. No. I'd love to have more female artists. I think it is nice to have an equal number, but it's not an issue at all. As Silvia said, I think more about whether the artist is interesting to me and the gallery. The personal thing is also very important and I'm happy Silvia has pointed that out because we work in a very close relationship together and I

don't want to work with someone I'm going to hate after half a year. Why are there not as many female artists as there are men? Why don't female artists make as much money as male artists? I think it's a deeper problem. Maybe it goes back to the art schools and the system in general. My personal system is about the arts and not about gender. So if there were more female artists who touched my tastes, I would have no problem taking on female artists. But I would not take a female artist just because she's female.

J.W. Of course not. But for me personally, it is a concern. From the very beginning, when I started the gallery, I wanted to have as many female artists as male artists. I have failed in this, and for me it's important to be conscious that just working with male artists, if you're a man, could be seen as a problem.

I also see at the moment that there are more and more commercially successful galleries that may have a lot of quality but have no programme. For example, galleries that work with and represent artists who have different positions, artists who are in conflict and have contradictions at an aesthetic level. At the moment, I see that the most powerful galleries are those that don't care about this serious problem. You can show very politically engaged artists and then immediately afterwards an artist who has adopted a reactionary position. I see that these conflicts are not discussed any more, and I believe you have to deal with these issues in order to qualify as a programme gallery. What do each of you has to say about this topic? Do you think there are contradictions in working with two different artists? Are there artists you would love to work with but which you believe it's impossible because it would be a contradiction?

G.D.V. Every artist that is part of my programme is strongly related to the others. Not in every respect; there is a red line that you can easily see, but there is a general environment that drives their decisions and choices. In terms of language, you can see different aspects and possibilities. Nonetheless, the artists I work with are all animated by the same kind of vision. Politics is another factor. Rather than Marxism or Structuralism, I decided to consider a vision that is more related to something that can deal with poetry. I have to deal or dialogue in terms of art. I am not so sure about political art in general. It is more about the consequences and the contradictions. I think that the

artist has the good fortune to live in a free position, and it can also entail a deeply political position. I try to choose artists that in a way activate this possibility. Of course, I'm not saying that every artist has a political position, but I like to imagine that this kind of gesture, if it is conscious, can also be political. So more or less the artists I work with are connected.

J.W. But don't you see that some galleries are working with artists who are in total opposition at the aesthetic level?

G.D.V. Yes, but the difference is the direction you give to your gallery, whether the direction is deeply related to the market or not.

J.W. How do you explain that those galleries that don't care about this coherency in the programme, that work with artists who are in total opposition at the aesthetic level, are commercially successful?

G.D.V. If your interest is to place the artworks in a market position, you have more possibilities than someone trying to give a kind of core and progression to the programme. In this latter case, the choice you make after your first choice is coherent, but maybe it is not the best decision in terms of the market. But you are taking a risk because you are deciding to follow a different approach. These are completely different jobs following completely different visions.

S.D. If you have all this consistency and a coherent programme and no conflict among the artists you show, a part of the audience may see your gallery practice and the programme as too intellectual. A lot of people are not comfortable with that, even potential collectors or buyers that may be a bit scared if they see a booth that is very well curated at an art fair. Sometimes gallerists who try to do better booths sell a little less because their booths are so precise as a whole thing that people just get scared of it.

J.W. I think it's a very good point: sometimes quality can create fear, whereas it is easier for an audience to access galleries who don't care about this aesthetic coherency. Matthias, do you agree with this? Is it something you are conscious of or it's of no interest to you?

"SOMETIMES GALLERISTS WHO TRY TO DO BETTER BOOTHS SELL A LITTLE LESS BECAUSE THEIR BOOTHS ARE SO PRECISE AS A WHOLE THING THAT PEOPLE JUST GET SCARED OF IT."

M.v.S. You see it in the auction market: a painting is easier to sell than a giant installation. Most people, of course, would rather go for an artwork that is an abstract colourful painting than to have a conceptual artist from the fifties who's just been rediscovered, because you actually have to invest some time. Time is an issue nowadays, especially in art fairs, where you have around three hundred galleries and people don't know how much time to spend and where; how much time to spend seeing things, especially in the case of video art. I see that for myself. If I go to an art fair, I really don't have the time to sit down and see a work which is maybe 20-30 minutes long and take the time to actually discover the artist.

There's definitely a certain respect, maybe sometimes fear, about art which steps away from being easy and being a commodity. But I think there are also a lot of people who appreciate that and who are going to our galleries because they want to see art which is not always easy and not always so accessible. Finding a way to make art accessible is also our job. It is not always filling the living room with art. It goes beyond that. We show video art and they ask "How do you play that?" There are always ways of dealing with art and I don't think people have to be afraid.

"FINDING A WAY TO MAKE ART ACCESSIBLE IS ALSO OUR JOB. IT IS NOT ALWAYS FILLING THE LIVING ROOM WITH ART. IT GOES BEYOND THAT."

G.D.V. The speed and the perception of art have changed a lot. Today there is a speed that is very strange, and there is a different idea of art that is all about hanging a particular object somewhere. This is very tough in relation to the possibilities of art. When we were buying videos, the idea was more to buy a piece of art by a specific artist. Now is about having the object: "I want to live with this element, I

want to own it, and I also want to show the value of it when someone comes in my house". So this is a part of the problem: the vulgarity that surrounds art and what art is today. It is not only the political aspect or the intensity. I am really, really sad that everything has turned into this.

J.W. But, do you agree that your gallery programme will determine the success of your gallery?

G.D.V. Absolutely.

J.W. When I speak with very young, emerging gallerists, they always ask for advice: art fairs, contracts, the agency role, lots of things. But in the end, what will make them successful or not is the artists they are working with. If these artists are important or they appear to be important, they will be successful even if they are bad professionals. You have some gallerists, like Chantal Crousel, who is not specifically a good salesperson, but she has the best artists. So people who come to her will be able to to make wonderful acquisitions. I'm addressing the people who are starting a gallery or thinking about running a gallery, and putting lots of effort into all the parameters that are not key to success. Do you agree with this analysis?

"THIS IS A PART OF THE PROBLEM: THE VULGARITY THAT SURROUNDS ART AND WHAT ART IS TODAY. IT IS NOT ONLY THE POLITICAL ASPECT OR THE INTENSITY."

S.D. Absolutely. The choice of the artists is the most important one, but there is more than one way to do it. There are many good artists, and many more to come. They won't all be in two or three or four galleries, and also the life of an artist is very long by definition.

J.W. Nowadays as well?

S.D. I'm just saying that you can work with young emerging artists, but you can also work with artists that have been around, maybe hiding a little bit for whatever reason, and still establish new things with them. Definitely, the programme is the artists, but there are no recipes. Now the younger generation—I am not talking only about gallerists and

artists—they want to know everything before they start. You will learn with time. It has to be organic. Some days will be dark and some days will be bright, and you will have to face all sorts of problems. But at the end of the day, when you have a good artist and you're able to do a good show, that means something.

"DEFINITELY, THE PROGRAMME IS THE ARTISTS, BUT THERE ARE NO RECIPES."

J.W. Matthias, did you work with some of your artists to build your gallery programme? Are the artists you are already working with part of the discussion or the conversation about building the programme? Or is it really just you and your business partner decisions?

M.v.S. It is very important to include the artists of the gallery when expanding the programme. I constantly ask my artists to give me recommendations because I think they are the best source to continue a programme. Artists know artists. They are probably deeper into the scene than I am and provide a different perspective. They might have different positions and these are things we have to consider. In the end, it's me and my business partner who make the decision but I definitely include the majority of the artists in the process when I add someone.

J.W. Is this the same for both of you or not?

S.D. Of course, it helps to develop many things. The programme is not just one artist, it is a number of them, and you work together all the time, one way or another. So the interaction with a good part of them, if not all, is important.

J.W. What would you recommend to someone who wants to open a gallery? My advice for example, would be: "Work with the ones you know already, those who made you desire to build a gallery programme. And forget about what you think the market is, etc." What would your advice be to someone who is planning to open a gallery, who is thinking about building his programme?

G.D.V. They have to follow what they want and what they feel, their own paths and interests. Then of course, the collaboration and the voices

of the artists are always very important in building a programme. Artists themselves suggest names, and this adds new views to what you started with. Those views will help you to continue the discourse by putting elements together. So in a way, the presence of the artists is quite important directly and indirectly in the construction of the programme.

"IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE THE ARTISTS OF THE GALLERY WHEN EXPANDING THE PROGRAMME. I CONSTANTLY ASK MY ARTISTS TO GIVE ME RECOMMENDATIONS (...) ARTISTS THEMSELVES SUGGEST NAMES, AND THIS ADDS NEW VIEWS TO WHAT YOU STARTED WITH."

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q. Silvia, I visited the amazing installation of 676 original drawings by Matt Mullican that you have at your gallery. If that work has another life outside the gallery and continues, if a museum takes it, if it goes into a private foundation or collection, what's your position on having curatorial credit for conceiving that particular installation with that artist?

S.D. It's OK. I'm just a mediator. Everything is temporary, so I did my job, it's already there, from now on it will go somewhere else. I have been part of it. Whoever wants to give me credit will do it. The artist already gave me credit and I gave him credit too. It's tough out there, and I don't need to hear "You did so well" every minute of the day. I just did my job; I know exactly what I did. Of course we have to take care of what happens after. We're professionals and we will do our best to take good care of every artwork. But sometimes, it's a little bit beyond our control. We cannot control everything once it leaves the gallery. It's not possible all the time.

Q. If a gallery's identity is based more on geographical aspects, on covering a region, nationality becomes very important. In that case, how can you keep a gallery programme or identity coherent, if you

would like to include a couple of artists not from that region because they actually fit in very well with the discourse? Will the gallery's identity be compromised, or is it something that is doable?

J.W. I think it is totally doable. For any of us it will not be a problem. Looking for something you are not related to is much more of a problem. There is something colonial about going to a place where you don't know the language, neither the culture, and just decide that this artist is the best on the scene and you will work with him. I find it very pretentious. Some have the capacity to grab an artist in a different cultural context and make a wonderful choice. But very often, it's a little bit what I call the East India Company. In other words, it's an export product for the western world, for the market. Some galleries have this talent to go to the other side of the world and find an outstanding artist. I'm sure that I don't have this capacity; I need to know more about the cultural environment and to feel at ease with it to be able to make a decision. But at the moment it's much more a weakness not to work with artists from all over the world than a strength. Somehow one can survive without working with artists from all over the world, but you will really suffer in economic terms.

There are so many new collectors, new buyers all over the world, and in order to engage with your gallery they need to find an open door. This open door is most of the time an artist that comes from their region or an artist they already collect. It may have a huge impact on the development of a gallery. That's the contradiction nowadays: on the one hand, you hear us saying that you have to fall in love with an artist, do it very sincerely, and that your gallery programme is the key to success; and on the other hand, there are some other strategic concerns that are sometimes in contradiction with our discourse. It's very hard to solve.

G.D.V. Sometimes choosing artists on the basis of geography is not deeply anthropological. I think sometimes you may need certain elements, certain points, a certain atmosphere. And you decide to follow those details, and not the totality of the thing. So, I think that if everything is natural and articulate, I can totally imagine myself working with an artist coming from the other side of the world. Geographical issues only become a problem at the moment we really consider it. In our times, it can be very dangerous to discuss the geographical

problem, so we have to pay a lot of attention. What you say can be absolutely right, but it can also be risky in terms of creating ghettos of visions of reality.

I also think the role of the artist is to make a synthesis and to work through parameters—details, elements—that very few fields do. That is why what they do and we do is amazing: we work in a field where it is not necessary to consider the entire aspect, but to be able to recognise details. This is why art can be very important for growth, because we are able to say that details, small segments are important. And if we are able to analyse those little elements, then maybe we are able to recognise things faster.

J.W. It is actually a tendency to think that we have a key to what is happening abroad. fully agree that your full sensibility as an art lover gives you a different level of access to artists who are very distant in cultural terms. And then you also have Silvia's practical perspective, which is about the time involved in working with an artist who is very far away, and how it may affect the quality of either your personal life or your professional engagement. Matthias, how do you feel about it?

M.v.S. If I found a Chinese artist who actually brings a different aspect to my programme, I would consider it because I think it's very important that the programme lives and embraces exchanges with artists from different regions talking to each other. But it would be dangerous to take that artist just to enter the Chinese market. Most of our artists know each other and they're friends, even if they do not live in the same city and rarely or occasionally meet. This is also a very interesting thing which I've just realised after a few years of having the gallery: the artists themselves interact without the gallerist actually adding anything. I believe someone from a different culture, a different continent, would bring something new to the table. It's a bad thing if you can't really cater as a gallery to the needs of that artist. The trouble is we spend too much time on airplanes, we travel too much. We are a super young gallery and we're also a very small team. If I had 30 artists, it would be impossible to run that if they lived all over the world. So it's it's a personal choice and depends on the resources you have and what you actually want. But in terms of the intellectual side, I think it can bring a very interesting aspect to the programme to have not European or not American-centred views.

S.D. I think it's important to try to understand where you are, what you can do, and also to understand that maybe you cannot do everything. It is obvious that the environment is changing and it's good to have an ability to adapt to the new situations. But at the same time, it's good to be aware of your limitations: what you can do, what you are best at.

Q. My first question goes back to issue of gender that you raised. I also only have one female artist in my gallery, and it's something that suddenly is beginning to concern me. Whilst I agree completely with Silvia that the quality of the artist is really the first criterion, and given that women do face quite a lot of constraints—as they do in any other sector—, I wonder whether gallerists wish to take an active role in trying to seek out female artists from different generations. Secondly, I'm not sure that I absolutely understand what a consistent gallery programme means or even if it's desirable. I feel as a gallerist that I have a duty not only to the artists that I work with but also to the audience. A lot of people come into my gallery that are not big collectors, that are not used to the art world, and I actually like to show them art that is a little bit different to increase their knowledge of the variety of art that is around.

S.D. I have nothing against helping female artists out there. That doesn't mean that every single gallery has to do that, it's a choice. But I'm totally in favour of this. With regard to the consistency of the gallery, I think that to understand the consistency of a gallery, you have to look at the gallery and see what kind of shows this gallery does, the artists and the artworks and everything. There is no single statement that can precisely define in every detail what consistency in a programme is. When you say sometimes I have an audience and I like them to see art that is different, I would like to ask you what do you mean by art that is different?

C. Sometimes I may show art that is very conceptual and sometimes something which is not, which is more immediate and what people would traditionally think of as art.

S.D. I do that as well. I have always been told that I only show conceptual art, which is a total lie. A lot of my artists are not conceptual. I show painting and I show performance, and there's no similarity whatsoever between Pieter Vermeersch and Dora García. But my programme, I think, is consistent.

C. I suppose then what you're saying really is that the definition of 'consistent' is something that needs to be explored.

S.D. It's a way of doing things, as well. Maybe it's finding links between all the artists that you show. If you see those links and are able to show these links, that generates a certain consistency. If you are a consistent person, probably the work you do will show that.

J.W. I think that art fairs are very interesting vitrines—though also full of contradictions—because very often you can see what a gallery wants to show out of the work it does in its space all year long. So it's a very interesting exercise to show the DNA of the programme in a very competitive environment.

Matthias, you have done this wonderfully in recent years—a very consistent gallery with a voice. You have something to say to the art world and have showed it step by step, not only in the gallery space but also in art fairs. Some wonderful galleries that I really esteem don't care about the presentation when they go to a fair. Some also have a political discourse about it, like Christian Nagel. For him, a fair is a fair, the programme of the gallery is shown only in the gallery, and when you go to a fair, you just remove some works from that context and you put them for sale in a fair.

"I THINK THAT ART FAIRS ARE VERY INTERESTING VITRINES—THOUGH ALSO FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS."

The younger generation of galleries, in particular, are much more used to the art fair as a medium, and not just as a place to make sales. They have a different perspective and try to use this platform to communicate who they are. If you read the art fair presentations of galleries carefully, you will see what they are trying to do on an aesthetic level. You get to identify what the gallery is about not only with their statement but when they start to combine several artists in one presentation. So it's one way to see what a consistent gallery is.

Q. When you work with artists, it's often very personal: you know them, you're often friends with them. What do you do if you see that things aren't going well and you have to get rid of an artist? And what are the possible reasons why you don't want to work with an artist anymore?

J.W. It's a kind of marriage, so it's always difficult to know. When you have no desire anymore, then you have to end the relationship. Some people can persist in a kind of ghost marriage forever. That's fine. But I think it doesn't work. So it's always a question of desire on both the artist's side and the gallerist's side. That's my understanding of it.

G.D.V. I totally agree. In my gallery, for example, you start a relationship and collaboration with an artist, often with an artist who is quite young. Then if you feel that there is not a parallel growth, then of course you can stop this relationship because it doesn't work. That doesn't mean that the artist is not good. It means that your relationship with the artist is not good. And sometimes, when a gallery doesn't work well or stops working on an artist, it is really complicated for that artist's career. I recently stopped working with two artists and we did it because I think that it was seriously damaging their career and was also harming the image of the gallery. It is not a drama; it is like a step that you take. Even closing a gallery is a step. I realised during our discussions here that mid-career galleries are the galleries that are in danger. And I was really surprised when Wallspace, a gallery I totally respect, had closed. This is something that can happen to my gallery: I could close tomorrow if things don't go well. For example, if I do three fairs that don't go the way I expect. I think that there is always the possibility of restarting from that point: a new possible beginning, an opportunity. We have to start thinking this way.

M.v.S. If an artist doesn't perform, it's not a reason. In fact, an artist always performs. It's not a financial thing. I have artists whose projects sell better; some other artists don't sell that well, but maybe they get more institutional recognition. The interesting thing about the gallery system is that you incorporate everything, so the artists who sell better can also finance the ones who don't sell as well. But the ones who don't sell as well are as important to the programme as the ones who are more interesting to the market. So it would be a horrible thing to say I'm dropping this artist because I haven't sold a painting or a sculpture in the last year. This not should be the case. You did something wrong by embarking on this venture with the artist.

C. For me it is very central this idea that galleries are about relationships. Are they marriages? Is there a mistress? We don't know; we're talking about all of that right now. What happens when things go wrong in that relationship? I have a funny anecdote you might want to end on. I worked with a very, very nice artist for over a decade. He sensed things were not going well and me too. It was not just financially; the work had shifted dramatically. We tried our best to support it, but it was harder to find an audience among the market share that we know, the curators we have a relationship with, etc. So I finally said to him "Let's go out to dinner and talk about this". I wanted to make it a little bit informal. During the course of the dinner, he said "Would you pass the wine and, by the way, this isn't working, is it?" And I said "No, actually, I was waiting for you to go there before I did." He said "OK, so we're in agreement. Will you help me to transition and find another gallery? I like the way you do things but this fit just doesn't work for where you are and where I am." And we're actually in the process of making that happen as he has some very important things happening on a museum level, and he does need the support. But since we had this open relationship, this dialogue, we feel that we can have this kind of human-to-human relationship, not artist-to-dealer, no power struggle. It's about what works for each of us based on mutual respect.

ART MARKET.
THE BIG DETACHMENT

SPEAKER
Marek Claassen

CONCEPTS
the gallery market & the dealer market, systems, structures, market failures, ranking system, discovery, representation, reputation, involvement, quantified data vs. personal knowledge

Marek Claassen

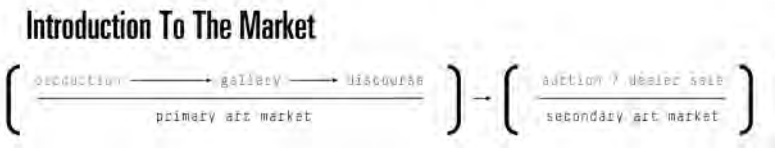
Director of ArtFacts.Net. Marek Claassen studied Business Adminstration and has many years of experience working with various galleries and software companies. He has been actively producing database enhanced web sites for the art world since 1995. Claassen has won many prizes for his internet activities and was nominated as one of Europe's best multimedia entrepreneurs by the EU Commission in 1998.

ART MARKET.
THE BIG DETACHMENT

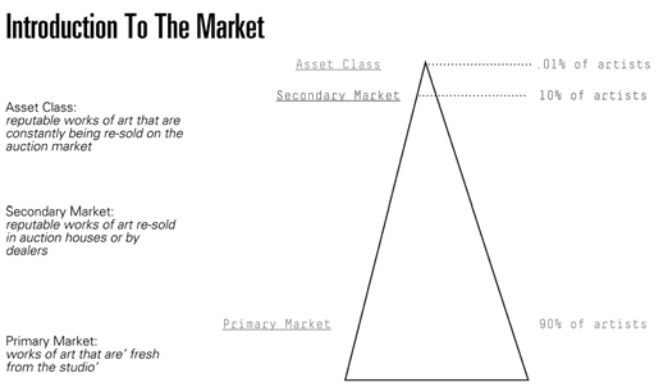
The title of this case study attempts to describe the metamorphosis of the art market from pure idealism to professionalism and then to a global industry.

Introduction to the market

The art market is divided into two segments: a) the gallery market, also called the primary market, which focuses on art fresh from the studio; b) the dealer market, also called the secondary market, which focuses on the resales of works of art. Every artist's career matures in the primary art market, where artistic productions have to undergo ruthless, extractive distillations through curator selections, public exhibits and intellectual discourses to become an object of value ready to be resold over and over on the dealer market. This is what the following diagram shows:



The quality of an artwork by an Old Master can easily be determined by the painter's ability to represent and compose an illustrated image. In this scenario, a simple market structure functions very well. There is a constant temptation for dealers to cut short the distillation process provided by the gallery market, putting artworks right from the studio to auction. By stripping out the primary market, its value-producing segment vanishes. This market scenario will lead to the extinction of intellect and leaves only capital in a socially dead market.



Let us take a look at the distribution of artists between the primary and secondary markets. The number of artists who became an asset class is unbelievably small. It's the tip of the iceberg, one out of a thousand, but the huge part that carries the tip of the iceberg remains underwater. These hundreds of thousands of other artists are not hobbyists. They spit blood, sweat and shed tears in an everyday working life. The great majority of processes are then pushed aside in a real-world scenario, where many are focusing on very few artists.

What causes a market failure?

Markets are a system and systems have structure. Well functioning markets have basic structural characteristics: many small buyers and sellers; buyers and sellers have equal access to information; products are comparable.

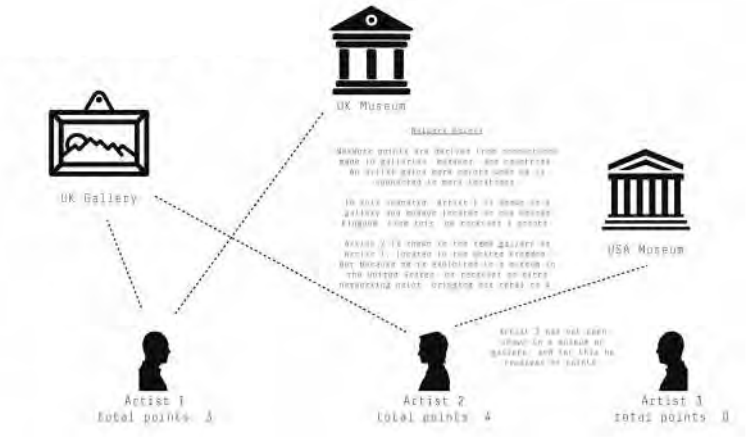
Extreme cases of failed markets are monopolies and monopsonies. If, for example, one company controls the local energy market, electrical power will be overpriced and take a lot of our discretional income. In the art market, and especially in the gallery market, it is a monopsony what creates failure. A monopsony is the polar opposite of a monopoly, with only one buyer and multiple sellers; one collector versus a thousand galleries. Market failures are always associated with information asymmetries; these asymmetries lead to uncertainty; uncertainties undermine trust; and trust is the essence of the art market.

My proposed solution is to quantify the unquantifiable. Don't leave the numbers to the dealers. To give you some figures, we are talking about 400,000 artists and nearly 20,000 operating galleries. They make a huge space that represents up 90% of the art market where we don't have any kind of quantified data. Quantified data are only available for the secondary market, the auctions.

"WE ARE TALKING ABOUT 400,000 ARTISTS AND NEARLY 20,000 OPERATING GALLERIES. THEY MAKE A HUGE SPACE THAT REPRESENTS UP 90% OF THE ART MARKET WHERE WE DON'T HAVE ANY KIND OF QUANTIFIED DATA—THESE ARE ONLY AVAILABLE FOR THE SECONDARY MARKET, THE AUCTIONS."

The artist ranking

How to build an artist's career meter? It is very simple. The ingredients we need are galleries, museums, artists. That's all. No price information.

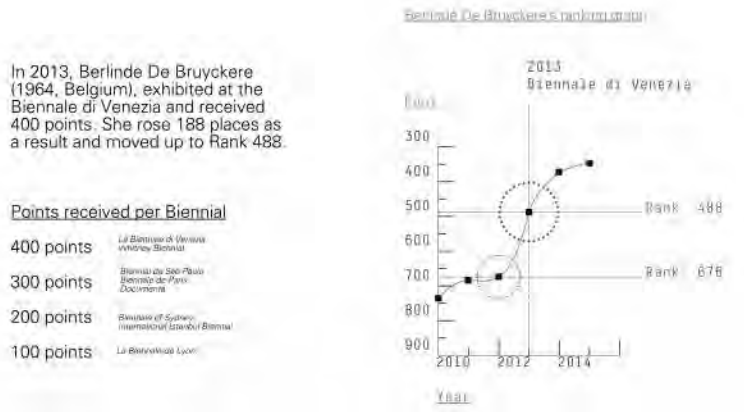


On the previous image there are three artists, two museums and one gallery. The gallery and one museum are located in the UK; the other museum is located in the USA. Galleries represent the artists and museums collect the artworks globally (it's a global business!). Artist number one is represented by a UK gallery and collected by a UK

museum. It makes a total amount of three points: one for each institution and the last one for the country. Artist number two is represented by the same UK gallery and his/her work is in the collection of a museum located in the US. His/her score is four: one point for each institution plus two more for each country. Artist number three is in no collection so he/she has zero points.

In a second calculation step we can associate the artist's network points to the gallery and museums to calculate their reputation. The UK museum receives 3 reputation points because it collects Artist 1 (3 network points). The USA museum receives 4 reputation points because it collects Artist 2 (4 network points). The UK gallery gets 7 reputation points because it represents Artist 1 (3 network points) and Artist 2 (4 network points). Furthermore, because a gallery is not so important like a museum of the same size, we reduce the reputation points of the gallery by 50% leaving 3.5 reputation points for the gallery.

In a third and last computation, we can add each of these institutional "reputation points" to the artists. So, for each show an artist has in one of these institutions, they will gain these points. Full points for a solo show participation and half the points for a group show participation. In this case, if, for example, artist three, who previously was given zero points, had a show in the US museum, he would get four points. So we could just add these "reputation points" by counting the (type of) exhibitions and adding them to the artists' accounts. In the end, the artist who has scored more points is number one, followed by the second one with more points, and so on.



In the previous image, the outcome of a more sophisticated ranking that also measures biennial participations is explained. The Belgian sculptor Berlinde De Bruyckere participated in 2013 in the 55th Venice Biennale. She received 400 points for this event and, as a result, her ranking jumped by 188 places.

"GALLERIES ARE THE INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN ARTISTS AND COLLECTORS, PRIVATE OR INSTITUTIONAL. HOW TO BUILD A RANKING SYSTEM FOR GALLERIES WITHOUT KNOWING ANY SALES FIGURES?"

An artist exhibition ranking like the one explained has to overcome the lack of price information in the primary sector, and because every artist gets the same points for participating in the 55th edition of the Venice Biennale, the ranking is transparent and easy to follow. Without knowing the real market value of the works produced by Berlinde De Bruyckere, we can say that she does a pretty good job in this ruthless, competitive primary market. She has a ranking of around 400 out of a hundred thousand artists ranked.

Ranking galleries

Galleries are the intermediaries between artists and collectors, private or institutional. How to build a ranking system for galleries without knowing any sales figures? We already have a career meter for artists, which I have just described, and this will be of help. In my view the only thing left to do is to identify some key characteristics of a good gallery. These quantifiable attributes can be:

1. Discovery: the number of top artists a gallery has shown within the artist's first year of their career (ability to anticipate future trends)

2. Representation: the number of trending artists a gallery has continuously shown over a period of five years or longer (ability to build careers)

3. Exhibitions: reputation points of the gallery based on the artist ranking (ability to devote space exclusive to art)

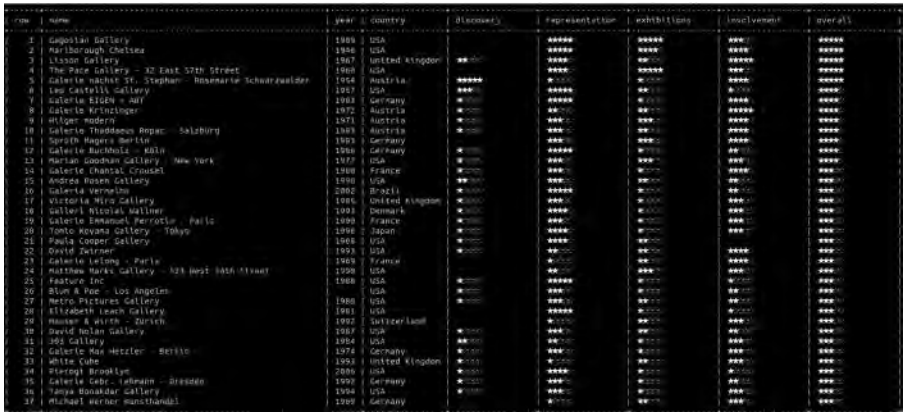
4.Involvement: the gallery's footprint on international art fairs (ability to compete with other galleries in a standardized space).

The power to discover future top artists can be measured by counting the number of top artists that have been shown in the gallery during the first year of their existence in the primary sector.

The ability to represent can be measured by counting the number of artists who have continuously exhibited and who are trending at this time. So this means we don't look at specific artists; instead, we take a closer look at the exhibition history of the gallery and whether an artist has repeatedly showed in the gallery and whether, a specific period of time—let us say five years—the rank of this artist went up, which might have something to do with good gallery work.

The capacity to exhibit can be measured by counting the points of artists you have shown in the past. It is an adaptation of the exhibition career meter, summing up the points of other artists that have been exhibited earlier in a gallery.

A gallery's ability to involve itself in the market can be measured by counting the number of art fairs, weighting them and putting this all together in a sum. So a gallery that has participated in the strongholds of Art Basel, Frieze, Armory Show and others shows of a similar standing will get more points than a gallery that shows at three lesser known fairs.



row	name	year	country	discovery	representation	exhibitions	involvement	overall
1	Gagosian Gallery	1980	USA		*****	*****	***	*****
2	Marlborough Chelsea	1946	USA		*****	****	****	*****
3	Lisson Gallery	1967	United Kingdom	**	****	**	*****	*****
4	The Pace Gallery - 32 East 57th Street	1960	USA		****	*****	***	*****
5	Galerie nächst St. Stephan - Rosemarie Schwarzwälder	1954	Austria	*****	*	*	***	*****
6	Leo Castelli Gallery	1957	USA	***	*****	**	*	****
7	Galerie EIGEN + ART	1983	Germany	*	*****	*	****	****
8	Galerie Krinzinger	1972	Austria	*	****	**	*****	****
9	Hilger modern	1971	Austria	*	***	***	****	****
10	Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac - Salzburg	1983	Austria	*	***	**	****	****
11	Sprüth Magers Berlin	1983	Germany		***	***	****	****
12	Galerie Buchholz - Köln	1986	Germany	*	****	*	**	****
13	Marian Goodman Gallery - New York	1977	USA	*	***	***	***	****
14	Galerie Chantal Crousel	1980	France	*	***	*	****	***
15	Andrea Rosen Gallery	1990	USA	**	***	**	**	***
16	Galeria Vermelho	2002	Brazil	*	*****	*	**	***
17	Victoria Miro Gallery	1985	United Kingdom	*	***	*	***	***
18	Galleri Nicolai Wallner	1993	Denmark	*	****	*	***	***
19	Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin - Paris	1990	France	*	***	*	***	***
20	Tomio Koyama Gallery - Tokyo	1998	Japan	*	****	*	***	***
21	Paula Cooper Gallery	1968	USA	*	***	**		***
22	David Zwirner	1993	USA	*	***	**	****	***
23	Galerie Lelong - Paris	1969	France		*	**	****	***
24	Matthew Marks Gallery - 526 West 26th Street	1990	USA		***	***	***	***
25	Feature Inc	1988	USA	*	*****	*	****	***
26	Blum & Poe - Los Angeles		USA	*	***	*	**	***
27	Metro Pictures Gallery	1980	USA	*	***	**	***	***
28	Elizabeth Leach Gallery	1981	USA		****	*	*	***
29	Hauser & Wirth - Zürich	1992	Switzerland		*	**	***	***
30	David Nolan Gallery	1987	USA	*	***	*	**	***
31	303 Gallery	1996	USA	**	**	*	***	***
32	Galerie Max Hetzler - Berlin	1974	Germany	*	***	*	***	***
33	White Cube	1993	United Kingdom	*	*	*	***	***
34	Pierogi Brooklyn	2006	USA	*	****	*	*	***
35	Galerie Gebr. Lehmann - Dresden	1992	Germany	*	***	*	**	***
36	Tanya Bonakdar Gallery	1994	USA	*	***	*	***	***
37	Michael Werner Kunsthandel	1999	Germany		*	**	***	***

This is a first impression of our gallery ranking. It is not completely thorough as it has been rapidly done for the Talking Galleries symposium 2015. The outcome is interesting nonetheless: a freshly produced, weighted list of 37 galleries, with their names, foundation year and country of origin. Each gallery on the list gains stars for its ability to reach the top in one of our four categories. The points for each attribute are summarised and the galleries that reach a defined quantum are marked with stars. The maximum you can get is five stars and the minimum is zero, meaning that the gallery that has the most points with a specific attribute gets five stars and the gallery with the lowest gets zero. A total of nearly 17,000 existing galleries were analysed. Five galleries received five stars, led by the Gagosian Gallery. Eight galleries received four stars, led by the Leo Castelli Gallery. Twenty-four galleries received three stars, led by the French Galerie Chantal Crousel. A hundred and seventy-two galleries received two stars, led by Wagner Art (Australia). Four thousand one hundred and seventy galleries received one star, led by Barbara Mathes Gallery in the USA. And 11,463 received no stars yet. The majority of galleries then do not fully meet these attributes. Are they perhaps too severe? We will have to look into that in the future.

"I REALLY ENCOURAGE YOU NOT TO BE AFRAID OF BIG DATA. DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF CONFUSING DATA-MINING WITH YOUR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF A TRAINED ARTIST, ART HISTORIAN OR MARKET EXPERT."

A ranking tool like this can be used to quickly identify galleries by their qualities. You gallerists are the experts, so it is up to you to see if this is in coherence with your qualitative notions. Nevertheless, this is what the computer says when we apply the calculations that I have offered. I really encourage you not to be afraid of big data. Do not make the mistake of confusing data-mining with your personal knowledge of a trained artist, art historian or market expert. A race driver, for example, may not need a speedometer. But we as occasional drivers can make good use of a speed indicator. The same applies to the modern collector. They don't have the time to become a connoisseur. They are dependent on track records to overcome the dreadful uncertainty. Whatever you might personally think about machine-produced rankings, standards are powerful and transparency is key. Overcoming information asymmetries tears down barriers to future collectors.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q. Why has the Austrian gallery Rosemarie Schwarzwälder gotten five discovery points?

M.C. The data is not spread equally. This gallery has a huge number of artists they have shown in the past; it's an old gallery that has reached the top 5,000 level in our artistic career meter. So they have overtaken the other galleries that have not shown the first shows of trending artists on that scale in the gallery segment. It's an extraordinarily high number.

C. But then you give a bigger weight to galleries that are far older. When defining quality for ranking galleries, the computer system seems not to really work. Rosemarie Schwarzwälder has been there

a long time, has discovered a lot of artists and still works with them, which is amazing. But then you see most of the really good galleries which are really advanced, to have one or two stars.

M.C. It's not a human being who did this ranking, neither is conducted by a magazine committee where ten editors sit together and discuss the ranking through. It's a query to a machine which ranks using formulas. There can be gaps in data. For example, we don't know for certain whether galleries exhibited a certain artist in the first year of their career because we don't know when their career started. There are all kinds of obstacles. But in order to counter-argue, when you look at the number one gallery, Gagosian Gallery, we see there is a zero discovery factor: they don't discover artists. But Gagosian has many branches and satellites where they conduct shows. Their presence becomes so overwhelming then that they kill other attributes. On the other hand, Rosemarie Schwarzwälder gallery met the representation factor, meaning it is a gallery that sticks with its artists, which I consider an attribute that should be highly valued. Calculations are strong too, and there are not many galleries that can bear this because you ask a machine something and it spits out results. Of course, those results can be questioned and we have to take a deeper look at them necessarily.

As I said before, we shouldn't leave this whole sector—with so many participants unquantified—to the auction market. Do you want to leave this to gossip, to the person who is the best on Instagram, or who has the richest friends? I would like to encourage you to open up this market, to make it understandable for outsiders, to install certainty and trust. This is not only a playground for somebody who has a certain discretional income.

C. I have been counting figures too for years. The first results I see from your ranking correspond closely to my results, where the top 50 galleries quantified are always the same, with a top segment of galleries extremely small. We are talking about eight to a maximum of 15 galleries. My results differ a little bit however. Gagosian doesn't come top in my results, and is only tenth. The gaps in your figures go back to the pre-internet age, when there were only printed catalogues, etc. But this is a huge amount of data to collect and to compute. Congratulations in any case.

M.C. I want to emphasise something else. It is like looking at hotels for example, not everybody has to be a five-star gallery. If I were a gallerist, I would think twice about being a five-star gallerist. If you go to FIAC and talk to the galleries on the ground floor, they are under great stress. On the other hand, you go to small fairs and it's relaxing. You can enjoy wandering around the booths and having a talk here and there. It's important that we have people who jump into this scenario as well as it's good to have five-star hotels. But it's also good that we have Airbnb and bed and breakfasts. They go together as part of the ecosystem. In this regard, can we think of a signs system that identifies galleries as they identify and differentiate hotels from bed & breakfasts?

Q. How do you propose we should do it?

M.C. There is no market information available in the primary market. And when you ask the galleries, they give you a price range so it's problematic. In every other market, this information is available. Why can't galleries at an art fair say "this artwork costs €10,000"? And if you are a museum or a super collector, you can get a discount. Then everybody would know what's happening. This would be one approach. But there's also an attempt to look at gallery working standards. If we arrive at a consensus on industry standards on how to operate, we could then do number crunching on it, translate these standards and then apply, for example, stars or another type of indicator.

We are living in an era where everything is changing. In Berlin, where I live, we have a growing group of middle-class Internet entrepreneurs, like in America's super-rich Silicon Valley but smaller. You go into the beautiful flats of these people, furnished with design furniture, with a parked Porsche down there, but no art. These are people around 35 years of age who don't collect art. Why? Maybe because there are no standards and they don't want to be tricked. We can't say that these people are simply not intellectuals who don't go to biennales and therefore are stupid. We should open this market to as many people as possible.

Q. How do you update all this information? I have just quickly checked the home page and there is lots of information which is not updated. For example, I just checked the artists. One of my artist's is exhibiting currently at the Venice Biennale and that fact is updated. But then you

state his last solo show in 2013, which is not true. So how do you do it? How do you get this information? Do you get it from the institutions? How do you deal with those that are not sending it to you?

M.C. How would you do it? I go to the internet and do the most important institutions first: Venice Biennale, Tate, MoMA, PS1. This is what I do first in order to have something solid, and then I work my way down. There are 16,000 galleries and, in all, we have to look at 40,000 institutions. We do the best we can but top down. Of course anyone can send us information. We always have something like 10,000 emails about missing exhibitions. We are talking here about millions of exhibitions, and we have already listed about 700,000; so of course, not everything is in there.

C. Websites of galleries are listing attendance at art fairs they never attended.

M.C. We have things happening that you can't believe: invitation cards sent to us which are manipulated with Photoshop; museums created on the internet, with a full history, that are non-existent. What we have to do is check every single thing. There are mistakes when you enter millions of datasets as people make mistakes. Let's say 5 or 10% of the data has a tweak somewhere. But the majority of it is OK.

Q. I understand your point about transparency and totally agree with you. But do you really think that someone needs to look at a ranking to make a decision on what he likes, what he wants to buy?

M.C. No, of course not. I know what I like and I know what I dislike. It is a tool, like a speedometer in a car, or IMDb when we're talking about movies: even though you have seen hundreds of movies from the entire history of cinema, you can get overwhelmed when you are presented with a vast amount of films; in this case IMDb can help you with a ranking. But that doesn't mean you don't have taste.

Q. Don't you think this is a little bit against the essence of art collecting?

M.C. No, not at all, because it's just a tool that helps you doing something. I am just presenting it as a means, not a substitute for taste. It doesn't mean neither that you should just look at a machine. In the end, what does a machine know? For a machine, this is just pure numbers. Machines don't know who Larry Gagosian is.

Anders Petterson

Anders Petterson is the founder and managing director of ArtTactic Ltd, a London-based art market research and analysis company set up in 2001. ArtTactic has been a pioneer in using crowd-sourcing techniques for gathering and processing intelligence on the art market. Petterson is the author or the annual Online Art Trade Report now in its 3rd edition. He is also lecturing on the topic of "Art as an asset class" for CASS Business School, Sotheby's Institute, Christie's Education and IESA in London. Petterson is a board member of Professional Advisors to the International Art Market (PAIAM). Prior to founding ArtTactic, he worked for JP Morgan in London.

THE NEW ONLINE ART CONSUMERS

SPEAKER

Anders Petterson

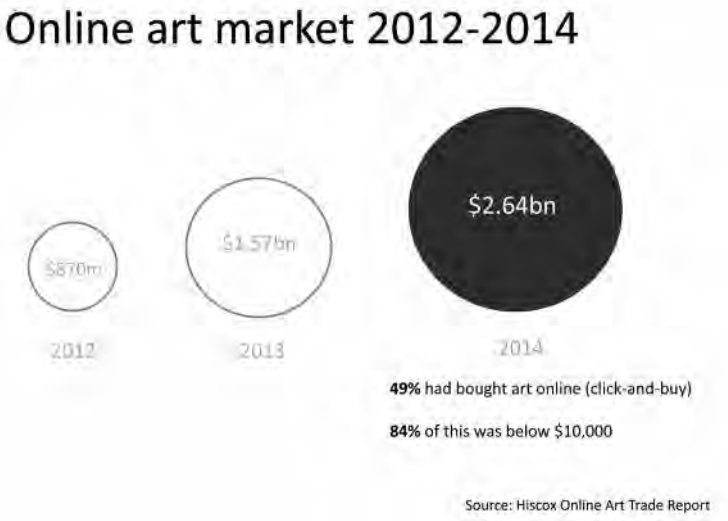
CONCEPTS

online markets, online sales, online audiences, new online art ecosystem, motivations and behaviours, credibility and trust, advantages vs. challenges, art as an asset class, technologies, multi-channel experience, industry fragmentation vs. consolidation

THE NEW ONLINE ART CONSUMERS

Online markets have affected virtually every industry in the world. The art market has been relatively untouched up until the last five years. But things are starting to change. I would like to look at some of these trends and consider what this means for us. What does it mean for a gallerist or another stakeholder in the market? Do we need to rethink the relationship that we have with the end client? How do we engage the new client?

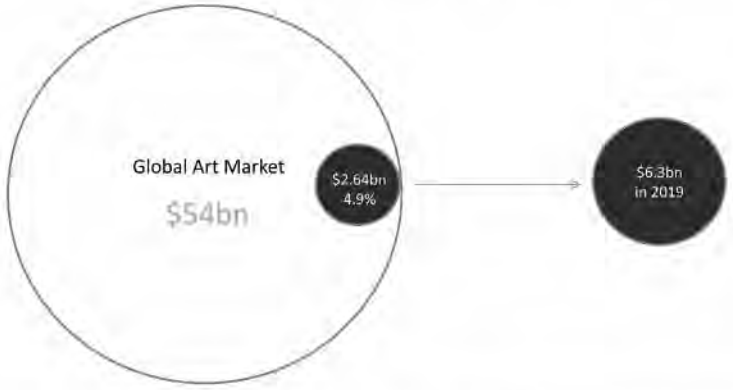
The art ecosystem is now being invaded by species that are slightly alien to the existing system. Does it mean that the power relationships in the art market are about to change? Could the relationships that the traditional players have had, be shifting somewhere else? I am not going to provide any solutions but maybe something that will nurture the debate. Where are we heading? How can we tackle these new challenges? They offer incredible opportunities to engage new audiences.



What does constitute an online sale? This is sort of an estimate. It is something that is very hard to determine because when you send a jpeg from the gallery to a collector and he buys on that without seeing the work, is that an online sale? In our case—Clare McAndrew of the TEFAF Report has a different figure—we basically have what we call click-and-buy platforms or e-commerce platforms where people are transacting directly. That does not mean that the art collector has never seen the work, but it gives an idea of how the market is changing, how it has changed over the last two years, and how it is likely to change in the next five to six years. It still constitutes a very small part of the total market though. If we assume again that the TEFAF Report is a benchmark for what the overall market is, it represents about 5% of that market.

The online market might grow in the future, but it is probably not going to take over the physical market. We are not going to see the same thing that we have seen in many industries, but we cannot ignore the fact that the time people spend online and on social media is starting to have an impact on how we engage with the things around us. And it is important now, as stakeholders in this market, that we also understand how to meet these people, how to find them and attract them to us, whether with regard to exhibitions, galleries and so forth.

Online art market 2012-2014

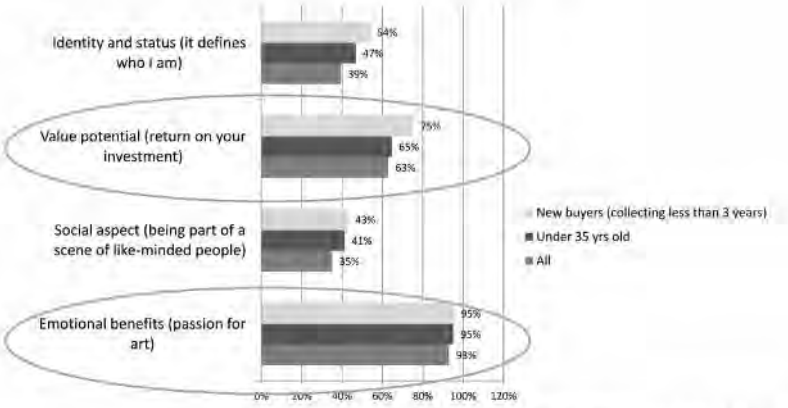


Source: TEFAF Report, Hiscox Online Art Trade Report

Changing behaviour among art buyers

So let us look at motivations. We started doing art market research 15 years ago, and the way that people look at the market has changed significantly. There have always been speculators and investors, but people are increasingly looking at art as an asset class. I am not making a judgement whether that is good or bad; it just changes the way the market works. It changes the behaviour of the market: it changes the way we engage with art and the way the market functions. Things are speeding up, so the market is becoming more volatile.

Motivations for buying art

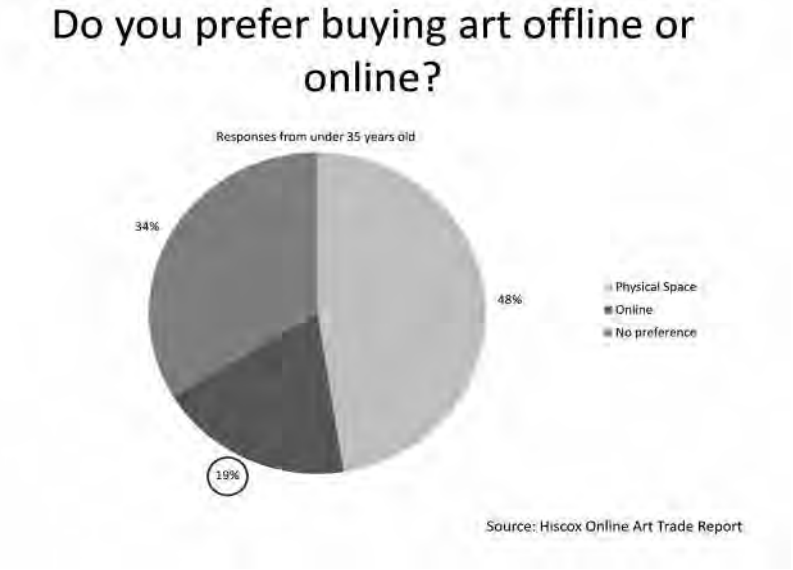


Source: Hiscox Online Art Trade Report

"PEOPLE ARE INCREASINGLY LOOKING AT ART AS AN ASSET CLASS. I AM NOT MAKING A JUDGEMENT WHETHER THAT IS GOOD OR BAD; IT JUST CHANGES THE WAY THE MARKET WORKS."

When we ask people about the reasons for buying art, the strong emotional aspect is the dominant motivation. The fact that people are in it for passion is probably one of the anchor points of the market

as a whole. I think everyone who is focusing only on the investment aspect is potentially in shark-infested waters. This is a market that needs to have a combination of different motivations. Online buyers feel that there is a sort of value potential, that there is a sense of an investment, and this is potentially quite dangerous: there is a promise out there among the people in the online institutions that here there is an opportunity for you to find the next Hirst or the next Warhol. Therefore, this issue about art investment and value potential needs to be taken with care.



The following are basic comments from a survey, which it is taken from the Hiscox Online Art Trade Report, an annual report downloadable for free. It is looking at responses from people under 35 years old and asking them about their preferences regarding platforms. This is not about what they buy or not; it is about where they prefer to buy. Now, the physical space, whether it is in an art fair or in the gallery itself, is still the predominant factor. But there is a proportion of almost 20% of people that prefer to buy art online. What I think is happening in the art market, and which has happened in many other industries as well, is that there is not going to be an either-or situation. The art market is not about online sales taking over from offline sales. It is about choice. It is about giving the consumer at any given point an opportunity to

choose which channel they want to use. So, if you are sitting in London and there is an art fair going on in São Paulo, you might not physically be able to travel there, but being able to use the online platform in order to complete a deal might be an opportunity.

"THERE IS NOT GOING TO BE AN EITHER-OR SITUATION. THE ART MARKET IS NOT ABOUT ONLINE SALES TAKING OVER FROM OFFLINE SALES. IT IS ABOUT CHOICE."

The picture going forward is not that a gallery should be afraid that they will lose their presence or their purpose in the market. But the way they need to reach their customers is going to change. And it might not change with existing audiences that you engage with. It is going to potentially change with the next generation coming afterwards. If you look at a ten-year-old and the way they use technology, it is now in their genes. And that is why we, as art market participants, need to stop to think about how we reach that audience. When people buy art online, people are starting to say "What is the reason? What are the key factors?" Obviously, the ability to find and sift through a vast amount of information in a very quick space of time is one of the driving factors.

One of the issues in terms of the challenges is obviously how do galleries build a reputation online. How is that reputation built offline? How do you transfer your offline or your gallery reputation into an online world? How to build a brand or how to build credibility and trust in an online world are questions that almost require a whole different skill set that the art world maybe has not yet come to proper terms with.

The preference of buying online is clearly linked to this notion of it being less intimidating. A lot of people feel that walking into a gallery or walking into an art fair is an intimidating experience. 40 to 50,000 people attend art fairs. They have already broken down that hurdle. But there many more standing at the gate waiting to participate, that are now starting to engage, using the online door as their opening into the art market. I think it is important for galleries to start to think about how can they engage that new audience, how to find them and how to attract them.

In terms of challenges, the fact that you cannot see the real artwork will be the major hurdle and will continue to be even if the technology advances in the future. A digital image is never going to be able to replace the presence of the real work. There are obviously other aspects, such as authenticity. This is a big issue in the art market, though maybe not so much in the contemporary art sector. But as

we move into other collectable areas, authenticating work and making sure that we are not dealing with forgeries is something that everyone is going to be concerned about. And there are businesses that are popping up in this regard.

"THE FACT THAT YOU CANNOT SEE THE REAL ARTWORK WILL BE THE MAJOR HURDLE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE EVEN IF THE TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES IN THE FUTURE."

During Frieze week 2015, an initiative was launched that was all about trying to marry up the art world with the technologies to start fingerprinting artworks. It makes possible to recognise that an artwork can actually travel to one place to another—the history and provenance of the work will follow—thereby eradicating this issue of authenticity. This is obviously going to be incredibly hard to deal with when it comes to older and more historic artworks. But maybe for the future, every single artwork will be tagged. Therefore transparency—technical information, ownership and so forth—is likely to be present. Obviously there are a lot of debates about ownership. In the case of online sales, this becomes even more important, as we are dealing with someone who is remote. Reputation then is going to be critical. All the galleries have their own reputation already, but this is something that might not necessarily have been translated into the online world yet. How do you translate 50 or 60 years of experience among online audiences?

On the logistics side, galleries are familiar with shipping things around the world. But when you start to ship things on the Amazon scale, the art world has not really figured out the logistics properly. The logistics market is incredibly fragmented. The pricing is very difficult to figure out. If you are trying as a buyer to ship something from São Paulo all the way to London, you might end up paying twice the value of the work, depending on the value of course. That is why we are starting to see businesses that are trying to figure out if there is a way to create a marketplace for shipping companies and logistics firms where people can put in the destination and then that bid will go out to 50 different vetted providers, who will come back with the best price for the consumer to choose.

“REPUTATION IS GOING TO BE CRITICAL. IT IS SOMETHING THAT MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO THE ONLINE WORLD YET. HOW DO YOU TRANSLATE 50 OR 60 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AMONG ONLINE AUDIENCES?”

Returns policies are another tricky area. Under consumer protection law in Europe at least, you have to now offer a kind of cooling-off period of about 15 days in which people can return works. That is a method or a way of working which is alien to the current art world. What we are dealing with at the moment is the standard model of a gallery, working with clients who have merged with a kind of consumer model online. Are these models entirely compatible?

One of the purposes of a gallery is to nurture and cultivate their artists, to let them go free into the online market space where they can be bought and sold. And that is also counterintuitive to many of the practices that current galleries are practising.

These issues are being addressed by companies and start-ups that have been popping up in the last two or three years. We will see whether they are going to succeed or not, but these challenges also represent huge opportunities. Marek Claassen, for example, has spoken about transparency standards and about creating rankings for people to navigate the world. There are many others that are now trying to create standards in their own way, whether related with authenticity, insurances, shipping and so forth.

The Changing Landscape

What does the art market look like today? Before us the ecosystem was virtually every single participant, from the artists, to galleries, to museums, to biennales, to art fairs, to auctions, to the support services and the collectors. There are a few things that have happened since the financial crisis in 2009:

- Art is starting to be treated not as an object with aesthetic, historical and cultural qualities, but rather as a financial object, as an asset class: it is being invested in, it is being lent against. It allows the entrance of a new set of species into what was a previously rather harmonious ecosystem.

- Technology is having a real impact on the way that artists are showing their work, like Artsy and Artspace. How many of you are using a third-party platform to show your art? How many of you can sell directly through your own websites? Artsy has received probably about 45-50 million in funding, so there is going to be quite a lot of capital required for a gallery to take on that role and try to become an ecommerce company. I do not think that should be the role of the gallery, which should probably focus on exactly what they are doing right now. But they will need to start to think about the relationships and the alliances they need to make between these two platforms.

- There is a lot of talk about auction houses and how they are starting to infiltrate and encroach into the territories of dealers and galleries. The discussions in the strategic rooms of the auction houses are not necessarily about galleries, but about someone else coming in and stealing the channel and the access to the audience that is being developed outside their current remit. We can see how both auction houses—Sotheby’s and Christie’s—are responding this in different ways. Sotheby’s is teaming up with eBay, a relationship that is very hard to assess whether it will actually prove successful; and Christie’s is developing its own platform. But at the same time you have total newcomers like Auctionata, which has created quite a buzz as a newcomer in the last two or three years; and Heritage Auctions which is by far the biggest online auction house in the world, and no-one had hardly heard about it except maybe for people based in the US.

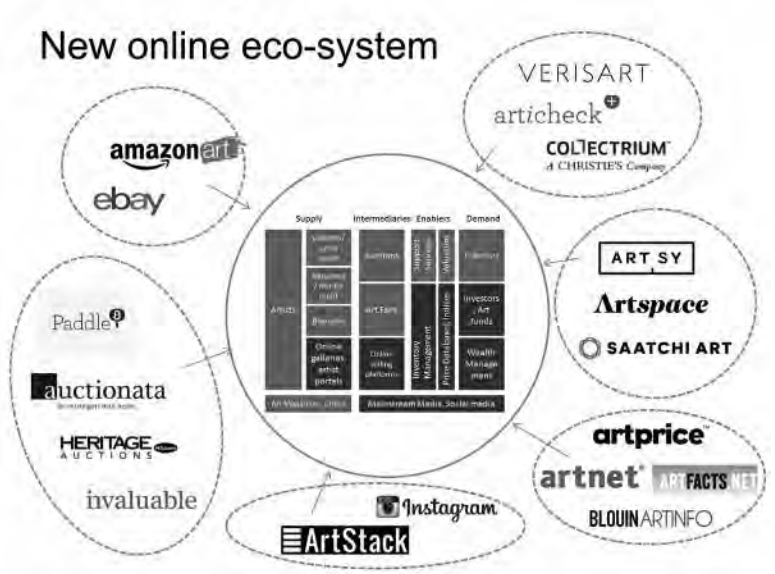
"THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE STRATEGIC ROOMS OF THE AUCTION HOUSES ARE NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT GALLERIES, BUT ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE COMING IN AND STEALING THE CHANNEL AND THE ACCESS TO THE AUDIENCE."

There are players who have not traditionally been in this art ecosystem. What will happen? If we are talking about rankings and this kind of implicit power structure within the art world, the auction houses in particular are worried that someone else can come in. I am not talking about the top end of the market because that is probably relatively set apart, although that top end is obviously reliant on the constant feed of collectors coming in. At the moment the lower end, the mass market, is where the businesses are. This is where all the online companies are going. Obviously you hear about Amazon or someone who sold something for a record of 1.5 million, but that is just PR. What they really care about is attacking the 90% at the lower end of the market, finding a way to engage that base, that access point that the auction houses do not care about because they have moved on to the very top end of the market, and also where a lot of galleries are struggling to sell inventory.

We are starting to see a shift in power in the online environment and the current players might not be the ones that we will see in the future. If the technology is good enough, there could be a major shift in this market going forward. For a gallery, this is again an opportunity to find alliances with businesses, particularly in the tech sector, that are now building these platforms for the primary market, whether that is an Artsy, Artspace or any of the others out there who have a chance of opening up a market to new buyers.

Online media is now a traditional way for people to communicate and share information. Instagram is something that has been widely discussed and there have been articles about how people are using it and how it drives interest in artists. Now that Instagram reaches 400 million people, you can start to think about the power of information sharing on this very visual platform and how it can be used to start to attract buyers and enthusiasts. It is what we are starting to see with younger artists, who are using these media themselves to get

people participating directly in a narrative through studio shots, the development of an artwork, etc. They might have a Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. How do you maximise and use this entire industry that is building up? I am not saying that you should all become social media experts. There are specialists out there already that you can draw on in order to think about how a gallery can work with the online market.



Artprice, Artnet, ArtFacts, Artinfo and others were part of the first revolution of making instantly available information that was typically sitting in books and was published annually, enabling users to find prices, information about artists, biographical data and so forth. On the other side, we are starting to see auctions online platforms like Paddle8, Auctionata, Invaluable, Heritage Auctions and others, players that traditionally have not been there in the past and have arrived in the last five years, except for Heritage Auctions. Artsy, Artspace, Saatchi Art are again platforms in the primary sector offering buyers an opportunity to find galleries and new artists. Lastly, looking at the social media side, like Instagram and ArtStack, these are the ways for audiences to follow and share similar interests. Online social networking is going to be an incredibly strong part of this market going forward.

Now, the question is about Amazon and eBay. You should never say that a player like eBay and Amazon will never enter the art market. They have a lot of money and they can keep on doing this for a very long period of time. We talked about logistics. I am not sure how well prepared Amazon is to start shipping art around the world, but if they wanted to, they could probably find the capability of doing so. Shipping is a challenge obviously. As an online business, Amazon is virtually a logistics company and has to be prepared to ship all across the world. That is their main business. They could have a real impact on the art market. In the current situation, everyone will have a negative view of Amazon Art as a place to grow art. And I agree: I do not think it is a particularly friendly destination and an incredibly inspiring place to go and see art. But purely on a fulfilment point of view, it is going to be very hard to beat someone like Amazon. They could be a partner though, and this is why I guess several dealers have signed up with them, as it gives them an option to at least have one foot inside the door.

EBay on the other hand, is experimenting with lots of auction houses. Sotheby's, Swann and many others are teaming up, again providing them with a platform. There are 300 million people on eBay and it is just a numbers game: if they can sift off a tiny percentage of that audience, that could have a real impact on the lower end of the auction houses, with the kind of material that they currently do not sell in the offline auctions.

And finally, there is all the support services that we are starting to see. Verisart was launched by Robert Norton, who was part of Saatchi Art and was also responsible for setting up Sedition. In this case, he is using a blockchain type of technology, labelling and tracking works and basically dealing with issues such as authenticity. Articheck is a condition tool, which basically allows people to quickly check the condition of works, which is very useful if you are a conservator in a museum or typically have to check the condition of a work every time it enters into your business. In this case, the history of the condition will follow the work. Collectrium is a collection management system that was recently bought by Christie's. I do not know whether Christie's purchase was purely strategic, but I think we need to watch out for businesses that look innocent, in the sense that they may turn out to be something different. Artnet is an example of this: it started as a kind

of auction database and a gallery database; now they have became an auction house in their own right. At the same time, Artsy has pivoted and changed probably three times, and now they have teamed up with Sotheby's to hold auctions.

"I HAVE NOT SEEN A MARKET IN THE LAST TEN YEARS WHERE THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH CHANGE BROUGHT ABOUT FROM THE OUTSIDE. AS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MIDDLE, WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT OUR APPROACH: HOW ARE WE GOING TO POSITION OURSELVES AS GALLERISTS IN THIS WORLD?"

None of these models are static at the moment. I have not seen a market in the last ten years where there has been so much change brought about from the outside. As stakeholders in the middle, we need to think about our approach: how are we going to position ourselves as gallerists in this world? These guys are not going to go away; they are going to be there and change things whether you like it or not. They might decide not to touch your current clients, but they are going for some new ones. And if they can find 200 million new ones, they can potentially change the entire power structure of this market. Galleries are not going to go away, partly because the physical artworks and objects are still going to be there. This is not the digitisation of publishing or music. But if, as a gallery, you do not navigate this world and build alliances, there is a risk that someone else is going to step in and engage with that audience that potentially could be yours.

Future strategic issues to consider

1. The art buyer's journey and experience has changed. Buying art is becoming a multi-channel experience. People are not entering through the same door that they used to, although people are still going to art fairs and going through galleries. They are increasingly coming in through other channels. Buying art is not either/or. People will have the option to do different things. They want to go to art fairs when they feel like it, to attend a gallery opening and buy something,

to go to auctions, or to buy online. It is a question of offering them the opportunity. One day you want to shop online, so you order your food through your local supermarket; and sometimes you decide to go to your local butcher. We have to be able to offer that choice to our consumers because that is what they want. And it is about meeting the needs.

2. Building reputation in the online art market. This is going to be crucial. Reputation is everything. How can we translate the reputation you currently have into an online world and therefore portray that trust that you have built up in the offline market over a number of years? It sounds easy, but it is not. You are dealing with people who have never met you, who do not know what your name stands for. How do you communicate that trust? There are businesses that can help out with these things, but again it relies on the art market seeking help from the outside because I do not think any of these issues can be solved from within.

3. Is a new architecture for the online art market required? At the moment, we have an existing art market built on the traditional model, and then we are building online stuff on top of it, on a very antiquated system that includes galleries and auction houses alike. The auction house model is a very old one and what they have tried to do is build online a kind of a surface or a skin on top. In a sense, they are just building on a foundation that is just too old and cannot cope with these new things. We need to think about whether the online market requires a total restructuring about what this market should look like and how it operates.

4. Will technology drive the need for a new artist-agent model? We come back to the question of whether we will have to rethink the artist-agent relationship, as artists themselves are increasingly having the opportunities to find other avenues to meet their audiences and develop a fanbase. It does not mean that galleries will be obsolete. But the artist might need or want to start to use other ways of engaging with an audience that is potentially outside the control of the gallery. How are you going to deal with that?

5. How to use technology to 'drive' interest and traffic to bricks-and-mortar gallery spaces and exhibitions? There are technologies around—

listings and location-specific services—that can be provided in order to drive traffic to venues. All these things are actually enabling galleries to bring people into their physical space. But the physical space is an underutilised asset. We could call it an asset in contrast with the kind of expense that a gallery will typically have by being in a prime location in any city in comparison with what it gives to them. Is there a way to use technology to make sure that people end up in the right venues? It is not all about moving things online.

6. Industry fragmentation vs. consolidation? Is the art world going to consolidate? We probably have weekly calls from private equity companies saying "This art world is so fragmented. Why do not they pull together?" I am not sure how many of you would like to work together. Most people have chosen the art world because it is more than just making a profit. That element of passion has been already mentioned in the symposium. In the case of my own company, if I was looking for profit, I would choose any other business than this. But I still chose it. I think many of you may be in the same situation. So this business-speak thing of pooling companies and mergers and acquisitions does not really work. I think this fragmentation will remain, and any business model, particularly in the online space, is actually building something that allows the fragmentation to exist. But it also allows the audience to engage with you through some kind of channel. In that regard, Artsy for example is really an aggregator: it is a way for you to find something and then basically it directs you out into the art world where that relevant object or artist is.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

C. In Geneva, Christian Bernard, an extraordinary visionary, curator and museum director, gave his farewell talk. He spoke about art as a pocket of resistance against the digitalisation of the world, and about the very object of art as a way of maintaining what the French call *corporéité*, which is to do with the real world. I don't know if many of these platforms really offer art. There is really a kind of philosophical debate and a kind of contradiction between these platforms of diffusion and art itself. And I'm also a little bit tired sometimes of seeing lots of people putting lots of pressure on us to enter this digital world as if

it were a necessity. And this is mostly why I really wanted to open a gallery: as a pocket of resistance against this movement.

Anders Petterson (A.P.) The market narrows the market into a number of artists and the online phenomenon is the same thing, it has certain preferences: certain type of art that can be sold online of course. The definition of art is something that is subjective. I don't want to focus so much on the online market as a commercial market, but I do think there are opportunities. I was debating more about how you reach out to an audience. That doesn't mean that the other one is obsolete. I think there are two models: one is Starbucks; the other one is my local coffee shop. I prefer my local coffee shop by far. I'm not making a judgement about whether your model is right or wrong. But we can't get away from the fact that there are big operators out there. It's not one or the other, they're complementary. So, at the moment, this is the market and these are the players. There are people entering into this space that's ultimately—whether you like it or not—going to impinge on your space. And this might be something to consider.

C. You said the system is changing. But it's not in certain ways.

A.P. If you think about the art market as a power system, galleries are one of the stakeholders. Auction houses have an impact on your business; the way they deal, the way they're starting to impinge. That might not be true for everyone.

C. The majority of auction houses, apart from Paddle8 and a few others, are a physical thing, not an online thing. Online business narrows art, as you said, to a very certain kind of art, which is basically visual, good-looking painting.
A.P. For now.

C. It's also about the galleries that actually choose what kind of clients we want to have. Do I really want a person online who just skips through everything and then maybe decides that something would be interesting for him/her without any physical contact? The internet is having this impact: changing everything around in the music industry, in the publishing industry, etc. I've been asking myself the same question for the last ten years: when will this big catharsis come to the art world? Even with Artsy, it hasn't happened.

A.P. And I don't think that will happen either. It all comes back to how you engage your audiences. How do you meet your audiences and how do you reach out to them? Are you using technology and social media? Well, indirectly this is engagement even if you're not an online sales platform. I think there's a distinction: selling online is maybe a large part of this thing, but technology also enables us to search, find, discover. And that's what's powerful. If you're not using these tools, then I think you will get left behind.

Q. Is the online work that is being sold at the moment in a more friendly price range? Judging from a past experience of mine with a couple of online auction houses, it seems that the way they sell things might work better for more affordable art as people might not have the same determination to check and inspect the piece. I'm involved in the new market of Africa. I have to say that for all the galleries in this new market, where they're trying to get as much visibility as possible and reach out to the largest new audience that they can, the online phenomenon is only positive. For the moment, they are adapting to this very easily. They are building their client base and their connections. They have a totally different attitude, which is "We don't have this and we want it. How do we get it as fast as possible?"

A.P. Coming back to the market side, it's clearly accommodating for a part of the market: the majority of the transactions are below $5,000 and probably a large part of them are below $1,000. It's opening up though. This is not going to change everyone, but there are both risks and opportunities for the existing players. If you are a big auction house, then something might happen. If you are Gagosian, the threat might not be one of the bigger galleries; it might be someone else instead. For younger galleries, in particularly galleries outside the main hubs, the online side is starting to play a real role. Galleries in Asia are starting to see the online side as a vehicle for them to reach audiences they otherwise wouldn't: a channel to reach certain people that otherwise might be difficult. It's a complement.

C. I would like to comment on the philosophical divide that we embody here, as we are evidence of the hegemony of the Westernised art market. In the so-called invisible markets or those that are a little bit delayed, online businesses come as an opportunity, basically because they make these other markets visible. It brings a hopeful situation to the table.

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Talking Galleries is the first international platform for gallery professionals to instigate the debate and the exchange of new trends specific to gallerism and the art market. It gathers and produces content on relevant issues related to gallery practices through international symposiums, a publication series and an online video channel, keeping updated to the most recent developments on the sector.

The Barcelona Symposium aims to be the definite meeting point for galleries where to reflect on their own profession. To that end, leading art world figures are brought together to discuss and rethink models for the art business sector.

This book collects the talks given at the fourth Barcelona Symposium held from 2 to 3 November 2015, at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), in which distinguished guests shared their insights into different aspects of gallerism at the moment. Their invaluable experience and the lively yet thought-provoking sessions are inspiring and enlightening to all those who are involved in the art gallery practice today.

"This publication gives a comprehensive overview of the 2015 symposium, with summaries of the panels, discussions and presentations. For those who were there, it is a reminder of what was debated; for those not able to attend, it is an important resource."

Georgina Adam

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